

INVICTUS

Education Trust

**MOBILE PHONE
POLICY**

Approved by Board of Directors
September 2018

To be reviewed by Board of Directors
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Introduction

This policy outlines the acceptable use of mobile phones at Invictus Education Trust in the context of safeguarding and appropriate behaviour. At Invictus Education Trust we recognise the vulnerability of our students and the potential for exploitation and abuse through the inappropriate use of mobile phones.

Policy Aims

The policy aims to:

- Ensure that there is clear and shared understanding of and adherence to its principles by all stakeholders, visitors, staff and students.
- Raise the awareness of all staff and students of the crucial role of safeguarding in all areas of school life, through various means and ensure increased vigilance.
- Secure an environment in which students (and their families) are protected from the risk of images being recorded and used/stored for inappropriate purposes.

Mobile phones and, in particular, the new generation of smart phones, such as the iPhone, now include many additional functions such as an integrated camera, video recording capability, instant messaging, mobile office applications and mobile access to the internet. These allow immediate access to email, searching for information on the internet and other functions such as access to social networking sites e.g. Facebook, twitter and blogging sites.

For many young people today the ownership of a mobile phone is considered a necessary and vital part of their social life. When used creatively and responsibly the smart phone has great potential to support a student's learning experiences.

In recent years we have had incidents of poor conduct where mobile phone use has been a feature. This has been particularly difficult to address if it is an element in bullying.

Bullying, intimidation and harassment are not new in society; however bullying using a mobile phone represents a new challenge for schools to manage.

Misuse of Phones

Parents and students should be clear that misuse of mobile phones will not be tolerated. The following are examples of misuse but are not exclusive. 'Misuse' will be at the discretion of the Headteacher:

- The deliberate engineering of situations where people's reactions are filmed or photographed in order to humiliate, embarrass and intimidate by publishing to a wider audience such as on Facebook or YouTube
- Bullying by text, image and email messaging
- The use of a mobile phone for 'sexting' (the deliberate taking and sending of provocative images or text messages)

- Students posting material on social network sites with no thought to the risks to their personal reputation and sometimes with the deliberate intention of causing harm to others
- Making disrespectful comments, misrepresenting events or making defamatory remarks about teachers or other students
- General disruption to learning caused by students accessing phones in lessons
- Students phoning parents immediately following an incident so that the ability of staff to deal with an incident is compromised
- Publishing photographs of vulnerable students, who may be on a child protection plan, where this may put them at additional risk.

Dealing with Breaches

Misuse of the mobile phone will be dealt with using the same principles set out in the School's Behaviour policy, with the response being proportionate to the severity of the misuse.

Students are aware that serious misuse may lead to the confiscation of their mobile phone, communication with parents and the imposition of other sanctions up to and including exclusion from school. If the offence is serious it will be reported to the Police.

The correct procedure to follow where a mobile phone has been confiscated and is not returned to the student at the end of the school day. This will ensure that the confiscation is correctly recorded and that the phone is kept securely in the school safe.

Where it is deemed necessary to examine the contents of a mobile phone this will be done by a designated member of staff.

The action will be properly recorded in case it later becomes evidence of criminal activity. The record will include the time, who was present and what is found.

Rules for the Acceptable Use of a mobile phone in school by students

Students are allowed to bring mobile phones into school at Parents discretion and the understanding that the safe keeping of the phone remains the responsibility of the student and parent whilst on school premises. School will only be responsible for the phone if it is confiscated from the student due to unacceptable use and placed in the school safe. If students do bring their phone into school, it is on the understanding that they agree with the following limitations on its use, namely:

- Mobile phones must be switched off in all classes, corridors and other areas during teaching time. It is not acceptable for phones merely to be put on silent or pager mode.
- The phone must be kept out of sight during lessons.
- Mobile phones must be switched off at all times during the school day, including break and lunchtimes, and remain off whilst students are on the school premises. It is not acceptable for phones merely to be put on silent or pager mode.

- No student may take a mobile phone into a room or other area where examinations are being held.
- The security of phone will remain the student's responsibility in all lessons including PE/gym lessons
- If asked to do so, content on the phone (e.g. messages, emails, pictures, videos, sound files) will be shown to a teacher

Unacceptable use

The school will consider any of the following to be unacceptable use of the mobile phone and a serious breach of the School's Behaviour Policy resulting in sanctions being taken:

- Photographing or filming staff or other students without their knowledge or permission
- Photographing or filming in toilets, changing rooms and similar areas
- Bullying, harassing or intimidating staff or students by the use of text, email or multimedia messaging, sending inappropriate messages or posts to social networking or blogging sites
- Refusing to switch a phone off or handing over the phone at the request of a member of staff
- Using the mobile phone outside school hours to intimidate or upset staff and students will be considered a breach of these guidelines in the same way as unacceptable use which takes place in school time
- Using a mobile phone outside school hours in such a way that it undermines the stability of the school and compromises its ability to fulfil the stated aim of providing 'a clear moral and ethical lead'.

Sanctions

Students and parents are notified that appropriate action will be taken against those who are in breach of the acceptable use guidelines, following the schools behaviour policy.

In addition:

- Students and their parents should be very clear that the school is within its rights to confiscate the phone where the guidelines have been breached.

Using the mobile phone outside school hours to intimidate or upset staff and students or undermine the stability of the school in any way will be considered a breach of these guidelines in the same way as unacceptable use which takes place in school time.

- If a phone is confiscated, school will make it clear for how long this will be and the procedure to be followed for its return.
 - 1st Day confiscated – the phone will be returned to student at the end of the school day

- 2nd Day confiscated – the phone will be returned to the student at the end of the school day with the staff authorisation.
- 3rd Day confiscated – the phone will only be returned to the student with parents coming to school and signing for the phone.
- Students should be aware that the police will be informed if there is a serious misuse of the mobile phone where criminal activity is suspected
- If a student commits an act which causes serious harassment, alarm or distress to another student or member of staff the ultimate sanction may be permanent exclusion. School will consider the impact on the victim of the act in deciding the sanction.

Confiscation Procedure

If a mobile phone is confiscated then:

- At the discretion of the teacher the mobile phone will be returned at the end of the school day.
- Or the student will be informed that the phone can be collected at the end of school day from the School Office or Headteacher
- The confiscation will be recorded in the school behaviour log for monitoring purposes
- School will ensure that confiscated equipment is stored in such a way that it is returned to the correct person
- In the case of repeated or serious misuse the phone will only be returned to a parent/carer who will be required to visit the school by appointment to collect the phone. This may be at the end of a week, a half term or longer. At the discretion of the Headteacher the phone may be returned to the student at the end of the confiscation period.
- Where a student persistently breaches the expectations, following a clear warning, the Headteacher may impose an outright ban from bringing a mobile phone to school. This may be a fixed period or permanent ban.

Where the phone has been used for an unacceptable purpose

- The Headteacher or a designated staff member will have the right to view files stored in confiscated equipment and if necessary seek the cooperation of parents in deleting any files which are in clear breach of these guidelines unless they are being preserved as evidence.
- If required evidence of the offence or suspected offence will be preserved, preferably by confiscation of the device and keeping it secure or by taking photographs of the screen
- School will consider whether an incident should be reported to the safeguarding board.

- The designated staff member should monitor repeat offences to see if there is any pattern in the perpetrator or the victim which needs further investigation.

Appendix 1

Safeguarding concerns which may be raised by mobile phone use in school

Looked after students

There may be a safeguarding concern if a LAC, who has limited contact, or supervised-only contact with a parent, suddenly acquires a mobile phone as this could have been provided by the parent to maintain contact. This should be discussed with the designated teacher for LAC in school.

Young carers

Some young carers only feel able to attend school because their mobile phone enables easy access with the person they care for and may react strongly to a ban on phones or restrictions on their use. This will need to be treated sensitively by the school.

Child sexual exploitation (CSE)

A feature of some of the recent cases where teenage girls have been groomed for sex has been giving them expensive phones as a gift. The unexpected acquisition of an expensive mobile phone by girls who are unlikely to be able to afford one themselves should trigger a safeguarding concern.

Mobile phones – Visitors (including parents, professionals, contractors)

- Visitors may bring mobile phones on to the school site but, when visiting the main school, are asked to switch them off and place them out-of-sight until they leave the building and have exited the school gate. This is done as part of the meet-and-greet process in a way that makes clear our safeguarding priorities
- Agency supply staff will be asked to store their phones out of site whilst on school premises.
- Visitors waiting briefly in reception – e.g. to collect a child – may keep phones to hand but they must be stored out of sight and not used
- Visitors attending courses in the conference rooms may use their phones once inside those rooms. On leaving, phones must be switched off and kept out-of-sight until outside of the school gate
- Visitors found to be using their phones in contravention of this guidance will initially be reminded of the policy and ultimately asked to leave
- Where possible, all visitors are made aware of the mobile phone policy in advance either through written or verbal communication (e.g. for parents this may be in ‘New Starter’ documentation, school newsletters, letters inviting parents to annual review meetings, mailings, emails, etc.)
- If contractors are required to have their mobile phone to hand in order to convey live information to their line manager or head office they will seek prior permission to do so in advance and will be accompanied around the site
- The use of personal mobiles to take photographs of the site (internal or external e.g. corridors, classrooms, central areas, swimming pool, etc.) of children or of staff is strictly prohibited unless in consultation and prior agreement with Headteacher

Roles and responsibilities

It is the responsibility of all staff members to exercise vigilance at all times and to raise concerns as soon as possible, either directly with the person who is contravening expectations or by reporting the incident to a senior leader as soon as possible after the event.

Senior leaders will investigate the detail surrounding reported incidents and take action accordingly. If a staff member is found to have contravened policy expectations the matter will be dealt with under the Trust’s Disciplinary Policy.

Review of Policy

This policy is reviewed every three years by Invictus Education Trust Board of Directors. We will monitor the application and outcomes of this policy to ensure it is working effectively.