

Students bringing mobile phones and other electronic devices and gadgets to school and using them for various purposes presents, or can potentially present, a wide range of problems, including:

1. Electronic devices can be valuable items and might render a student vulnerable to theft;
2. Electronic devices (and their cost and level of sophistication – or otherwise) can make students objects of envy or disparagement and could have implications with regard to discipline and potential bullying;
3. Even when apparently silent, the use of mobile phones for texting purposes could be potentially undermining of classroom discipline and distracting to the students;
4. Use of newer phones with integrated cameras and other audio/video capturing devices could lead to child protection and data protection issues with regard to inappropriate capture, use and distribution of images.

Hence, as a matter of policy, the school will not allow the possession and/or use of any kind of audio/video players and image capturing devices (**smart phones, MP3 players, voice recorders, iPods, cameras**) as well as portable computers and handheld games consoles of any kind (**iPads, laptops, tablet PCs, PSP, Nintendo 3DS etc.**) on the school premises. Any student found in possession of any of these devices will be liable to commensurate punishment and will be required to hand it over to a member of staff immediately, which will then be returned to a parent or carer only. For a student found using these gadgets during the school day, the most severe sanction of immediate suspension will be applied.

Furthermore, it is the duty of parents to ensure that students do not leave for school in the morning with any of these gadgets.

However, we acknowledge that it is unrealistic to demand that no student may ever bring a mobile phone to school under any circumstances.

Hence, outlined below is our current policy on the possession and use of mobile phones in school by students:

- **Smart phones** should **not** be brought to school. The school advises parents to **actively discourage** students from bringing their smart phones to school on the above grounds.
- It is the parents' duty to ensure that their daughter does not bring any mobile phone into school without obtaining **prior authorisation**. In cases where a student is found to be in possession of an unauthorised mobile phone in school, it will automatically be assumed that it was brought in with the parents' awareness.
- In extremely exceptional and extenuating circumstances, a student may be allowed to bring their mobile phone into school, **specifically a non-smart phone**, e.g. Nokia brick phone, for a specific reason and purpose.
- In such cases, the parent will be required to complete the link below, highlighting the following points:
 - i) The reason why the student needs to bring in her **non-smart phone**.
 - ii) The reason why the parent feels it cannot be avoided or that an alternative means of communication is not possible. (Please note that students are allowed to use school phones whilst in school and at home time.)
 - iii) The specific days on which the student should be allowed to bring her phone.
 - iv) An undertaking that the parent/student will be solely responsible for any situations that may possibly arise by the student bringing the phone to school.

(Please note that the risk of theft is not the only problem that parents need to worry about. A small number of potential problems, including legal ones, have been highlighted above.)

<https://forms.office.com/e/scC1jDJ6Ls>

- After reviewing the reason's stated, and the Headteacher is convinced that there is a genuine need for a student to bring in her non-smart phone, a permission will be granted to the student.
- If permission is granted, the student will be required to **switch off** (not put on silent) the phone **before** entering the school doors and may switch it back on **only after leaving the school doors**.
- Upon arrival, students must hand in their non- smart phones to the school office and collect them at the end of the school day.
- The school, under no circumstances whatsoever, will accept any liability for students' non-smart phones.
- If a student is found by a member of staff to have had her authorised non-smart phone on her, even if it is not being used, during school hours, teachers or members of staff will be entitled to confiscate it and it will only be returned to the parent **at the end of the term**. This will automatically revoke the permission granted for the student to carry a non-smart phone to school.
- All cases of unauthorised possession of mobile phones to school will result in immediate suspension of the student from school.

Students who are granted permission to carry non-smart phones to school must know that:

- There will be random mobile phone checks conducted by staff members in the classrooms. Students will be required to fully cooperate with staff members for these checks.
- If a member of the staff has any suspicion that a mobile phone has unsuitable material stored on it, students will be required to hand over the phone to the Headteacher who will then access the contents of the phone in the presence of the parents/guardians. In circumstances where there is a suspicion that the material on the mobile phone may provide evidence relating to a criminal offence, the phone will be handed over to the police for further investigation. Parents will need to recover the phone from the police in such circumstances. (There has been a court case where a person has received a custodial sentence for showing someone a video on a mobile phone, which caused them distress. Parents and students should be aware that such incidents are likely to be treated seriously by the courts.)

Any failure to comply with any of the above guidelines may result in normal disciplinary action to be taken up to and including the consideration of permanent exclusion of the student concerned.

NB: This policy should be read in conjunction with the Behaviour and Anti-Bullying Policies.

On 19th February 2024, new Mobile Phones in School Guidance has been issued, that backs Headteachers in prohibiting the use of mobile phones throughout the school day.

Last year Unesco called for smart phones to be banned from schools as evidence showed it was linked to reduced educational performance and that excessive screen time had a negative impact on children's wellbeing.