

Beech Lodge

Mobile Phones in School Policy Pupils, Visitors and Staff

Author	Lucy Barnes
Last updated	January 2023
Update due	January 2025

Beech Lodge School, Stubbings Lane, Maidenhead SL6 6QL

01628 879384 · info@beechlodeschool.co.uk · www.beechlodeschool.co.uk

Mobile phones in school policy for pupils, visitors and staff

1. Introduction and aims

At Beech Lodge School, we recognise that mobile phones, including smart phones, are an important part of everyday life for our pupils, parents and staff, as well as the wider school community.

Our policy aims to:

- Promote, and set an example for, safe and responsible phone use
- Set clear guidelines for the use of mobile phones for pupils, staff, parents and volunteers
- Support the school's other policies, especially those related to safeguarding

This policy also aims to address some of the challenges posed by mobile phones in school, such as

- Safeguarding risks
- Data protection issues
- Potential for lesson disruption
- Risk of theft, loss or damage
- Appropriate use of technology in the classroom

1.1 Things that have happened in UK schools and why we need to ensure all our pupils and adults are safe.

- Use of mobile devices for up-skirting and obtaining imagery of genitals
- Adults taking pictures of children for theirs and others' sexual gratification
- Pornography and violent content accessed by children's own internet connectivity whilst in school
- Gang culture, knives, extremism, Drill and Grime music accessed by children's own internet connectivity
- Inappropriate and violent games accessed and played including 'Blue Whale' which requests users to undertake a series of tasks; the final one being suicide
- Pornographic and violent interpretations of known children's cartoons etc. accessed inadvertently
- Inappropriate and 'dangerous' material stored on personal devices by family members, then accessed without internet connectivity in school
- Pupils contacting family members/ birth family against parental permission

- Pupils taking pictures and videos of staff, creating memes and using VI to distort images, meaning and publishing online, leading to suspension and disciplinary action
- Using images taken of other pupils for bullying and humiliation on social media
- Sharing of personal data on social media inappropriately

2. Roles and Responsibilities

2.1 Staff

- All staff (including teachers, support staff, and contractors) are responsible for enforcing this policy.
- All staff are being protected by the procedures in this policy.
- 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.
- Volunteers, or anyone else otherwise engaged by the school will be made aware of this policy through the information given at Reception.
- Staff need to use notify the Headteacher if they have identified a breach of this policy
- The Headteacher is responsible for monitoring the policy every two years, reviewing it, and holding staff and pupils accountable for its implementation.

3. Use of mobile phones by staff

3.1 Personal mobile phones

Staff (including volunteers, contractors and anyone else otherwise engaged by the school) are not permitted to use their mobile devices while children are present/during contact time. Staff keeping their phone with them during contact times must ensure their phone is on vibrate only.

Use of personal mobile phones for personal reasons is restricted to non-contact time, and to areas of the school where pupils are not present such as the staff room and offices.

In circumstances where immediate contact is needed, then staff should let family/ their child's school know to call Reception as personal phones will be switched off during lessons.

The Headteacher will decide on a case-by-case basis whether to allow for special arrangements. If special arrangements are not deemed necessary, school staff can use the school office number as a point of emergency contact.

School Established and agreed WhatsApp contact may be required on occasion to notify colleagues of an issue.

3.2 Data Protection

- Staff must not use their personal mobile phones to process personal data, or any other confidential school information.

- Staff can use school iPads/ cameras to take pictures – not personal devices
- Staff can access website programmes that access data on external servers such as Arbor and My Concern through should never download content onto their personal devices.
- Staff must secure their phones as much as possible, including using passwords or pin codes to protect access to the phone's functions. Staff must also secure any work phone provided to them. Failure by staff to do so could result in data breaches.

3.2 Safeguarding

- Staff must not give their personal contact details to parents or pupils, including connecting through social media and messaging apps.
- Staff must not contact children on the child's personal devices, only ever contacting them through their parent/carer should this be required/necessary to do so
- Staff must avoid publicising their contact details on any social media platform or website, to avoid unwanted contact by parents or pupils.
- Staff must not use their mobile phones to take photographs or recordings of pupils, their work, or anything else which 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.
- Our schools' use of classroom apps or programmes that require can be accessed via staff's personal devices can be done outside the classroom/ contact with children. Information/ images/data cannot be downloaded to a personal device.

3.3 Using personal mobiles for work purposes

In some circumstances, it may be appropriate for staff to use personal mobile phones for work. Such circumstances may include, but aren't limited to:

- Emergency evacuation
- Supervising off-site trips

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 which could identify a pupil
- Refrain from using their phones to contact parents. If necessary, contact must be made via the school office.

3.4 Sanctions

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

4. Use of mobile phones by pupils

Pupils are allowed to bring a mobile to school, though they must hand it in upon arrival. This includes:

- Pupils travelling to school by themselves
- Pupils travelling by car by their parents/carers (preferably left with their parent when reaching school)
- Pupils travelling to school via Taxi Transport
- Personal phones/ tablets that are internet enabled and have cameras are not allowed on school trips during the day nor at afternoon clubs (specific personal circumstances will be considered on a risk-assessed basis).

4.1 Sanctions

- Schools are permitted to confiscate phones from pupils under sections 91 and 94 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006)
- School staff have the power to search pupils' phones, as set out in the DfE's guidance on searching, screening and confiscation. The DfE guidance allows schools to search a pupil's phone if we have reason to believe the phone contains pornographic images, or if it is being/has been used to commit an offence or cause personal injury.
- If they are confiscated, parents/carers will be contacted to collect the phone/device
- 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:

- Sexting
- 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

5. Use of mobile phones by parents, volunteers and visitors

Parents, 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 on school grounds or school trips or when working with pupils
- Not posting any images/data about the school on social media without

consent

- Parents, 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.

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

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

Parents or volunteers supervising trips are also responsible for enforcing the school's policy for pupils using their phones, as set out in section 4 above.

Parents 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 his/her personal mobile during the school day.

6. Loss, theft or damage

Pupils bringing phones to school must ensure that phones are appropriately labelled

Pupils must secure their 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 and from school.

Confiscated phones will be stored in the school office in a secure location until collected.

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

7. Monitoring and review

The school is committed to ensuring that this policy has a positive impact of pupils' education, behaviour and welfare. When reviewing the policy, the school will take into account:

- Feedback from parents and pupils
- Feedback from teachers
- Records of behavior and safeguarding incidents
- Relevant advice from the Department for Education, the local authority or other relevant organisations.

Appendix : mobile phone information slip for visitors

Visitors: Use of mobile phones in our school

- Please keep your mobile phone on silent/vibrate while on the school grounds
- Please do not use phones where pupils are present. If you must use your phone, you may go to the Staffroom ➤ Do not take photos or recordings of pupils (including your own child), or staff
- Do not use your phone when working with pupils
- The school accepts no responsibility for phones that are lost, damaged or stolen while you are on the school grounds. A full copy of our mobile phone policy is available from the school office.