

Mobile Device Policy September 2024

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following policies:

- Anti-bullying Strategy
- Behaviour Policy
- Online Safety Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

Contents

- Introduction
- Aims
- Expectations

Introduction

At BMS we believe that a school's culture and values are manifested through the behaviour of its members. The BMS mission is to Inspire Excellence by providing a truly modern, inclusive and relevant education delivering excellence in all aspects of school life. Our four aims inspire, engage, encourage and cultivate, provide a clear sense of purpose to drive the delivery of our mission.

Inspire

We inspire all of our school community to set high standards for themselves, develop a love of learning, a sense of curiosity and an ability to think independently.

Encourage

We encourage students, staff and parents/guardians to develop a sense of wellbeing and students are encouraged to develop their emotional intelligence and self-awareness.

Engage

We engage with and develop positive relationships with existing and potential students, staff, parents/guardians, OBMs and the wider community.

Cultivate

We cultivate an outstanding learning environment, widening access for all and investing in staff development, the facilities and the daily operation of the School.

Aims

'Mobile devices' includes mobile phones, tablets, smart watches and earphones. This list of mobile devices is not exhaustive, and the school reserves the right to extend this list as new smart technology becomes more widely available.

At Bedford Modern School we recognise that mobile devices are an important part of everyday life for our students, parents/carers and staff, as well as the wider school community. As such, we recognise that access to technology, at the right time and in the right way, can be life enhancing for students. However, unrestrained access to mobile devices can be harmful. This policy aims to address some of the challenges posed by mobile devices in school by:

- Promoting, and setting an example for, safe, appropriate and responsible device use.

- Supporting the creation of a calm, safe and supportive environment which ensures that students can learn and be protected from disruption.
- Setting clear guidelines for the use of mobile devices for pupils, staff, parents/carers and visitors.
- Supporting the school's other policies, especially those related to child protection, data protection and behaviour

Expectations

We understand pupils may need to have a mobile device for their journey to and from school but the school's policy is that mobile devices are not permitted to be used during the school day. Students must also seek to secure their devices as much as possible, including using face ID, passwords or pin codes to protect access to both functions and data.

The school accepts no responsibility for mobile devices that are lost, damaged or stolen on school premises or transport, during school trips or fixtures, or whilst students are travelling to and from school. Parents should therefore ensure that these devices are covered on their own household contents insurance policies.

Mobile devices **MUST** be kept in a locker or bag during the school day (for students below the Sixth Form) and not be visible (this includes charging devices during lessons, devices out on the desk, or devices visible in pockets where they can distract students during lessons). They should be switched off or set to silent, not set to vibrate. **Devices must then, be neither seen nor heard.**

Students must not take pictures or make videos under any circumstances with their personal device.

No students should walk around the school or over road crossings/the bridge wearing headphones; headphones may only be worn in school when express written permission has been given by a member of staff which is likely to be given for medical reasons only. Students will not be allowed to listen to music during lesson time.

Mobile devices are not allowed to be used in the refectory at lunchtime or when students are in the corridors and walking around the school site or during after school clubs and rehearsals.

Any student caught using a mobile device in a toilet or changing area (which includes backstage during school music and drama performances) can expect at least a detention and most likely pastoral contact will be made with home.

After 4pm, students should only use their device to support school pickups with permission of their Head of Year and / or staff in After School Care. They should still not be used freely until students leave the school site.

Age specific regulations

Junior School

Pupils in the Junior School are only allowed to bring devices to school if they travel by bus. They should hand their device in at the Junior School Reception every morning and collect it at the end of the day or earlier if they are going on a fixture. If a pupil is found in possession of a device during the school day it will be confiscated and held at Reception and their parents will be contacted. The pupil will be able to pick it up at the end of the day. They are not permitted to take a mobile device on school trips.

Senior School

Students may only use their mobile device when specific permission has been provided by a member of staff.

Sixth Form

Sixth form students may use their devices when in the Oakley Room, Wilden Room and Café area (but not during Breakfast Club or the school lunch period). They may also use them in lessons when explicitly directed to by the member of staff.

Exceptions

During examination periods, there may be special dispensation given to students in Year 11 where appropriate and as agreed with their Head of Year in consultation with the Assistant Head (Years 9-11) or Deputy Head Pastoral.

If pupils are on a school trip, they may be allowed to take a mobile phone (except for students in the Junior School), but this is for emergency use only. This will be clarified in the letter sent to parents by the trip leader. If a member of staff gives permission, then students may use the camera function but should not upload any images to social media whilst on the trip – this is for reasons of safety/security. The devices should not be used whilst on the coach journeys, only at the venue. It may be appropriate on a residential trip for the trip leader to collect in and store mobile devices overnight or for the duration of the trip. For a longer trip students may use devices to read, listen to music or watch downloaded programmes at the discretion of the trip leader.

If a student is required to carry a device due to disability or a medical issue eg glucose level monitoring by diabetics, then their class teachers will be made aware and they will be issued with a laminated pass.

Sanctions

If it proves necessary to confiscate a mobile device due to breach of the policy the following will apply:

- The mobile device must be switched off by the student and then passed to the teacher.
- The teacher will take the mobile device to reception where it will be placed in an envelope and labelled with the student's name and form.
- Any existing damage or defects to the device will be noted at this stage.
- In the first instance the student may collect their device at the end of the school day.
- Names, dates and details will be recorded using the Level 1 record system. Any repeat confiscation will be recorded as a Level 2 sanction, and further sanctions imposed using the behaviour policy for students not following the school rules.
- Inappropriate use of a device will be recorded as Level 3 or higher.

If there is a concern about material that is stored on the device, the Deputy Head Pastoral will be informed in the first instance (the Senior Deputy Head or Head in their absence) and safeguarding or disciplinary procedures implemented. Ought we to consider reference to permission to search/view here?

Lost phones should be brought to Main School Reception. The school will then attempt to contact the owner.

Parental contact

Where parents need to contact their child during the school day, they should contact the Junior School reception, main school reception or sixth form office as appropriate where staff will be able to relay messages and facilitate contact. Should a student need to access a telephone in an emergency they may use the telephone in either Reception or ask their Head of Year.

Staff rules

As per the expectations in our Staff Code of Conduct, mobile phones must be switched off or silent at all times. Staff should only use their mobile phones for personal calls during personal time in private and away from the eyes and ears of the students and should secure their personal phones, as well as any work phone provided to them. Failure by staff to do so could result in data breaches, making staff liable for disciplinary procedures. If they need to make a call they should do it in an empty classroom or office. Staff must never store the telephone numbers of parents/carers or students on their personal mobile phone. Staff will be issued with a school mobile phone for use in case of emergency on school trips or offsite activities.

Personal devices should not normally be used:

- As a camera or audio-visual recorder to record sound or images of students; School devices will be provided for these tasks.
- In lessons when teaching is taking place (unless required for multi-factor authentication).
- When directly supervising students inside or outside of the school whilst also being responsible for their health and safety.
- In front of students for personal use.

These points aim not only to protect pupils but also to protect employees from allegations of misconduct or inappropriate behaviour. Employees bringing a personal mobile phone or hand-held device into school do so at their own risk. The school will not be held responsible or accept any liability for personal equipment that is damaged, lost or is stolen.

Parent, volunteer and visitor rules

- Please keep your mobile phone on silent/vibrate while on the school grounds.
- Please do not use phones where pupils are present.
- If you must use your phone, please go to a space where students will not see or hear you.
- Do not take photos or recordings of staff or students (unless it is your own child but any photographs of your own child must not include other children unless with the explicit consent of their parents).
- Do not use your phone in lessons, or when working with pupils.
- The school accepts no responsibility for phones that are lost, damaged or stolen while you are on the school grounds.
- Parents/carers should use the school office (01234) 332500 as the first point of contact if they need to get in touch with their child during the school day. They must not try to contact their child on his/her personal mobile during the school day.
- A full copy of our mobile phone policy is available from the school office.

Mr M Price
Assistant Head Innovation

January 2025
February 2026