



## Redhill School Mobile Phone and Electronic Device Policy 2021-22

### Introduction

We have reviewed and deeply reflected on our policy around mobile phones. Our policy in the 2020-21 academic year attempted to reflect modern society and allow pupils a degree of flexibility to check their phones in social time. Whilst incidents regarding misuse of mobile phones remain low, we are concerned that pupils are favouring using their phones in social time over face-to-face interactions with their peers. As educators we have a duty to ensure we develop skilful communicators who are emotionally intelligent, and it is for this reason that we will be moving to a policy where mobile phones must be switched off before pupils enter the school site and then not seen or heard including at break or lunchtimes. The only reason that pupils will be allowed to use their phone is if they are directed to by a member of staff in a lesson for an educational purpose. Pupils will no longer be able to check or engage with their phone until they leave the school site. All the finer details around sanctions and what will happen if a pupil is found to be in possession

Mobile phones and the new generation of smart phones, such as the iPhone, include many additional functions such as an integrated camera, video recording capability, instant messaging, mobile office applications and mobile access to the internet.

These allow immediate access to email, searching for information on the internet and other functions such as access to social networking sites e.g. Facebook, twitter and blogging sites.

For many young people today the ownership of a mobile phone is considered a necessary and vital part of their social life. When used creatively and responsibly the smart phone has great potential to support a pupil's learning experiences.

### Mobile phone misuse

At Redhill School we have a responsibility to minimise incidents of poor conduct where mobile phone use has been feature.

Bullying, intimidation and harassment are not new in society, however bullying or harassment using a mobile phone represents a new challenge for schools to manage.

Parents /carers and pupils should be clear that misuse of mobile phones will not be tolerated.

The following are examples of misuse but are not exclusive:

- The deliberate engineering of situations where people's reactions are filmed or photographed in order to humiliate, embarrass and intimidate by publishing to a wider audience such as on Facebook, YouTube or other social media platforms
- Bullying by text, image and email messaging
- The use of a mobile phone for 'sexting' (the deliberate taking and sending of provocative images or text messages)
- Posting material on social network sites with no thought to the risks to their personal reputation and sometimes with the deliberate intention of causing harm to others
- Making disrespectful comments, misrepresenting events or making defamatory remarks about teachers or other students
- General disruption to learning caused by students accessing phones in lessons
- Pupils phoning parents immediately following an incident so that the ability of staff to deal with an incident is compromised
- Publishing photographs of vulnerable students who may be on a child protection plan, where this may put them at additional risk

### **Mobile phone misuse procedures**

Misuse of a mobile phone will be dealt with using the same principles set out in the school behaviour policy, with the response being proportionate to the severity of the misuse.

Pupils are aware that serious misuse will lead to the confiscation of their mobile phone, communication with parents and the imposition of other sanctions up to and including exclusion from school. If the offence is serious, it will be reported to the Police.

If a phone is confiscated for the first time it will be stored in reception and can be collected by the student at the end of the day. This will ensure that the confiscation is correctly recorded and that the phone is kept securely. If the phone is confiscated on a second occasion it will be stored in reception and can be collected by a parent/carer at an arranged appointment with a senior staff member. At the meeting parents/carers will be required to sign for the phone and agree that their child will not be allowed to bring their phone into school.

Where it is deemed necessary to examine the contents of a mobile phone this will be done by a designated member of staff. The action will be properly recorded in case it later becomes evidence of criminal activity. The record will include the time, who was present and what is found.

### **Rules for the acceptable use of a mobile phone at Redhill School by pupils**

Students are allowed to bring mobile phones into school. If they choose to do so it is on the understanding that they agree with the following limitations on its use, namely:

- Mobile phones must be switched off and placed out of sight when coming onto the school site, in all classes, corridors and other areas during teaching time. It is not acceptable for phones merely to be put on silent or pager mode.
- The phone must be kept out of sight in a bag during the school day.
- Mobile phones are not allowed to be checked at break or lunchtimes.
- Mobile phones and devices will be allowed under the supervision of the teacher where they are shown to be an essential resource to the learning in the lesson e.g. filming for animation project, using media applications and for structured revision.
- The security of phone will remain the student's responsibility in all lessons including PE lessons.
- If asked to do so, content on the phone (e.g. messages, emails, pictures, videos, sound files) will need to be shown to the relevant member of staff.

### Unacceptable use

The school will consider any of the following to be unacceptable use of the mobile phone and a breach of the school's behaviour policy resulting in sanctions being taken.

- Using a mobile phone on the school site in school hours. This includes in lessons, corridors and at break and lunchtimes.
- Photographing or filming staff or other students without their knowledge or permission
- Photographing or filming in toilets, changing rooms and similar areas
- Refusing to switch a phone off or handing over the phone at the request of a member of staff.

### Sanctions

Pupils and parents are notified that appropriate action will be taken against those who are in breach of the acceptable use guidelines, following the schools behaviour policy.

If a pupil uses their mobile phone during school hours either in lessons, corridors or at break or lunch then the following sanctions will apply:

- For a first offence the phone will be confiscated and taken to main reception. The breach will be recorded, no further action will be taken and the pupil will be able to collect their phone at the end of the school day.

- For second and subsequent offences the phone will be confiscated, a 20 minute detention will be issued and the phone will be returned to a parent/carer at a meeting with the relevant Head of Year.

In addition:

- Students and their parents should be very clear that the school is within its rights to confiscate the phone where the guidelines have been breached.
- Students should be aware that the police can and will be informed if there is a serious misuse of the mobile phone where criminal activity is suspected.
- If a student commits an act which causes serious harassment, alarm or distress to another student or member of staff the ultimate sanction may be permanent exclusion.

School will consider the impact on the victim of the act in deciding the sanction.

### **Confiscation procedure**

If a mobile phone is confiscated then:

- The pupil will be informed that the phone can be collected at the end of school day from main reception.
- The confiscation will be recorded in the school behaviour log for monitoring purposes.
- School will ensure that confiscated equipment is stored in such a way that it is returned to the correct person.
- Where a student persistently breaches the expectations, following a clear warning, the Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher may impose an outright ban from bringing a mobile phone to school. This may be a fixed period or permanent ban.

### **Where the phone has been used for an unacceptable purpose**

- The designated staff member will have the right to view files stored in confiscated equipment and if necessary seek the cooperation of parents in deleting any files which are in clear breach of these guidelines unless they are being preserved as evidence.
- If required evidence of the offence or suspected offence will be preserved, preferably by confiscation of the device and keeping it secure or by taking photographs of the screen
- School will consider whether an incident should be reported to the Dudley Children's Safeguarding Board.
- The designated staff member should monitor repeat offences to see if there is any pattern in the perpetrator or the victim which needs further investigation.

### Monitoring and Evaluation

- The Deputy Headteacher will present a report to Governors every year outlining the action taken within the preceding year and evaluating the impact of that action.
- The Deputy Headteacher will present an evaluation every term to the Leadership Team.