

**Ysgol Uwchradd Y Frenhines Elisabeth
Queen Elizabeth High School**



Moving Forward Together

QEHS Mobile Phone Policy

Full Governing Body

Date established by Governing Body: 29th March 2023

Responsible Person – Mrs Lisa Jones

Designated role – Deputy Headteacher

Chair of Governors signature – *Jeremy Griffith*

Review Date: *20/06/2024*

Next review – Summer Term 2027

QEHS Mobile Phone policy



At Queen Elizabeth High School, we recognize the usefulness of mobile phones in specific situations. We realize the importance of parents being able to keep in touch with their children via mobile phone outside of school hours. However, both locally and nationally, there is growing evidence of mobile phone misuse, including online bullying, inappropriate use of images and other forms of harassment. We also realize that the fact that pupils spend so much of their time in front of a screen is a growing concern because of the negative impact on learning and wellbeing. Mobile phones can affect their education by distracting learners during the school day, prevent them from strengthening real life friendships. By reducing use of phones we aim to remove the barriers so pupils can focus fully in their lessons and spend quality time socializing together in their free time. In light of this and after a full consultation with all stakeholders it is our intention to implement a mobile phone ban during school hours.

Curriculum and Prevention

The PSE and Health and Well-Being programme across the school seeks to address the potential drawbacks of social media use. Schemes of work provide opportunities for pupils to learn about age appropriate applications and the potential risks associated with social media usage. Alongside the PSE provision the school is supported by the police liaison programme; School Beat. Additionally, assemblies are used to convey message concerning safe internet use.

Learners in Years 7 - 11 are NOT allowed to:

- Use their mobile device without permission at any time during the school day;
 - Mobile phones must be switched off 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
 - The phone must be kept out of sight during lessons.
 - No student may take a mobile phone into a room or other area where examinations are being held.
 - The security of the phone will remain the student's responsibility in all lessons including PE/gym lessons.
- Use headphones or have anything connected via Bluetooth during the school day.

Year 12 and 13 students will be able to access their phones in the 6th form area only. Other than this area, the same rules apply.

Breaches of Rules

Any form of misuse of a mobile phone will be dealt with as a serious breach of the student commitment and will be dealt with in line with the Behaviour Policy. 'Misuse' will be at the discretion of the Headteacher:

- *sending inappropriate messages*
- *sending inappropriate messages or posts to social networking or blogging sites*
- *taking photographs and/or videos in school*
- *photographing or filming staff or other students without their knowledge or permission*
- *photographing or filming in toilets, changing rooms and similar areas*

- *bullying, harassing, humiliating or intimidating staff or students by the use of text, email or multimedia messaging*
- *refusing to switch a phone off or hand 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 our aim of providing a clear moral and ethical lead*
- *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)*
- *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*
- *students phoning parents immediately following an incident so that the ability of staff to deal with an incident is compromised or 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 not only to the confiscation of their mobile phone, but may include the student being internally or externally excluded from school. If the offence is serious, it will be reported to the Police.

If the mobile phone is found to be switched on during the day, the phone will be confiscated and only be returned to a parent/carer in person. Where it is deemed necessary to examine the contents of a mobile phone this will be done by a member of staff. N.B. Parental permission is not required for this. 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 was found. This includes messages, emails, pictures, videos, sound files. Where a mobile phone is confiscated, it will be stored in the safe in the main office and it will be recorded and kept securely.

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 school's Behaviour for learning 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.
- if a phone is confiscated, it will require a parent/carer to collect the phone from school.
- 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 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:

- it will be held until a parent/carer collects the phone in person from the school.
- 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.
- 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 local 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.

FAQs:

I need to contact my child during the school day. How can I do that?

We understand that at times a parent may want to contact their child during the school day. In such a situation, we ask parents to follow our current policy of calling the school office (01267 245300) and a message will be delivered to your child immediately. This can include a message for them to turn on their mobile phone to receive a message / call.

My child needs to contact me (parent)) during the school day. How can they do that?

Any learner who needs to contact home should report to their year office. We have each parents/carers phone number on our system and the pupil can use the phone facilities there.

What if a learner uses their phone to check their timetable or to access Google Classroom?

All KS3 and KS4 learners are given a copy of their timetable at the start of the year, and can keep these in their pencil cases. Staff also have access to pupil timetable so help is at hand if needed. All pupils have access to chrome books in school for working online, and all homework tasks are set using Google Classroom, which they can also access from home.

What about ALN learners who use their phone to take pictures of notes from the whiteboard or to monitor any medical conditions. Are they allowed to use their phones?

Some learners (See Appendix 3) will be allowed to use their phones for educational or medical purposes (e.g. for apps that monitor diabetes, translation apps etc.). However, this usage has to be agreed with the school either as part of their health care plan or ALN review. Parents/carers will be informed immediately of any improper use e.g. playing games or accessing social media while pretending to use their phones for educational or medical reasons.

My child is not going to cope without their device.

Phone addiction is a growing concern for many of us. There will be times when young people and adults have to go without their mobile phone for various reasons e.g. mobile phones are not allowed in any exam room. We feel it is better to educate and support learners and young people now, before it becomes a more serious problem.

Where can I find Support and advice regarding my child's use of social media?

The SWGfL (South Wales Grid For Learning) has some great advice and resources to support parents. Follow the links below for advice for parents:

<https://swgfl.org.uk/resources/online-safety-guidance-for-parents/>

[Parents and Carers - UK Safer Internet Centre](#)

[Inclusive Digital Safety advice for Parents and Carers | Internet Matters](#)

[Topic: Online Safety and Social Media | SWGfL](#)

[Information, Advice and Support to Keep Children Safe Online \(internetmatters.org\)](#)

[Social Media Checklists | SWGfL](#)

[Teens 14+ online safety advice and expert tips | Internet Matters](#)

[Help & advice 11-18 year olds | Childnet](#)

[Resources for 11-19s - UK Safer Internet Centre](#)

[Report Harmful Content](#)

[Gaming | SWGfL](#)

You can also access support through HWB:

<https://hwb.gov.wales/keeping-safe-online>

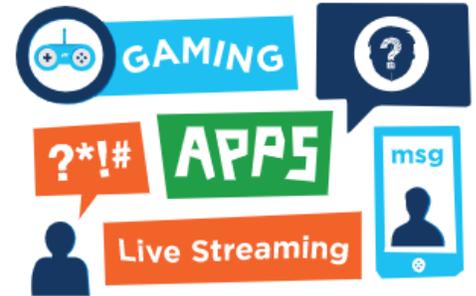
Parental support with this is vitally important and greatly appreciated.

There are many studies into the negative effects of screen time on young people's mental health, wellbeing and brain development and we feel it is our duty to take these important steps to try to support the wellbeing and learning of all pupils.

Appendix 1

Guidance on Confiscation DfE guide on screening and searching - What the law allows (N.B. this guidance is currently under review)

"Schools' general power to discipline, as set out in Section 91 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006,



enables a member of staff to confiscate, retain or dispose of a student's property as a disciplinary penalty, where reasonable to do so."

See below for full document

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/searching-screening-and-confiscation>

Appendix 2 - Legal context

Common Offences Related to the Misuse of Mobile Telephones

The key to both offences below is that the message/picture/video is actually **SENT**. (If it is only stored on a device the offence is not complete.)

1. Malicious Communications Act 1988

It is an offence to send an indecent, grossly offensive or threatening letter, electronic communication or other article to another person with the intention that it should cause them distress or anxiety

2. Communications Act 2003

Section 127 covers all forms of public communications 127(1) a person is guilty of an offence if they-

- "send by means of a public electronic communications network a message or other matter that is grossly offensive or of an indecent, obscene or menacing character; or
- (b) causes any such message or matter to be so sent.

127(2) A person is guilty of an offence if, for the purpose of causing annoyance, inconvenience or needless anxiety to another, they –

- send by means of a public electronic communications network, a message that they know to be false,
- causes such a message to be sent; or
- persistently makes use of a public electronic communications network.

Appendix 3

Police response to an incident in school

Extract from the Home Office guidance on the action police should take if a crime may have occurred in school.

In order to sustain the disciplinary authority of schools, this guidance clarifies the general principles of NCRS as they apply specifically to incidents on school premises. When police have reported to them an incident which took place on school premises, including those witnessed by, or reported directly to, officers working in the school, which they would normally record as a notifiable offence will, in the first instance, invite the victim or the person acting on their behalf to report the matter to the head teacher to be dealt

with under normal school discipline procedures. Such reports should be recorded as an incident only, until or unless:-

(a) they judge it to be a serious incident as defined below; [see full document]

(b) having brought the matter to the attention of the school in line with good practice (see references to guidance papers below), they receive a formal request from the school to create a crime record; or

(c) the child, parent or guardian or the child's representative asks the police to create a crime record.

Appendix 4

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

Looked after students.

There may be a safeguarding concern if a CLA, 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 CLA 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. The same approach is often used to draw children into selling drugs.

Medical Need

Some learners will be allowed to use their phones for educational or medical purposes (e.g. for apps that monitor diabetes, translation apps etc.). However, this usage has to be agreed with the school either as part of their health care plan or ALN review.