

Mobile Phone

Policy Statement



Consultation:

- Principal
- Deputy Principal
- Head of Pastoral Care
- Staff Consultation
- Pupil Consultation
- Board of Governors

Summary:

Policy

M. Houston
Principal

Additional Notes

Policy Number: 2019

History:

- Created March 2019
- Amended October 2019

Ratified by the Board of
Governors on:
23 October 2019

Introduction

Ulidia Integrated College recognises that the use of mobile phones and smart devices (tablets, smart watches etc.) has become a major part of our culture and the College recognises the advantages of their usage. However, the misuse of mobile phones and smart devices in school can pose safeguarding and child protection risks to children and cause unnecessary distraction and disruption to learning.

We discourage pupils from bringing mobile phones and smart devices to the College, but we understand parents may wish for their children to have a phone for their safety whilst travelling to and from the College. As a school, we strongly encourage our staff and students to talk to each other. We encourage young people to develop friendship groups at break and lunchtime, as opposed to using their mobile phones.

Rationale

The purpose of this document is to provide a set of procedures which will ensure both pupils and staff understand the appropriate ways in which mobile phones and smart devices may be used in the College, and will form part of the College's e-Safety Policies.

Policy Scope

This policy applies to all individuals who have access to personal mobile phones and smart devices on site. This includes staff, volunteers, governors, children, young people, parents, carers, visitors and contractors. This list is not exhaustive nor exclusive. This policy should also be read in relation to the following documentation:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Guidance on the Filming and Recording of School Events

Staff Use of Mobile Phones

It is important in Ulidia Integrated College that all staff:

- have a clear understanding of what constitutes misuse of mobile phones and smart devices
- know how to minimise risk to young people and themselves
- avoid putting themselves into compromising situations which could be misinterpreted and lead to possible allegations
- understand the need for professional boundaries and clear guidance regarding acceptable use
- are responsible for self-moderation of their own behaviours
- are aware of the importance of reporting concerns promptly

It is fully recognised that imposing rigid regulations on the actions of others can be counterproductive. An agreement of trust is therefore promoted regarding the

carrying and use of mobile phones and smart devices within the setting, which is agreed to by all users.

Staff Personal Mobile Phones and Smart Devices

In order to ensure the protection of both pupils and staff on the College site:

- Staff are not permitted to make/receive calls/texts during contact time with children
- Staff should have their phones on silent or switched off and out of sight (e.g. in a drawer, bag or pocket) during class time
- Mobile phones and smart devices should not be used in a space where children are present (eg. classroom, playground)
- Use of phones (inc. receiving/sending texts and emails, use of search engines) should be limited to non-contact time when no children are present e.g. in office areas, staff room, empty classrooms
- It is also advised that staff security protect access to functions of their phone or smart device using secure password functions
- Should there be exceptional circumstances (e.g. acutely sick relative), then staff should make the Deputy Principal or appropriate line manager aware of this and arrangements will be made in case of having to receive an emergency call
- Staff are not, at any time, permitted to use recording equipment on their mobile phones or smart devices, for example: to take recordings of children, or share images
- Legitimate recordings and photographs should be captured using school equipment such as cameras and iPads
- Staff should report any usage of mobile devices that causes them concern to their line manager, Safeguarding and Child Protection staff or Principal

Mobile phones and smart devices for Work Related Purposes

We recognise that mobile phones and smart devices provide a useful means of communication on offsite activities. However, staff should ensure that:

- Mobile and smart device use on these occasions is appropriate and professional. This will never include taking photographs of children on their personal device or communicating with a pupil in any way.
- Mobile phones and smart devices should not be used to make contact with parents during school trips – all relevant communications should be made via the school office
- Personal mobile numbers are never shared with pupils or parents
- In instances where it is essential for pupils or parents to make contact by phone with a member of staff, a school mobile phone must be used

Use of Mobile phones and Smart Devices by Visitors

Volunteers, Visitors, Governors and Contractors

All volunteers, visitors, governors and contractors are expected to follow our mobile phone policy as it relates to staff whilst on the premises. On arrival, such visitors will be informed of our expectations around the use of mobile phones and devices.

Parents

Parents are requested not to use their mobile phones and smart devices while in school. Phones should be on silent and out of sight.

Please refer to 'Guidance on the Filming and Recording of School Events' before using your mobile phone to capture images during school events.

Pupil Use of Mobile Phones

The use of mobile phones and smart devices in the classroom is not acceptable as they cause a distraction to learning. Pupils will only be permitted to use their phones in lessons for educational purposes and under direct supervision of the teacher.

These restrictions are in place at all times while students are in the grounds of the school building, this includes when students arrive and leave at the end of the day. Phones and devices should be **fully switched off** and out of sight before students enter the green perimeter fence of the school grounds and not accessed again until they have crossed outside the green perimeter fence when leaving the College.

A pupil bringing a phone to school is responsible for its care and usage **at all times**. It is, in the end, a choice to bring mobile phone to school and as such, the school cannot accept any responsibility for damage or loss of any device. We advise appropriate insurance for any mobile device brought on site, as the school **will not** cover any loss or damage.

All pupils at Ulidia Integrated College are expected to adhere to the following rules:

If a student is concerned regarding any issue in school, they **MUST** report to their Form Tutor or Year Head in the first instance. Under no circumstances should a student telephone/contact or message in any way their parent or carer on a personal device without first speaking to member of staff. Breach of this regulation may result in removal of the privilege of carrying a mobile phone or smart device during school hours.

Mobiles phones and smart devices must be turned off and kept out of sight. Pupils are asked to ensure that if they bring them, phones are kept zipped away securely in the inside pocket of their blazer.

The use of personal mobile phones/devices to play music, use the internet, take photographs or video images is prohibited as it may breach the College E-Safety Policy. An exception to this is the 6th Form Study area where pupils are permitted to listen to music while they study.

- Students are allowed to use their phone to contact home relating to safety/transport or for personal reasons after a drama, music or sporting activity. In this instance, staff should allow students to use their phone on the school site where appropriate.
- If a student is unwell and wishes to go home, **they must** report to their Form Tutor or Head of Year in the first instance. Under no circumstances should a student telephone his/her parent/carer to collect them from College without speaking to a member of staff first. Similarly, **parents/carers should not telephone or message their child** and arrange to collect them without informing a relevant member of staff or reception.

Sanctions

- If a student is using a mobile phone, a member of staff will confiscate the phone and place it in the main office for collection by the pupil at the end of the day. This will be referred to their Head of Year and an appropriate sanction will be put in place. On the first occasion, the mobile phone will be returned at the end of the school day and a message will be sent home to inform the parents or carers.
- Confiscated phones must be taken to reception where the phone will be secured in the school safe. School will not take any responsibility or accept any liability for the phone during this time.
- If a pupil persistently uses their phone ie. the phone is confiscated more than once in the school year, parents/carers will be asked to collect the phone from the main office at their convenience. Alternatively, the phone or device will not be released to the pupil until the end of the week in which the phone or device was confiscated.
- If a student refuses to hand over the phone, then this will be viewed as defiance and appropriate sanctions will be put in place.
- Pupils who contact parents via mobile phone or device without permission will receive a sanction for improper use of mobile phones, regardless of the reason. In cases where an incident has occurred, the ability of staff to deal with the incident is compromised. Parents/carers who arrive to school without an appointment will be asked to make one with a relevant member of staff. It must be understood that demands to speak to a member of staff immediately will not be met, unless the concern is of an immediate safeguarding or child protection concern where a child's safety is at risk **and** outside agencies, such as the PSNI or Social Services must be involved.
- The use of mobile phones and smart devices to store or transmit violent, degrading acts, racist or pornographic images, sexting or personal sexual imagery is strictly prohibited. The production or sharing of such images is a criminal offence. Therefore, the College will inform the police and the College Safeguarding & Child Protection staff.

Such behaviour may result in a fixed term exclusion or permanent exclusion.

Mobile Phone Use and Exams

□ The use of mobile phones and smart devices is strictly prohibited in all public exams. Students must follow the JCQ guidelines. Severe penalties are issued by exam boards if rules on mobile phones and smart devices in exams are breached

