Mulberry
Academy Shoreditch

Mobile Phone Policy

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Version	Reviewed	Changes since last version
1		New Policy

1. Introduction and aims

At Mulberry Academy Shoreditch, our policy aims to:

- Ensure our environment is mobile phone-free by default
- Ensure the safe, responsible and lawful use of mobile phones, where applicable
- Provide clear guidelines for the use of mobile phones for pupils, staff, parents/carers, visitors and volunteers
- Support the school's other policies, especially those related to child protection and behavior
- This policy also aims to address some of the challenges posed by mobile phones in school, such as:
- Risks to child protection
- Data protection issues
- Risk of theft, loss or damage
- Appropriate use of technology for learning purposes

Note: throughout this policy, 'mobile phones' refers to mobile phones and similar devices.

2. Relevant guidance

This policy meets the requirements of section 36 of the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act 2026, and the Department for Education (DfE)'s mobile phone guidance and behaviour guidance. Further guidance that should be considered alongside this policy includes Keeping Children Safe in Education, which sets out the expectation that all schools should be mobile phone-free environments by default.

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 Staff

All staff (including teachers, support staff and supply staff) are required to actively enforce this policy and challenge any breach of mobile phone restrictions immediately and consistently.

Volunteers, or anyone else otherwise engaged by the school, must alert a member of staff if they witness, or are aware of, a breach of this policy.

Josh Mickelburgh and Matiur Rahman are responsible for monitoring the policy and reviewing it every year, and holding staff and pupils accountable for its implementation.

Staff will address any questions or concerns from parents/carers quickly, and clearly communicate the reasons for prohibiting the use of mobile phones.

3.2 Governors

Our governing board monitors policy implementation, reviewing termly reports pulled from our live tracking system and CPOMS to assess impact on behaviour, focus, and school culture.

4. Use of mobile phones by staff

The DfE's mobile phone guidance says that staff should not use their own mobile phone for personal reasons in front of pupils throughout the school day. All schools should be mobile phone-free environments by default: anything other than this should be by exception only.

4.1 Personal mobile phones

Staff (including volunteers, contractors and anyone else otherwise engaged by the school) are not permitted to use their personal mobile phone during the school day, while students are present / during contact time. Use of personal mobile phones must be restricted to non-contact time, and to areas of the school where pupils are not present (such as the staffroom).

There may be circumstances in which it's appropriate for a member of staff to have use of their phone during contact time, for personal reasons. For instance (this list is non-exhaustive):

- For emergency contact by their child, or their child's school
- In the case of acutely ill dependents or family members

The headteacher will decide on a case-by-basis whether to allow for special arrangements.

If special arrangements are not deemed necessary, school staff can use the school office number (020 7920 7900) as a point of emergency contact.

4.2 Data protection

Staff must not use their personal mobile phones to process personal data, or any other confidential school information, including entering such data into generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools such as chatbots (e.g. ChatGPT and Google Gemini).

Further detailed guidance can be found in the school's Data Protection Policy and our staff ICT Acceptable Use Agreement.

4.3 Safeguarding

Staff must not give their personal contact details to parents/carers or pupils, including by connecting through social media and messaging apps.

Staff must avoid publicising their contact details on any social media platform or website, to avoid unwanted contact by parents/carers or pupils.

Staff must not use their personal mobile phones to take photographs or recordings of pupils, their work, or anything else that could identify a pupil. If it's necessary to take photos or recordings as part of a lesson / school trip / activity, this must be done using school equipment.

Please refer to our Online Safety Policy and ICT Acceptable Use Policy for further clarity on appropriate digital staff-pupil boundaries

4.4 Using personal mobiles for work purposes

In some circumstances, it may be appropriate for staff to use personal mobile phones or a similar device during the school day in front of pupils for work. Such circumstances may include, but are not limited to:

- Issuing homework, rewards or sanctions
- Use of multi-factor authentication
- Emergency evacuations
- Supervising off-site trips
- Supervising residential visits

Further guidance on this can be found in our Educational Visit Policy.

In these circumstances, staff will:

- Use their mobile phones in an appropriate and professional manner, in line with our staff code of conduct
- Not use their phones to take photographs or recordings of pupils, their work, or anything else that could identify a pupil
- Refrain from using their phones to contact parents/carers. If necessary, contact must be made via the school office

4.5 Work phones

Some members of staff are provided with a mobile phone by the school for work purposes.

Only authorised staff are permitted to use school phones, and access to the phone must not be provided to anyone without authorisation.

Staff must:

- Only use school phone functions for work purposes, including making/receiving calls, sending/receiving emails or other communications, or using the internet
- Make sure that all communication and conduct linked to the device is appropriate and professional at all times, in line with our staff code of conduct

4.6 Sanctions

Staff that fail to adhere to this policy may face disciplinary action.

See the school's staff disciplinary policy for more information.

5. Use of mobile phones by students

The DfE's mobile phone guidance says that the use of mobile phones should be prohibited throughout the school day.

Pupils must not use their mobile phones during the school day, including during lessons, in the time between lessons, at breaktimes and at lunchtimes, unless explicitly authorised by a member of staff (for example, for a specific medical reason). We operate a strict "Not Seen, Not Heard" model. If a phone is visible or audible anywhere on school grounds, it will be confiscated immediately by staff and taken down to Main Reception. Reception logs the infraction simultaneously on our live tracker and CPOMS to ensure accurate records.

Pupils will be taught the risks that are associated with the use of mobile phones, both in school and more broadly, to make sure they understand the decision to prohibit the use of mobile phones throughout the school day. These risks can include a loss of focus in lessons, classroom disruption and an increase in bullying. Pupils will be encouraged to see a mobile-phone free environment as desirable and valuable.

5.1 Use of smartwatches by pupils

The DfE's statutory mobile phones guidance includes in the term 'mobile phones' all devices with communications and smart technology that the school chooses to include in its policy.

Smartwatches are wristwatches with smart technology in them. They can be used to tell the time, send and receive text and voice messages, make calls and listen to music. Some smartwatches have wellness and health-related features.

Smartwatches with standalone cellular connectivity, messaging functionality, or internet capability are subject to the exact same restrictions as mobile phones. They must remain switched off and out of sight throughout the entire school day. If a student uses a smartwatch to breach policy rules, the device will be confiscated under our standard 3-stage framework.

5.2 Exceptions for special circumstances and for sixth-form pupils

Some pupils will be permitted to possess, or use, a mobile phone/smart device in school

For instance:

- Young carers who need to be contactable
- Pupils with diabetes who use their phones to monitor their blood glucose levels
- Sixth-form pupils

The school may permit pupils to use a mobile phone in school, due to exceptional circumstances or if they are in the school's sixth form.

In the case of permission due to exceptional circumstances, permission will only be granted where there is a documented safeguarding or medical necessity. To request such permission, pupils or parents/carers should contact Josh Mickelburgh or Matiur Rahman.

Any pupils who are given permission must then adhere to the school's code of conduct / acceptable use agreement for mobile phone use.

Sixth-form pupils are allowed access to their mobile phones during the school day, to reflect their increased independence and responsibility, but must not compromise our policy on the use of mobile phones for other pupils.

Therefore, they are only permitted to use their mobile phones or smart devices out of sight of younger pupils, and in designated Sixht Form areas. Misuse of mobile phones or other devices by pupils in the sixth form will lead to sanctions according to our behaviour policy.

During independent study and free-time, strictly inside designated Sixth Form areas only. They must remain out of sight when moving through the main school or when younger pupils are present.

5.3 Sanctions

Our 3-Stage Confiscation System

- **Stage 1 (First Incident):** The phone is confiscated and stored at reception. The student collects the device independently from reception at the end of the day (**3:30 PM**). A warning is logged on the tracker and CPOMS.

- **Stage 2 (2 or More Incidents):** If the weekly tracker review shows a student having two or more infractions, the phone must be handed in every day for a week. The Pastoral Lead or Head of Year personally ensures the device is placed into a secure pouch. The student must go to reception at 3:30 PM to have it unlocked.

- **Stage 3 (3 or More Incidents / Evasion):** If a student continues to repeat or tries to evade the system (such as arriving late), the response is escalated immediately. Reception checks late arrivals against the watchlist and alerts WA to secure the device. This triggers a mandatory face-to-face meeting with parents, the Head of Year, and SLT, alongside time in the **Reflection Room (RR).**

In each case, the sanction given must be reasonable and proportionate. The school will also consider whether:

- There are any relevant special circumstances (for example, age, religious requirements, special educational needs (SEN), disability)
- The pupil's behaviour may indicate they may be suffering, or at risk of, harm. If this is suspected, staff will follow the appropriate procedure set out in Keeping Children Safe in Education. This will include speaking with the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) or deputy, who will consider whether pastoral support, an early intervention, or a referral to children's social care is appropriate

Certain types of conduct, bullying or harassment can be classified as criminal conduct. The school takes such conduct extremely seriously and will involve the police or other agencies as appropriate.

Such conduct includes, but is not limited to:

- Making of or sharing nudes and semi-nudes including images that are digitally altered or wholly generated using AI (such as 'deepfakes' or 'deep nudes')
- Upskirting
- Threats of violence or assault
- Abusive calls, emails, social media posts or texts directed at someone on the basis of someone's ethnicity, religious beliefs or sexual orientation

6. Use of mobile phones by parents/carers, volunteers and visitors

Parents and carers are encouraged to reinforce and discuss this policy at home as appropriate, including the risks associated with mobile phone use and the benefits of a mobile phone-free environment.

Parents/carers, visitors and volunteers (including governors and contractors) must adhere to this policy as it relates to staff if they are on the school site during the school day.

This means:

- Not taking pictures or recordings of pupils, unless it's at a public event (such as a school fair), or of their own child
- Using any photographs or recordings for personal use only, and not posting on social media without consent
- Not using phones in lessons, when working with pupils or while children are present
- Parents/carers, visitors and volunteers will be informed of the rules for mobile phone use when they sign in at reception or attend a public event at school.

Visitors are briefed on our phone-free policy upon arrival and are required to review the information slip provided at sign-in.

Parents/carers or volunteers supervising school trips or residential visits must not:

- Use their phone to make contact with other parents/carers
- Take photos or recordings of pupils, their work, or anything else that could identify a pupil

Parents/carers or volunteers supervising trips are also responsible for enforcing the school's policy for pupils using their phones, but must refer any proposed sanctions to a member of staff, as they do not have the power to search or confiscate devices.

Parents/carers must use the school office as the first point of contact if they need to get in touch with their child during the school day. They must not try to contact their child on their personal mobile during the school day.

7. Loss, theft or damage

Pupils must secure their mobile phones as much as possible, including using passwords or pin codes to protect access to the phone's functions. Staff must also secure their personal phones, as well as any work phone provided to them. Failure by staff to do so could result in data breaches.

The school accepts no responsibility for mobile phones that are lost, damaged or stolen on school premises or transport, during school visits or trips, or while pupils are travelling to or from school.

Confiscated phones will be stored in the school office in a locked cabinet.

Lost phones should be returned to the Main Reception desk. The school will then attempt to contact the owner.

8. Monitoring and review

The school is committed to making sure that this policy has a positive impact on pupils' education, behavior and welfare. When reviewing the policy, the school will take into account:

- Feedback from parents/carers and pupils
- Feedback from staff
- Records of behaviour and safeguarding incidents
- Relevant advice from the DfE, the local authority and any other relevant organizations

If there are any concerns regarding this policy, these should be brought to the attention of Josh Mickelburgh and Matiur Rahman in a timely manner.