



Mobile Phone Policy

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1. 1. Introduction and aims

1.1 Aims

At Marling School we recognise that mobile phones, including smart phones, are an important part of everyday life for our students, 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 students, staff, volunteers, parents and visitors
- Support the school's other policies, Safeguarding, Behaviour and Rewards and Anti bullying.

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

- Risks to student protection
- Data protection issues
- Potential for lesson disruption
- Risk of theft, loss, or damage.

1.2 Rationale

By the age of 12, 97% of children own a mobile phone¹. While mobile phone ownership is very high once a student starts secondary school education, it remains parents' responsibility for deciding whether their child has a phone or not. The majority (63%) of 8-11-year-olds use social media and messaging apps, rising to 93% for children between 12 and 15 years old². By understanding which apps their children are using, parents can make informed choices about their child's mobile phone use and support schools in providing education about online safety.

The National Behaviour Survey (2021-2022) found that 29% of secondary school students (rising to 40% for key stage 4 students) reported mobile phones being used without permission in most of their lessons³. This not only distracts the single student using the phone, but disrupts the lesson for a whole class, and diverts teachers' efforts away from learning. Parents can play an important role in supporting the school in effectively implementing its policy on mobile phones and eliminating this form of distraction for students in lessons.

Mobile phones have already been prohibited or restricted in one in four countries worldwide⁴, including France, The Netherlands and several Australian states and territories. Restrictions on the use of mobile phones is not unique to schools in England.

Screen time can displace positive activities⁵. Socialising, exercise, and good sleep are positive influences on wellbeing. All these can be displaced by screen time. By prohibiting the use of mobile phones during break and lunchtimes at school as well as in lessons, more time for socialising and exercise can be created during the school day. Parents should be encouraged to consider the impact screen time has on their child's sleep and work together with schools to promote student's wellbeing.

One in five children have experienced bullying online. Data from Office of National Statistics (2020) suggests that one in five children (19%) aged 10-15 experienced at least one type of bullying behaviour online, and out of them, around three quarters (72%) said they experienced at least some of it at school or during school time. Around half of children (52%) who experienced online bullying

¹ [Children's Media Use and Attitudes Report 2023 - Ofcom](#)

² [Children's Media Use and Attitudes Report 2023 – Ofcom](#)

³ [Department for Education \(2023\) National Behaviour Survey: Findings from Academic Year 2021/22](#)

⁴ [UNESCO \(2023\) Global education monitoring report, 2023: technology in education: a tool on whose terms?](#)

⁵ [Royal College Paediatrics and Child Health \(2019\) The health impacts of screen time - a guide for clinicians and parents](#)

behaviours said they would not describe them as bullying and around one in four (26%) did not report their experiences⁶.

Three in ten students cite making and maintaining friendships and their mental health as a cause of worry, anxiety or depression⁷. By restricting access to mobile phones, children and young people can spend more time staying active and socialising face to face with their peers, activities which have a positive impact on wellbeing⁸.

2. Roles and responsibilities

2.1 Staff

All staff (including teachers, support staff, and supply staff) are responsible for enforcing this policy.

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.

The Senior Leadership Team (SLT) are responsible for monitoring the policy every 2 years, reviewing it, and holding staff and students accountable for its implementation.

3. Use of mobile phones by students

3.1 Student Use

Years 7 - 11

The school recognises that parents/carers in the community feel the need for their children to have access to a mobile phone for communication home. This helps with safeguarding and child protection especially in the long dark winter months. Marling School supports this approach wholeheartedly. To that end, the school has adopted the following mobile phone best use policy:

- Students are allowed to bring mobile phones to and from school to ensure their personal safety at all times

⁶ [Office for National Statistics \(ONS\) \(2020\) Online bullying in England and Wales: year ending March 2020.](#)

⁷ [Department for Education \(2023\) National Behaviour Survey: Findings from Academic Year 2021/22](#)

⁸ [Royal College Paediatrics and Child Health \(2019\) The health impacts of screen time - a guide for clinicians and parents](#)

- Students must not use a mobile device, smart watch or electronic device including headphones anywhere in school during the school day, except under the specific direction of a member of staff. For the purposes of this policy, the school day begins the moment that the student enters the school site and ends once that the student leaves the school site. Mobile phones will not be permitted to be used at any after school extra-curricular clubs
- If a student brings their phone to the school, then on arrival it should be switched off/on silent and kept out of sight, for example in a bag or locker. It should not be seen or heard (including vibrate) throughout the school day
- The phone can be switched back on upon leaving the school site. Not before and not during any period of social time (break or lunch)
- Any student found using or known to have used their phone during the school day will have the phone confiscated
- Confiscated phones will be kept in either the Main Reception or Sixth Form Reception
- Phones will be returned at the end of the school day via either Main Reception (Years 7-11) or Sixth Form Reception (Sixth Form). Parents will accordingly be informed via Main Reception or Sixth Form Reception. Students will be asked to sign for their phone
- If the student is a repeat offender, the school will request a parent/carer to come in and collect the phone from the school
- Any refusal to hand a phone over to members of staff will result in a follow up sanction in line with the school's Behaviour and Rewards Policy. This would constitute the refusal of a reasonable request by a member of staff.

Sixth Form Students

- Sixth Form students can only use mobile phones before 8.40am and during break and lunchtime inside Downfield Sixth Form Centre, in the Downfield enclosed back garden, or inside East Campus Sixth Form area
- Sixth Formers cannot use mobile phones during any other time or in any other locations while on school site, except under the specific direction of a member of staff
- Phones must be put away before Sixth Formers leave the sixth form buildings
- No phones can be used, or visible, when walking around the school site, including when entering or leaving the school site
- Phones that are visible outside of the above times and locations will be confiscated and kept in Sixth Form Reception or Main Reception until the end of the school day

- Phones will be returned from Sixth Form Reception at the end of the day, they will need to be signed for by the owner of the phone
- Any refusal to hand a phone over to members of staff will result in a follow up sanction in line with the school's Behaviour and Rewards Policy. This would constitute the refusal of a reasonable request by a member of staff
- Repeated breach of the Mobile Phone Policy will result in further sanctions.

3.2 Designated areas:

The Headteacher reserves the right to allow phones in selected areas given individual circumstances.

3.3 Contacting Children and Parents/Carers

Parents wishing to contact their child during the school day should ring the school. We have a well-established and efficient system for getting messages to students and pastoral support if it is needed. Students who need to contact parents in an emergency should speak to Main Reception who will make a phone available.

3.4 Sanctions

If a phone is seen by a member of staff, it will be confiscated by them. Schools are permitted to confiscate phones from students under sections 91 and 94 of the [Education and Inspections Act 2006](#). Once confiscated, this will be placed in either Main Reception or Sixth Form Reception. Students will be allowed to sign for and collect their phones at the end of the day.

If a student has their mobile phone repeatedly confiscated, we will request a parent or carer collects it from Main Reception after school. Further sanctions may be applied according to the school's Behaviour policy.

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, staff have the power to search student's phones, as set out in the [DfE's guidance on searching, screening and confiscation](#). This will always be done by a member of the SLT or pastoral team. 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

- 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.

4. Use of mobile phones by staff

4.1 Personal mobile phones

Staff (including volunteers, contractors and anyone else otherwise involved/employed by the school) are not permitted to make or receive calls, or send texts, while students are present. Use of personal mobile phones must be restricted to non-contact time, and to areas of the school where students are not present (such as departmental offices and the staff room). There may be circumstances in which it is appropriate for a member of staff to have use of their phone during contact time.

For instance:

- 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.

4.2 Safeguarding

Staff must refrain from giving their personal contact details to parents or students, including 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 or students.

Similar details and guidance can be found in the E-Safety Policy and the ICT and Acceptable Use Policy. Staff must not use their mobile phones to take photographs or recordings of students, their work, or anything else which could identify a student. If it is necessary to take photos or recordings as part of a lesson/school trip/activity, this must be done using school equipment.

4.3 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 are not limited to:

- Emergency evacuations
- Supervising off-site trips
- Supervising residential visits

- To use an authenticator app to access a school system.

In these circumstances, staff will:

- Use their mobile phones in an appropriate and professional manner, in line with the CBAT Code of Conduct for All Adults
- Not use their phones to take photographs or recordings of students, their work, or anything else which could identify a student.

4.4 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:

- Ensure that communication or conduct linked to the device is appropriate and professional at all times, in line with the CBAT Code of Conduct for All Adults.

4.5 Sanctions

Staff that fail to adhere to this policy may face disciplinary action. See CBAT Disciplinary Procedures Relating to Misconduct for all Employees and CBAT Disciplinary Rules for all Employees

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 students, unless it is a public event, 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, or when working with students.

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.

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

Parents must use Main Reception 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.

6. Loss, theft or damage

Students bringing phones to school must ensure that phones are stored securely and out of sight when not in use. Students 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 GDPR breaches.

Where a mobile phone is brought into school, it is entirely at the student's and parents' own risk. The school accepts no responsibility for the loss, theft or damage of any phone or electronic device brought into school. (Section 94, Education and Inspections Act 2006 makes provision for when a teacher disciplines a student by confiscating an item, neither the teacher nor the school will be liable for any loss or damage to that item).

Equally, there is no statutory liability on schools for items that go missing in other ways. Confiscated phones will be stored either in Main Reception or Sixth Form Reception in a secure location and must be signed out by the student or parent/carer upon return. Lost phones should be returned to Main 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 on student's education, behaviour and welfare. When reviewing the policy, the school will take into account relevant advice from the Department for Education, the local authority or other relevant organisations. This policy will be reviewed every two years.

Other linked policies:

Behaviour and Rewards

Safeguarding

E-Safety Policy

ICT and Acceptable Use Policy

CBAT Code of Conduct for All Adults

CBAT Disciplinary Procedures Relating to Misconduct for all Employees

CBAT Disciplinary Rules for all Employees