

Sutherland House School

Pupil Mobile Phone and Personal Device Policy

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Title: Mobile phone policy

Applicable to: All School Staff, Parents and pupils

Ratified by: Robbie Jones

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1. Introduction and Aims

1.1 Introduction

At Sutherland House School we recognise that mobile phones, including smart phones and internet connected electronic devices, are an important part of everyday life for our pupils, parents, and staff, as well as the wider school community. We also recognise that mobile phones are now part of modern society and that most pupils own a phone with access to the internet. We also recognise that for safety reasons, pupils may carry a mobile phone to contact parents/carers after school/before school. However, such devices can lead to problems in school such as bullying/harassment, disruption to lessons, issues relating to safeguarding concerns and inappropriate web usage.

1.2 Aims

- Promote, and set an example for, safe and responsible device use
- Set clear guidelines for the use of mobile phones for pupils
- To support our behaviour policy, which aims to promote positive behaviour and safety of pupils across the school.
- To ensure that pupil welfare and safeguarding incidents associated with mobile phones and devices are minimised.
- To clarify parental and staff responsibility around mobile phones

2. Legislation and Statutory Guidance

This policy complies with Department for Education (DFE) statutory safeguarding guidance, ***Keeping Children Safe in Education***, and its advice on:

- Teaching online safety in schools
- Preventing and tackling bullying and cyber bullying: advice for headteachers and school staff
- Relationships and sex education

This policy also complies with ***DFE Guidance on Searching, Screening and Confiscation 2022***, and ***Education and Inspections Act 2006***.

3. Role of Parents/Careers

Parents / Carers play a crucial role in ensuring that their children understand the need to use mobiles and devices in an appropriate way. Parents and carers will be encouraged to support the school in promoting good online safety practice and to follow the school's guidelines on the appropriate use of mobile phones in school.

Parents are expected to:

- Notify a member of staff or the Head Teacher of any concerns regarding the misuse of mobile phones.
- Ensure their child has a good understanding of relevant areas of the policy, and how they must adhere to this in and out of school.
- Cooperate with the process outlined in Section 5 and Section 6

- Recognise their ultimate responsibility for supply and management of the device.

Parents can seek further guidance on keeping children safe from the following:

- Childnet — Online safety for young people
- Child Safety Online: A practical guide for parents and carers whose children are using social media - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)
- Children and Mobile Phones - Advice for Parents | Children 1st

4. Role of staff

4.1 Which staff will be responsible

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 Head Teacher, along with SLT, are responsible for monitoring and reviewing the policy, and holding staff and pupils accountable for its implementation.

4.2 How staff will be trained

Staff will receive:

- Clear guidance on the 'Pupil Mobile Phone and Personal Device Policy', and it's implementation
- Regular safeguarding training, including cyberbullying and the risks around the use of the internet
- If necessary, specific training around the misuse of internet devices or mobile phones in schools

They will also be encouraged to seek further advice as needed.

4.3 Communication between school and Parents/Careers

Staff will pass any relevant information around the use of phones in school via the home-school diary system or preferred method of communication.

5. Use of Mobile phones and Personal Devices by Pupils

5.1 Permitted pupil use of mobile phones

At Sutherland House, we recognise that in some cases pupil use of mobile phones may be deemed appropriate. This relates to:

- Pupils travelling to and from school alone, without an escort
- Pupils with very specific regulation needs during transitions

Where this is the case, parents must make a clear, written request for their child to attend school with their phone, outlining their rationale for this (see appendix 1).

Any rationale justifying use of the mobile phone during school hours will not be accepted.

Upon receipt of the parental request, school will decide whether or not the usage is justified. If usage is permitted, a letter of permission will be sent to parents.

Once permission has been granted, the pupil will be asked to sign an agreement (appendix 2), after which, they may travel to school with their mobile phone, but this must be handed to school staff upon arrival at the school site. This will then be signed in a stored securely until the end of the day. Pupils with permitted access will then be able to access their phones as they transition to leave school at the end of the day.

5.2 Unpermitted use of mobile phones

Lack of consent

Where there has been no parental request for mobile phone usage, a pupil should not attend school with a mobile phone.

Where a pupil has been granted permission for mobile phone use for transition purposes, they **MUST NOT** utilise the phone, under any circumstances, whilst under supervision of school staff.

In the case of general phone usage, the following behaviours are prohibited by pupils at all times. This applies to all pupils who have access to mobile phones, both in and out of school:

- Attempt to capture any footage/photographs within the school vicinity, of staff, pupils at any time.
- Bullying by text, image, and messaging
- Making disrespectful comments, misrepresenting events, or making defamatory remarks about teachers or other pupils
- Pupils posting material on social network sites with no thought to the risks to their personal reputation or the reputation of others or the school and sometimes with the deliberate intention of causing harm to others
- General disruption to learning caused by pupils accessing phones in lessons
- The deliberate engineering of situations where people's reactions are filmed or photographed in order to humiliate, embarrass and intimidate by sharing these images or videos online
- Pupils phoning parents immediately following an incident so that the ability of staff to deal with an incident is compromised
- Publishing photographs of vulnerable pupils, who may be on a child protection plan, where this may put them at additional risk
- The use of a mobile phone for taking and sending of provocative images or text messages.

Please be aware that this list is not exhaustive, and any actions causing similar harms or consequences are also prohibited.

5.3 Exceptional Circumstances

As a highly inclusive setting, we remain acutely aware of the need, at times, to make reasonable adjustments and accommodations considering very specific needs. Where it is felt, on balance, that the policy causes obstruction to necessary, reasonable, adjustments for specific individuals, the Head Teacher has authority to agree alternative arrangements.

Further to this, there may be educational exceptions whereby the school curriculum requires device usage. Again, the Head Teacher has authority to permit usage in these circumstances, in agreement with parents.

6. Usage Management

6.1. Unpermitted devices

Without written permission from the school, no pupil should bring mobile devices with them on site or during school activities whilst in under supervision of school staff. Devices must remain at home.

Where a pupil does not comply with this element of the policy, staff will request for the device to be handed to staff. This will remain with staff and be sent home with the pupil at the end of the day. Parents will be called on the day to remind them of the policy, and that their child must not attend school with their device the following day. Where safeguarding concerns are raised, relevant organisations including local authority safeguarding teams or the police may be contacted.

6.2. Signing in and storage of permitted devices

Where permission has been granted for pupils to use their devices during transitions to and from school, the device must be handed to school staff upon arrival at the school site or agreed activity location.

Staff must store the device securely, and report to admin the name of the pupil and type of device that has been stored.

6.3. Lack of cooperation with policy and device misuse

Where pupils do not comply with the policy, in relation to storage, usage or any other relevant areas, the phone will be confiscated and returned at the end of the week of confiscation.

If lack of compliance with the policy is persistent, pupil permission to access the device, as previously agreed, will be reviewed by the Head Teacher and SLT, and may be withdrawn.

Where there is significant, immediate concern that a pupil has access to a device, and is demonstrating severe misuse (e.g. photographing/videoing/recording staff and pupils or actively engaging in bullying or harassing behaviours), staff will remove the device from the pupil. At this stage, particularly if pupils are unresponsive to staff requests, parents may be requested to attend the school to remove the device and take it away from the building.

Where it is felt by the school that the device will continue to be severely misused, the school has authority to confiscate the item (Education and Inspections Act 2006).

Where the school has 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 authority to decide to search the phone content, as outlined in the DFE guidance on 'Searching, Screening and Confiscation' (DFE, 2024). Where this is deemed appropriate, parents will be informed, as appropriate, and may be asked to support in the process.

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 (consensual and non-consensual sharing nude or semi-nude images or videos)
- Upskirting
- 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

7. Links with Other Policies

This policy links to the following policies and procedures:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- PBS Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Offsite Educational Visit Policy
- First Aid Policy
- Medication Policy

Appendix 2- Pupil Agreements

These agreements can be used with pupils to secure their understanding around the policy.

Agreement 1: For pupils who **have NOT been** granted a specific permission

General Mobile Phone and Personal Device usage agreement

I understand that mobile phone and personal device usage is not generally permitted in school, and I must not bring these items with me into the school building.

If I am using a mobile phone or device at home:

1. I understand that under no circumstances can I take photos or recordings (either video or audio) of school staff or other pupils.
2. I understand that I should always avoid sharing my contact details with people I don't know, and I cannot share other people's contact details without their consent.
3. I must not use my mobile phone to bully, intimidate or harass anyone. This includes bullying, harassing or intimidating pupils or staff via:
 - a. Email
 - b. Text/messaging app
 - c. Social media
4. I understand that I must not use my device inappropriately, even when I am not in school.
5. I understand that I should not use inappropriate or derogatory language while on the device or when using social media.
6. I understand that I should not use my phone to view or share harmful content.
7. I understand that I must comply with any request by a member of staff to switch off, or hand in, a device. Refusal to comply with this is a breach of the school's policy.

Signed:

Date:

Agreement 2: For pupils **who HAVE been** granted a specific permission

Mobile Phone and Personal Device usage agreement for pupils who have been granted a specific permission

I have been permitted to use my device specifically to:

8. I understand that I must submit my phone to school staff upon arrival at school or the agreed activity location. This will then be returned to me at the end of the school day, unless misuse has led to confiscation.
9. I understand that my phone must remain switched off (not just on 'silent') whilst I am under the supervision of school staff, both in and out of school.
10. I understand that I cannot use my phone during school hours, even in private areas, such as toilets or changing rooms. This is also to protect the privacy and welfare of other pupils.
11. I understand that under no circumstances can I take photos or recordings (either video or audio) of school staff or other pupils.
12. I understand that I should always avoid sharing my contact details with people I don't know, and I cannot share other people's contact details without their consent.
13. I must not use my mobile phone to bully, intimidate or harass anyone. This includes bullying, harassing or intimidating pupils or staff via:
 - a. Email
 - b. Text/messaging app
 - c. Social media
14. I understand that I must not use my device inappropriately, even when I am not in school.
15. I understand that I should not use inappropriate or derogatory language while on the device or when using social media.
16. I understand that I should not use my phone to view or share harmful content.
17. I understand that I must comply with a request by a member of staff to switch off, or hand in, my device. Refusal to comply with this is a breach of the school's policy and may lead to confiscation.

Signed: _____

Date: _____