



St Hugh's School

Mobile Devices Policy

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Statement of intent

Mobile phones, tablets and other personal electronic devices have become widely available and accessible to students. This policy is designed to prohibit the use of mobile phones and similar smart technology throughout the school day, including break and lunch times.

St. Hugh's School accepts that personal mobile phones and tablets are often given to students by their parents to ensure their safety and personal security; however, such devices pose inherent risks and may jeopardise the learning environment.

As a school, we must strike a balance between personal safety and a suitable educational setting. We understand that parents may wish for their child to carry a mobile phone for their personal safety, whilst students may wish to bring additional devices to school for other reasons. This policy establishes how personal electronic devices should be used by students in school to ensure both personal safety and an appropriate learning environment.

Personal electronic devices include, but are not limited to the following items:

- Mobile phones
- Smart watches
- Personal digital assistants (PDAs)
- Handheld entertainment systems, e.g. video game consoles, iPods
- Portable internet devices, e.g. tablets, laptops
- Wireless handheld technologies or portable information technology systems, e.g. devices used for word processing, wireless internet access, image capture and/or recording, sound recording, and information transmitting, receiving and/or storing

1. Legal framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory and good practice guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- DfE 'Mobile phones in schools'
- DfE 'Communicating your policy for prohibiting the use of mobile phones in schools to parents'
- DfE 'Behaviour in Schools'
- DfE 'Keeping children safe in education 2025'
- DfE 'Searching, screening and confiscation at school'
- Data Protection Act 2018
- The UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR)
- Voyeurism (Offences) Act 2019
- Protection of Children Act 1978
- Sexual Offences Act 2003
- DfE 'Cyberbullying: Advice for headteachers and school staff'

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Anti-bullying Policy
- Online Safety Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Complaints Procedures Policy
- Social Media Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Acceptable user policies (staff and student)

2. Roles and responsibilities

The governing board will be responsible for:

- The implementation of the policy and procedures.
- Evaluating the effectiveness of the policy and procedures.

- Ensuring that the policy, as written, does not discriminate on any grounds.
- Reviewing the policy annually.

The headteacher will be responsible for:

- Handling complaints regarding this policy as outlined in the school's Complaints Procedures Policy.
- The day-to-day implementation and management of the policy.
- Informing parents and students of the Personal Electronic Devices Agreement.
- Communicating this policy to the relevant staff members and the wider school community.
- Communicating what devices can be brought to school and when they can and cannot be used.
- Deciding how best to achieve a mobile phone-free school environment.

Staff members will be responsible for:

- Negotiating incidents of cyberbullying in conjunction with the headteacher, in line with the Anti-bullying Policy and the Behaviour Policy.
- Applying this policy consistently and proportionately, including confiscating devices where appropriate.
- Reporting any safeguarding concerns to the DSL, or deputy, where misuse indicates risk of harm.
- Avoiding use of their mobile phones in front of students for any non-work related issues (see staff code of conduct policy for further detail of staff expectations regarding mobile phone use).
- Teaching students about the risks associated with mobile phones, other devices and social media, both in school and more broadly.

The DSL will be responsible for:

- Initiating and managing responses to incidents of upskirting with relevant staff members and in line with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.
- Liaising with and reporting the relevant information to children's social care and/or the police, when it is necessary to do so.

Students are responsible for adhering to the provisions outlined in this policy.

3. Ownership and responsibility

Students are responsible for their own belongings. The school accepts no responsibility for replacing property that is lost, stolen or damaged either on school premises or travelling to and from school, and at school events.

Staff will be protected against liability in any proceedings brought against them for any loss or damage to personal devices that have been confiscated as an appropriate sanction, provided that they have acted lawfully.

Students are responsible for replacing school property they lose, damage or steal, including electronic devices.

Students and staff should enable a personal PIN or passcode on all the devices they bring to school to protect their personal data, images and videos in the event that the device is lost, stolen or accessed by an unauthorised person.

4. Acceptable use

Where students are bringing personal electronic devices into school, they will be expected to make their parents aware of this. Students will remain responsible for the safety and security of any personal devices brought into school and the school will not accept responsibility for loss, theft or damage.

Personal devices will not be used at any point during the school day, including during break and lunch times, unless an agreed exception applies. Where an agreed exception is in place, use of a personal device will be limited strictly to the specific purpose outlined within that exception and will be subject to any conditions set by the school.

5. Unacceptable use

All students in possession of an electronic device are expected to turn them off and hand in their device to school staff when entering their class at the start of the school day. These are then collected at the end of the school day unless an agreed exception applies. Please see 'Searching, as per DfE Searching, Screening and Confiscation Advice for Schools July 2022' Any breach of the acceptable user agreement by a student may result in the confiscation of their device.

Unless express permission is granted by a member of staff or adaptations and reasonable adjustments apply, mobile devices will not be seen, heard, or accessed at any time during the school day.

Any permitted use for specific students will be limited strictly to the specific purpose outlined in the agreed plan. All other use will be prohibited.

The school will consider the risks that may be posed to students who do not have access to their mobile phone when organising travel to and from school. Parents will be consulted with to consider ways to mitigate any concerns around the issue of travel to and from school. Students will be able to access their personal devices when travelling to and from school; however, they should not be used to arrange travel during the course of the school day. Permission to carry electronic devices for students travelling to and from school on school

transport remains at the discretion of school transport and in line with their policies and procedures.

Staff members will be required to model expectations surrounding the use of personal devices when they are in front of students throughout the school day, and only use their personal devices where required for work or safeguarding purposes.

Staff and students will adhere to the Social Media Policy at all times.

Files will not be sent between mobile devices.

Bluetooth and Wi-Fi functions can be enabled unless work related circumstances require it to be turned off.

If students fall ill during school hours, they will not use their mobile device to contact parents; they will use the agreed school procedures.

Under no circumstances will personal electronic devices be taken into examinations. Under no circumstances will mobile devices be used in changing rooms or toilets. Any such instances will be treated as a safeguarding concern.

Personal electronic devices will not be plugged into outlets on the school premises without the express permission of the headteacher, and they will have an up-to-date portable appliance test (PAT).

Staff will not give out their personal contact details to students. If correspondence is needed between staff members and students for homework or exams, staff should provide their school contact details.

Under the Voyeurism (Offences) Act 2019, the act known as “upskirting” is an offence. Any incidents will not be tolerated by the school. Despite the name, anyone (including both students and teachers) of any gender, can be a victim of upskirting.

A “specified purpose” is namely:

- Obtaining sexual gratification (either for themselves or for the person they are enabling to view the victim’s genitals, buttocks or underwear)
- To humiliate, distress or alarm the victim

Any incidents of upskirting will be reported to the DSL and handled in accordance with the school’s Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

6. Adaptations and reasonable adjustments

The school will comply with its legal duty to make reasonable adjustments with regard to this policy where necessary. Adaptations may be made in exceptional circumstances and in response to a student’s specific needs.

If it is deemed necessary due to the nature of a student’s SEND, reasonable adjustments will be made to allow that student to use their mobile phone or similar device during the school day.

The school will not prevent students from using their mobile phones in order to manage their medical condition effectively, e.g. if a student is using a monitoring app on their phone to manage their diabetes.

Beyond these specific duties, the school recognises that a need for mobile phone access for some students may depend on their individual circumstances. The school will allow limited flexibility for these students where an agreed exception is required in the best interests of the student's safety and welfare, for example where a student is a young carer.

Where a student has an agreed adaptation or reasonable adjustment that requires access to a mobile device, this will be permitted only for the specific purpose and within the limits set out in the agreed plan.

7. Cyberbullying

All personal electronic devices will be used in line with our Online Safety Policy.

Incidents of cyberbullying will be dealt with and reported in line with the Anti-bullying Policy and the Behaviour Policy.

As part of the school's ongoing commitment to the prevention of cyberbullying, regular teaching and discussion about online safety will take place as part of PSHE lessons.

8. Searching students

School students have a right for their private life to be respected under article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR). This right is not absolute, and the school can interfere with this right as long as it is justified, proportionate, and aligns with the powers to search in the Education Act 1996.

All searches will be conducted in line with the school's behaviour policy.

The headteacher, and other authorised staff members, will have the power to search a student or their possessions where they have reasonable grounds to suspect that a student is in possession of a prohibited item. Mobile phones and similar devices will be deemed as prohibited items that may be searched for in line with the Behaviour Policy.

In all cases the authorised member of staff will always:

- Seek the co-operation of the student before conducting a search.
- Ensure the student understands the reason for the search and how it will be conducted.
- Give the student the opportunity to ask any questions so that their agreement is informed.
- Have due regard to the DfE's 'Searching, screening and confiscation' guidance.

Staff may search a student's outer clothing, pockets, possessions, desks or lockers. Staff conducting a search must not require the student to remove any clothing other than outer clothing - outer clothing means any item of clothing that is not worn wholly next to the skin or immediately over a garment that is being worn as underwear and includes hats, shoes, boots

or scarves. Possessions means any goods over which the student has or appears to have control - this includes desks, lockers and bags.

A staff member may ask a student to show them what they are doing on their mobile phone or tablet if they reasonably believe that the student is using the device to cause harm. If it is judged reasonable, the staff member may inspect the files or data on a student's electronic device and delete them if necessary.

Staff members will ensure they have a good reason to examine and delete data on a student's electronic device. When determining a good reason to examine data, staff members will ensure they reasonably suspect that the data has been, or could be, used to cause harm, undermine the safe environment of the school and disrupt teaching, or be used to commit an offence.

When determining a good reason to delete data, staff members will consider whether the material found may constitute evidence relating to a suspected offence and if so, choose not to delete the data. The data may be deleted if it is found likely to cause harm to any person, and the student and/or parent refuses to delete the data themselves.

If a search uncovers a device that is being used to cause harm, or which contains prohibited material such as pornography, a staff member can confiscate the device. If a staff member finds child pornography, it must be given to the police as soon as reasonably practicable. Where staff find stolen items like mobile devices, they must be given to the police as soon as reasonably practicable.

The staff member conducting the search must be the same sex as the student being searched. A witness to the search must be present; this should also be a staff member of the same sex as the student being searched.

Students are required to comply with any request to check their electronic device.

Students are required to comply with any request to disable the screen lock function of their electronic device and show any staff member what they are doing. Any student who refuses to comply with these requests will be disciplined in line with the Behaviour Policy.

9. Logical consequences

The school will apply logical consequences relevant to the individual for breaches of this policy in a consistent and proportionate manner, in line with the school's Behaviour Policy.

Where this policy is clearly breached, for example where a device is used, seen, or heard ringing, staff will notify a member of SLT.

Where a breach gives cause to suspect a student may be suffering, or may be at risk of, harm, staff will follow the school's safeguarding procedures and report concerns to the DSL.

Confiscated personal electronic devices will be locked away securely in the headteacher's office.

Bullying via personal electronic devices will be dealt with in line with the school's Anti-bullying Policy.

10. Monitoring and review

This policy is reviewed annually by the headteacher and DSL.

Any changes to this policy will be communicated to members of staff, parents and students by the headteacher.

The scheduled review date for this policy is Spring 2027.