



School Policy on the use of mobile phones, tablet devices & related technologies – July 2024

Context

At Belmont House School the well-being, safety and security of our pupils and staff is central in our planning and ethos and this policy regards these as key factors in our current position concerning the use of technologies during the school day.

Bullying and harassment are not new issues in many schools and business places; however, social media does present schools with a new and ever-changing challenge to manage.

We recognise that Smart phones, iPads, other tablet devices and related technologies (e.g., smart watches) potentially do have a place in school life and that realistically a large percentage of our school population will carry such devices with them every day. It is also recognised that parents look to these devices in today’s society as a measure of reassurance and a method of contacting their child with ease. However, there is clear research evidence that the inappropriate use of mobile phones can have a detrimental impact on mental health and wellbeing as well as limiting pupils’ interactions with each other; there is evidence from many schools that the unfettered use of mobile phones is often highly distracting for children and young people, interrupting their concentration and their ability to think.

However, used appropriately, modern technologies can enhance learning and teaching leading to effective learning in the class, improved attainment and drive innovation. We are forward thinking in our pedagogy related to the use of technology and consider that when used appropriately, digital technology can have a positive impact on learning.

Please note that the use of the term “phone” or “mobile phone” in this Policy denotes mobile phones and includes ALL other portable digital devices including tablet devices and smart watches

This policy also considers the School’s policies and procedures in relation to:

- Safeguarding & Child Protection
- GDPR & Data Protection
- ICT Acceptable Use
- Anti-Bullying
- Use of Photographic Images and Videos of Children in School

Pupils: Acceptable & Unacceptable Use

Acceptable use:

The following identifies the sole circumstance under which the School deems the use of mobile phones to be **acceptable**:

- **During a lesson in which the teacher has given their express permission for the use of mobile phones to enhance learning and teaching.**

Unacceptable use:

The following indicators are what the School deems as **unacceptable use** under any circumstances:

- **By parents to contact their child in School during the day – parents are reminded to use the School Office for this purpose**
- **During a lesson in which the teacher has NOT given their express permission**
- **In toilets**



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- In the Lunch Hall
- In PE Changing Rooms
- In corridor/playground between lessons
- During a School Show, Performance or event
- To take pictures or videos of any pupil at any time or under any circumstance
- To take a picture or video of a member of staff at any time or under any circumstance.

To that end the use of mobile phones in any or all of the above **unacceptable use classifications is expressly forbidden; phones are to be switched off and out of sight in bags or pockets throughout the School day from when a pupil arrives on site in the morning until they leave to return home at the end of the day.**

Any pupil using a device in contravention of the above rules will be asked to switch their phone off and the device handed in to the School Office for safe keeping until the end of the day. Repeat offences will result in disciplinary sanctions being imposed.

Staff: Use of Personal Mobile Phones

The School recognises that personal mobile phones have the potential to be used inappropriately. Mobile phones should never be used to take photographs or videos of children.

Personal mobile phones should not generally be needed or used by staff, except as set out in the guidelines below:

- Should staff need to use their mobile phone, best practice is that mobile phones, wherever possible, should not be used in the presence of pupils.
- Mobile phones should not be used during lesson times either to make or receive calls unless there is an emergency.
- Staff should never give their mobile phone number to any pupils. This also includes past pupils under the age of 18 years.
- Staff should exercise caution when giving their mobile number to parents as this could be misconstrued. The School is aware that some staff members are also parents of the School.
- PE staff may use their mobile phones during PE sessions and when they are responsible for pupils away from School, but only to communicate arrangements to parents or colleagues or for emergency purposes.
- Trips and Visits Off-site: The staff member in charge should take the School mobile phone when off-site. This phone should be used when communicating with parents. Other staff members on the trip or offsite should carry their mobile phones so they can communicate with colleagues when necessary or in an emergency.
- No photographs, videos or images of pupils should be captured using a personal mobile phone in any setting.

Melvyn Shanks
Principal
July 2024