

Mobile Phones and Devices Policy

Primary person responsible for updates to this policy: Chris Randell

Job title: Principal

Last review date: September 2021

Next review date: September 2022

Relevant ISI coding (if applicable)

Circulation: This policy has been adopted by the governors and is available to parents on request. It is addressed to all members of staff and volunteers and applies wherever they are working with children.

'Parents' refers to parents, guardians and carers.

Contents

1. Scope of this policy
2. General rules for children
3. Searching, screening and confiscation
4. General rules for staff and visitors
5. Use of cameras
6. EYFS settings
7. Contact with parents/carers
8. Security
9. Health & safety considerations
10. Alpha Plus phones and devices

1. Scope of this policy

The purpose of this policy is to set out general rules about mobile devices and personal electronic devices, and to give staff guidelines regarding the appropriate use of such devices in the course of carrying out their duties.

The responsible, considerate and safe use of mobile phones and portable electronic devices is part of the multi-dimensional, social and behavioural goals which are embedded within our educational and management processes. This policy is part of our strategy for safeguarding children within our care. It complies with *Keeping Children Safe in Education 2021* and should be read in conjunction with our other policies, notably:

- Safeguarding and child protection
- Online safety
- Anti-Bullying
- ICT Usage
- PSHEE
- Photos and Images
- Social Media

2. General rule for students

Students are allowed to bring mobile phones or other personal electronic devices to school and use them only within the guidelines laid down by the college:

General guidelines

- Mobile phones should be used sensibly. Internet use on your mobile phone is subject to the same rules as set out in the ICT Usage Policy
- You must not disconnect college equipment in order to charge their phones

Student guidelines

- Mobile phones may only be used in lessons or study time if the teacher has included the use of a mobile phone in an activity. Abuse of this rule may result in confiscation of the phone and disciplinary action.
- Mobile phones are not allowed in tests or in the public exam room (please see Examinations Policy)
- Students are contacted via text and email from our management information system (SIMS) and by the College landline/mobile and by Microsoft Teams.
- Teams should be used for contacting teachers

Staff guidelines

- Those members of staff who need to contact students by text more frequently have college mobiles (Principal, Assistant Principals, Houseparents, Director of Accommodation, Head of House)

Online safety education covers the potential dangers that students face when online. Whilst College/boardings wifi has appropriate filtering in place, most mobile devices now have 4G/5G capabilities which cannot be filtered. Educating students about how to stay safe online and who to

report concerns to play an important role. Students should not use personal data when in the college building.

3. Searching, screening and confiscation

Staff authorised by the Principal have the right to search for, examine and confiscate any device where they reasonably suspect that the data or file on the device in question has been, or could be, used to cause harm, to disrupt teaching or break the school rules. This will be done in accordance with the Department for Education's guidance: [Searching, screening and confiscation](#) (2018). Inappropriate usage will be dealt with consistent with our policies on discipline, behaviour, sanctions and exclusions. Following an examination of an electronic device, the member of staff has the right to erase any data or files, if they think there is a good reason to do so. However, care should be taken not to delete material that might be required in a potential criminal investigation. If a member of staff has reasonable grounds to suspect that a device contains evidence in relation to an offence, they must alert the Principal and, where there are safeguarding concerns, the Designated Safeguarding Lead. The device should then be given to police as soon as is reasonably practicable. Any incidents will be recorded in the online safety log.

4. General rule for staff and visitors

The use of personal electronic devices by staff or visitors for any purpose when in the company of children is prohibited¹. This applies to situations both on-site and off-site (e.g. on trips). When in the presence of children, personal electronic devices should be kept out of sight of pupils (e.g. in a draw, bag or jacket pocket and set to silent. In an emergency, personal calls can be directed to the school's landline number so that a message can be relayed to the member of staff.

Personal electronic devices may be used when not in the company of pupils. Where they are used, staff should be respectful and considerate towards colleagues and others, and should be mindful of setting an example, e.g. by not being unnecessarily distracted by electronic communications.

Staff must ensure that there is no inappropriate or illegal content on their personal devices. The Head reserves the right to check the contents of a staff-member's devices should there be any cause for concern relating to our responsibilities for the safeguarding of children.

5. Use of cameras

An increasing number of electronic devices now have built-in cameras and have the capability to capture copy and transmit images and other recordings through a range of technologies and formats. Staff must not take or transmit any recording of pupils on any personal device. Only school hardware must be used for this purpose.

¹ A pragmatic and common sense approach must be taken to the interpretation of this rule in the context of evolving technologies. For example, the **Apple Watch** and other wearable devices would technically be in breach of this rule. If staff choose to wear such devices, they must be especially mindful that their professional behaviour is not compromised, either in the quality of their vigilance and supervision of children, or in the example they set to children by avoiding being, or being seen to be, distracted or addicted to message and alert-checking.

No parent or visitor is permitted to use a camera (including a mobile phone's camera facility) whilst on school premises, except for some² specific events such as plays, recitals, concerts, sporting events, open days or other promotional events. We strongly advise parents against the publication of any such photographs on the internet (e.g. on social media), and will request parents to remove any such material if we deem it illegal, harmful or inappropriate in any way.

Where appropriate, our policy regarding this matter should be explained clearly to parents by a member of staff before difficult situations arise.

Staff should also be aware that taking photographs of colleagues using personal devices should only happen with the permission of that member of staff.

See our *Photos and Images Policy* and *Social Media Policy* for further information on these matters.

6. Contact with parents/carers

All contact with Parents/Carers must be made through the Alpha Plus Group network: emails must be from a Group account and telephone calls made on a Group phone. Personal phones or other personal contact details should only be used with parents in an emergency.

7. Security

Staff must ensure that personal electronic devices are PIN protected to ensure their own privacy and security. This also applies to the use of e.g. personal webmail accounts through school devices, which should also be password protected and not set to automatically log in.

8. Health and safety considerations

In circumstances where staff are lone-working in remote areas of the school, or out of hours, a work mobile or two-way radio should be provided if there is no land-line in the room. Staff are reminded that using hand-held mobile phones whilst driving is a criminal offence.

9. Alpha Plus phones and devices

Any staff member who has been provided with a Group mobile phone or device must comply with Group policies, which are available on the [Group Portal](#). These phones must be PIN protected at all times. Mobile phone usage data and associated phone bills are checked on a regular basis.

² We reserve the right to prohibit the use of cameras for some events if deemed inappropriate by staff.