



Exeter School

Mobile Phones Policy

Status:	Approved
Approver:	SLG
Author:	MFCG and JSW
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Preamble:

At Exeter School, we understand that mobile phones are an important part of daily life and that there are many benefits to having access to one, but we also believe that pupils should be focused on their learning and wellbeing whilst at school. This policy is designed to create a safe, respectful, and distraction-free environment whilst pupils are at school or engaged in school activities. Our goal is to support pupils in making positive choices while maintaining a productive and harmonious school atmosphere. We want to provide a space free from mobile phones for our pupils to develop their relationships, enjoy the wide range of activities on offer, and feel safe. We ask parents to support us in this by managing their children's use of their mobile phones at home and during family time.

Definitions:

Within this policy, for simplicity, the term 'phone' refers to a mobile telephone, which could be either:

- a. A smartphone, which is a cellular telephone with an integrated computer and other features not originally associated with telephones, such as an operating system (OS), web browsing and the ability to run software applications.
- b. A 'brick' phone, which is an older style cellular telephone that is not a smartphone, and therefore has neither access to the internet, nor a built-in camera.

1. Introduction and Aims

- 1.1 Purpose:** To promote safe and responsible use of phones, minimise distractions, and support the school's other policies, e.g., Safeguarding and Child Protection, Behaviour Management, Anti-Bullying, and Acceptable Usage (pupils) policies.
- 1.2 Goals:** To ensure phones are used appropriately, reduce potential for lesson disruption, and protect pupils from online risks and incidents or behaviours that may be harmful to their wellbeing.
- 1.3 Methodology:** this policy has been developed following a review of research and in the light of new UK [government guidance](#) (February 2024). The school has engaged with pupils, parents, and staff to create this policy. We are confident it reflects the changes necessary given current best practice and guidance.

2. Roles and Responsibilities

- 2.1 Staff:** All staff are responsible for enforcing this policy. They should regularly remind pupils of the rules and respond accordingly if a pupil does not follow them.
- 2.2 Pupils:** Pupils must follow the policy and use their phones responsibly during the permitted times.
- 2.3 Parents:** Parents should support the policy and ensure their child understands and adheres to it.

3. Use of Phones by Pupils

3.1 Junior School

- a. Although it is not the school's place to tell parents which phone they should provide for their child (or whether a phone is advisable at all), we strongly suggest that pupils in the junior school do not own a smartphone. However, if parents do decide to provide their child with a phone, the school recommends that pupils use a basic phone with limited capabilities (e.g. a 'brick' phone, or a smartphone with parental control software added).
- b. Pupils are not permitted to have a phone on their person during the school day.
- c. Any pupils who bring a phone to school must hand it in to the school office upon arrival.
- d. Pupils are allowed to collect their phone from the office at the end of the school day but are not to use it until they have left the school site.
- e. Any pupil who is found to be using their phone on school site will be reprimanded, a demerit given, and parents informed. When pupils travel on a school bus for fixtures, the phone must be handed to the teacher in charge and collected when the parents pick their child up.
- f. Unless there are special, agreed circumstances involved, no junior school pupil should have a phone with them on day trips or during residential.

3.2 Third and Fourth Forms

- a. In the first two years of senior school (3F and 4F) the school's recommendations for the type of phones pupils should own remain the same as those outlined above in '3.1

Junior School' – i.e. if parents do decide to provide their child with a phone, the school recommends that pupils use a basic phone with limited capabilities (e.g. a 'brick' phone, or a smartphone with parental control software added).

3.3 Third Form to Upper Fifth

- a. Pupils must not use their phone once they have entered the school gates. Pupils may use their phones once they have left the buildings to leave site at the end of the day.
- b. If a pupil does bring a phone into school, it must be stored in the pupil's book locker where it must remain, switched off, until the end of the school day.
- c. All book lockers must be securely locked with a combination padlock, the code of which must be shared with the school (via tutors). School can supply combination locks for pupils via the reprographics department.
- d. Phones may only be visible when being transferred to or from a book locker at the start and end of the school day.
- e. Failure to comply with these conditions will result in a sanction as listed below in Section 5.
- f. Pupils must collect phones from book lockers shortly before leaving the site. Pupils must transfer their phone immediately to their bags/pockets and not use their phone until they are outside the school buildings, for example walking towards the perimeter gates.
- g. Phones should not be taken to the library or period 8 activities (unless off-site). Book lockers will be accessible until 5.30pm each school day.
- h. All pupils have a school managed iPad which can be used to email parents (during break and lunchtimes), access podcasts and music, take photographs and for other school activities during the day. Activity on their iPad is subject to the school's filtering and monitoring protocols.

3.4 Sixth Form

- a. Pupils in 6F may use their phones exclusively in the 6F centre, the gym (when supervised), on the second floor of the library in the 6F-only area), or on occasion in certain subjects with the teachers' permission (e.g., in the creative arts to listen to music).
- b. Pupils may not use their phone in any other location and phones must always be kept out of sight until returning to the aforementioned areas.
- c. Sixth form pupils must recognise their position as role models in their use of phones, such that younger pupils are not tempted to follow their behaviour. Suitable sanctions may be applied to sixth form pupils who abuse their privilege to have access to their phones at school.

3.5 Changing spaces and toilets

Under no circumstances must any pupil use a phone in the changing spaces or toilets. This contravenes the school's safeguarding policy and potentially puts pupils at risk. Any pupil

found to be using a phone in such a space will be sanctioned according to the school's behaviour management policy as well as having their phone confiscated according to the sanctions outlined below in section 5.

4. Special considerations

4.1 Off-site activities and fixtures

Pupils in 3F – U5 must hand in their phone to a member of staff at the start of a bus journey. Phones will be returned when pupils leave the vehicle and collected in for the return journey. Pupils will normally be supervised during the time when phones are in their possession i.e. for the activity, in changing rooms, dining room etc. Pupils bringing phones do so at their own risk. Sixth form pupils may have phones on their person for off-site activities and fixtures and must follow the trip leader's direction regarding their use.

4.2 Trips (including residentials, outdoor activities and international travel).

All trips will be risk assessed, and access to phones will be at the discretion of the trip leader on a trip-by-trip basis, depending on the age of pupils and the nature of the trip or activity.

4.3 Medical

Where a pupil may need to use their phone for medical reasons, such as monitoring blood sugar levels, they will be allowed to use their phone. Where possible, a restricted smart phone must be used (i.e. internet access disabled).

4.4 School bus routes

This policy does not apply to pupils whilst using school bus routes travelling to and from school.

4.5 Leaving the site early

On the occasion where a pupil must leave school early, they should collect their phone from their book locker during the break or lesson changeover just before their departure. The phone must remain switched off and in the school bag during any part-lesson before the pupil leaves the site. Pupils will be required to demonstrate the necessity for this arrangement when asked by a member of staff. Failure to comply with this would result in a sanction as described in section 5.

5. Sanctions

We hope that these sanctions will serve to deter pupils from trying to use phones during the school day or when involved in a school activity or trip. Pupils whose phone is not locked in their locker during the day will be sanctioned in the same way as pupils using a phone.

- a. On the first occasion, a letter is sent home, and the phone will be confiscated for the rest of that day (or handed in the next day if after 4pm). Pupils can collect their phone from the Head's reception at 4pm on the day it is confiscated/handed in.
- b. On the second occasion, the phone will be confiscated for 3 school days*. Parents can collect it at the end of this period from the Head's reception at 4pm and a school

detention (Wednesday 4:10pm-5:10pm) will be issued. Whilst confiscated, the phone is kept securely in the Bursary.

- c. On the third occasion, the phone will be confiscated for 5 school days*. Parents can collect it at the end of this period and a Head's detention (Saturday 9.30am-11.30am) will be issued.
- d. Subsequent occasions will necessitate further confiscations and a meeting between the Head of Section, pupil and parents.

*If a confiscation runs over a weekend, a parent should collect the phone from the Bursary at 4pm on the Friday and the pupil will then need to hand in the phone on the following Monday morning before 8.30am to continue the period of confiscation. The parent would not then need to collect the phone again once the period of confiscation has lapsed.

Sanction totals and queries shall be recorded by the school's attendance officer and overseen by the Assistant Head (head of middle school). Sanction totals will be reset at the end of every term.

These sanctions no longer run in conjunction with the misuse of iPads which, for most cases, will be dealt with via a lunchtime detention. Exceptions to this may include a serious breach of the Acceptable Use Policy.

6. Use of phones by staff

We believe staff should be role models and consequently should avoid using phones in the presence of pupils. However, there will be work-related occasions when staff may need to use a phone, e.g., to use an authenticator app, to take a register or to make an emergency phone call.

7. Use of phones by parents, volunteers, and visitors

As we do with staff, we expect parents and visitors to model the type of behaviour we expect of our pupils. Consequently, where possible, parents should refrain from using their phone whilst on site. For safeguarding reasons, we ask parents not to use video and cameras on site (e.g., at school plays, concerts, fixtures, etc). Visitors will be reminded at the start of performances.

8. Communication

Parents have become increasingly reliant on communicating with their children at the end of the day, particularly those staying in school for an after-school club or in the library. This ultimately blurs the boundaries of when a pupil should be using their phone.

- a. The school encourages parents, where possible, to make clear arrangements prior to the school day to minimise any distraction to pupils while they are at school.
- b. If necessary, parents may pass important messages to their child via the Bursary (8am-5pm). We will always try to pass the message on in a timely fashion.
- c. Where communication is required to arrange collection from school at the end of the day, we ask parents and pupils to email one another using school email account.

9. Loss, Theft, or Damage

9.1 Reporting: Pupils must report any loss, theft, or damage to their phone immediately.

9.2 Responsibility: The school is not responsible for lost, stolen, or damaged phones.

10. Monitoring and Review

10.1 Review Period: This policy will be reviewed annually by the strategic leadership group.

10.2 Feedback: Feedback from pupils, parents, and staff will be considered during the review process to ensure the policy remains effective and relevant.