

Blackfen School for Girls



Mobile Device Policy

Headteacher: Ms C Senior
Chair of Governors: Mr W Stone

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Prepared by	Deputy Headteacher	Ruth Makepeace	
Verified by	Headteacher	Carrie Senior	
Approved by	Chair of Governors	William Stone	

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1. Introduction and aims

At Blackfen School for Girls we recognise that mobile phones, including smart phones, and related electronic devices such as headphones, earphones and smart watches are an important part of everyday life for our students, parents/carers and staff, as well as the wider school community. Such devices are now part of modern society and the majority of students will now own a mobile device. However, mobile devices can lead to several problems in school such as bullying, disruption to lessons and inappropriate web usage. As a school, we strongly encourage our students to talk to each other and develop friendship groups at break and lunchtime, as opposed to using their mobile devices. In line with Department for Education guidance and our commitment to safeguarding and learning, students in Years 7-11 will **no longer be permitted to use mobile phones at any point while on school premises**.

To support this, we are implementing **Secure Lockable Phone Pouches** for every student.

Objectives of this Policy

- Eliminate distraction from learning caused by mobile phones
- Promote positive behaviour, engagement, and wellbeing
- Prevent misuse of mobile devices, including bullying, filming, and academic dishonesty
- Create a safer school environment and reduce safeguarding risks
- Reinforce a calm and focused school culture through consistent rules

Our policy also aims to:

- Promote, and set an example for, safe and responsible phone use
- Set clear guidelines for the use of mobile devices for staff, parents/carers and volunteers
- Support the school's other policies, especially those related to child protection and behaviour

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2. Roles and responsibilities

2.1 Staff

All staff (including teachers, associate 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 Deputy Headteacher is responsible for monitoring the policy, reviewing it, and holding staff and students accountable for its implementation.

2.2 Governors

The School Governing body are involved in reviewing this policy.

3. Use of mobile devices by staff

The school issues devices to staff & students where appropriate. A mobile device is a piece of portable electronic equipment that can connect to the internet, including, but not exclusively, a laptop, MacBook, mobile phone and a tablet user should not undertake any usage that is deemed unacceptable. This includes but is absolutely not limited to:

- Accessing, creating, storing or linking to or sending material that is pornographic, offensive, obscene or otherwise inappropriate.
- Sharing confidential information about the school, its students, or other members of the school community
- Setting up any software, applications or web services on this device without approval by authorised personnel, or creating or using any programme, tool or item of software designed to interfere with the functioning of the ICT facilities, accounts or data
- Carrying out any activity which defames or disparages the school, or risks bringing the school into disrepute
- Using inappropriate or offensive language

Please note: In the case of staff, if the AUP use of social media is not followed, as outlined above, there will be an investigation carried out and this could lead to disciplinary action. In the case of governors, it could lead to suspension, as it may damage the reputation of the Schools' Governing Body.

- School staff's social media profiles should not be available to students and set all public profiles to private.
- Staff will ensure that they do not post any images online that identify children who are students at the school without their consent.
- Staff should be aware of the school's Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) which can be found on SharePoint in Policies.

3.1 Personal mobile phones code of conduct

Staff (including volunteers, contractors and anyone else otherwise engaged by the school) are not permitted to make or receive calls, or send texts, while students are present/during contact time. Use of personal mobile phones must be restricted to non-contact time, and to areas of the school where students are not present (such as the staffroom).

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There may be circumstances in which it's appropriate for a member of staff to have use of their phone during contact time. For instance:

- Where they are accessing Edulink for professional purposes (such as performing Last-Call duty).
- For emergency contact by their child, or their child's school
- In the case of acutely ill dependents or family members

The headteacher will decide on a case-by-basis whether to allow for special arrangements.

If special arrangements are not deemed necessary, school staff can use the school office as a point of emergency contact.

3.2 Data protection

Staff must not use their personal mobile phones to process personal data, or any other confidential school information. Please refer to the school's Data Protection Policy and the Acceptable Use Policy for further information.

3.3 Safeguarding

- Staff must not give their personal contact details to parents/carers or students, including connecting through social media and messaging apps.
- Staff must not have students or their parent/carer(s) as their friend, contact or similar and must not attempt to contact students or their parent /carer(s) via social media.
- Must block or delete parents and students attempting to befriend or follow them via social media.
- Should not publish anything on social media that they would not want their employer or students to see.
- Staff must avoid publicising their contact details on any social media platform or website, to avoid unwanted contact by parents/carers or students.

Staff must not use their mobile phones to take photographs or recordings of students, their work, or anything else which could identify a pupil. If it's necessary to take photos or recordings as part of a lesson/school trip/activity, this must be done using school equipment.

The Education Act 2011 allows for staff seizing an electronic device to examine any data or files on the device if they think there is good reason to do so. The DfE guidance states that there is no need to have parental consent to search through a young person's mobile phone. These data or files may be deleted before returning the item if they believe there is good reason to do so.

Only the Headteacher, Designated Safeguarding Lead, Deputy Head, Deputy DSLs and Student Support Officers have the power to search a student's device.

3.4 Using personal mobiles for work purposes

A school mobile phone will be available for the lead individual to take on a trip. However, in some circumstances, it may be appropriate for staff to use personal mobile phones for work. Such circumstances may include, but aren't limited to:

- Emergency evacuations
- Supervising off-site trips

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- Supervising residential visits (unlikely)

In these circumstances, staff will:

- Use their mobile phones in an appropriate and professional manner, in line with the acceptable use policy
- Not use their phones to take photographs or recordings of students, their work, or anything else which could identify a student
- Refrain from using their phones to contact parents/carers, but if this is required caller identification must remain anonymous. If necessary, contact must be made via the school office

3.5 Work phones

Some members of staff are provided with a mobile phone by the school for work purposes.

Only authorised staff are permitted to use school phones, and access to the phone must not be provided to anyone without authorisation.

Staff must:

- Only use phone functions for work purposes, including making/receiving calls, sending/receiving emails or other communications, or using the internet
- Ensure that communication or conduct linked to the device is appropriate and professional at all times, in line with our staff code of conduct.

4. Use of mobile devices by students

Statutory government guidance mandates that all schools should be mobile phone-free environments by default, with any exceptions permitted only for specific, justified circumstances. This is to mitigate risks of distraction, disruption, bullying and abuse.

Students in Year 7-11 must place their mobile devices in their lockable phone pouch on arrival at school. Students may unlock their pouches in the unlocking stations provided as they leave school at the end of the day. Any student seen with their mobile device on school site between 7.45am and 3:10pm, without prior agreement, will have their device confiscated. Headphones must be kept in bags while on school site.

Devices must not be seen or heard aside from following scenarios:

- **Students with diabetes can access their device for glucose readings.**

4.1 Secure Lockable Phone Pouches – How the System Works

- Each student will be issued a signal-blocking pouch
- Students must bring their pouch to school every day
- As students arrive at school, phones are to be placed inside and locked in the pouch under staff supervision
- The pouch remains on the student's person but cannot be opened until the end of the school day
- At the end of the final lesson, students will unlock pouches as they leave site by using unlocking stations
- If a student leaves school early, they will unlock their pouch as they leave site.
- If a student arrives late, they will lock their phone in their pouch as they sign in in Reception.

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- If a pouch is forgotten, students will hand their phone in and collect it from the office at the end of the day.

4.2 Expectations of Students

- Bring your pouch every day and use it without exception
- Keep your pouch and phone secure and undamaged
- Follow all staff instructions regarding pouch use
- Do not bring or use any item intended to bypass the system (e.g. second phone, magnets)
- Smartwatches and other devices with cellular/communication capabilities must have these functions disabled or be treated as mobile phones.
- Do not damage or deface the pouch – this is treated as deliberate misconduct

4.3. Expectations of Staff

- Conduct spot checks during the day if misuse is suspected
- Report damage, missing pouches or misuse to SSO
- Keep unlock stations secure and inaccessible to students during the school day

4.4. Expectations of Parents

- Ensure your child brings their pouch to school each day
- Reinforce the message that phones must not be used during the school day
- Accept that any damage to a pouch will be chargeable
- Use the school reception/Student Support Officer as the point of contact in emergencies
- the school does not allow students to make covert recordings (voice or visual) of any other student or adult in school. If caught doing this at the time, or retrospectively, parents/carers should expect severe sanctions (including suspension) to be actioned by the school.
- they should understand that the school will take any inappropriate behaviour seriously and will respond to observed or reported inappropriate or unsafe behaviour in accordance with the School's Behaviour Policy.
- they should understand that their child (if a parent/carer) has agreed in the Acceptable Use Agreement to not to search for or share any material that could be considered offensive, harmful or illegal. This might include bullying or extremist/hate/discriminatory content.
- they must support the school by promoting safe and responsible use of the internet, online services and digital technology at home and will inform the school if they have any concerns.
- they are responsible for the content of their own social media account(s). If a parent/carer has shared their confidential login and password details of any of their social media accounts with anyone else or any of their accounts have been 'hacked' and/or taken over by someone else they will still be held responsible for the content posted to their account, in respect to this AUP. At the very least, once they regain control of any of their social media account(s) they will be expected to remove any content that does not meet any of the AUP outlined here. NB - Students and Parent/Carers
- parent/carers should not use a student's Office365 email, Edulink account or Teams account or other School provided system to communicate with teachers or any other member of staff. These systems are for your child's use alone to participate in their learning. If a parent/carer wishes to discuss any aspect of their child's learning with a member of staff, they should contact by ringing the school or via their own email or Edulink account.

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- if the AUP is not followed, as outlined above, there will be an investigation carried out and this will result in at least a serious sanction, exclusion or the school reporting a student to the Police as set out in the School's Behaviour Policy.
- the school has a robust filter for the internet and a system for monitoring computer usage, However, out of School and particularly on mobile phones connected to the mobile networks, there is often no supervision, monitoring or filtering. It is therefore a student's responsibility to adhere to this guidance or face the consequences of their actions as set out in the School's Behaviour Policy
- Parents/carers, visitors and volunteers will be informed of the rules for mobile phone use when they sign in at reception or attend a public event at school.
- Parent/Carers are to understand that the school has a clear policy on the use of Internet based social media (e.g., TikTok, Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat, YouTube, Pinterest, Instagram, WhatsApp etc...) and that they and their child should actively support this.

5. Exceptions

We recognise that for a very small minority of pupils, access to a mobile phone may be a medical or safeguarding necessity.

Medical Needs: Pupils who use a phone to monitor a medical condition (e.g., glucose levels for diabetes) will be assigned a soft close medical phone pouch via an Individual Healthcare Plan

Any other exceptions (e.g. for medical or SEN reasons) must be agreed in writing with the **Deputy Headteacher**. These will be rare and handled discreetly.

6. Consequences for failing to comply with AUP Policy

Students must adhere to the school's acceptable use agreement for mobile phone use (**See AUP Policy**)

Where students have not adhered to the school's acceptable use agreement, mobile devices will be confiscated. (**See Appendix 1**).

Confiscated devices will be taken to the school office and labelled with the student's name. This also applies to air pods, earphones and speakers.

The device will be confiscated and stored in a secure location in the school office.

(Schools are permitted to confiscate phones from students under sections 91 and 94 of the [Education and Inspections Act 2006](#))

The DfE guidance allows schools to search a student's phone if we have reason to believe the phone contains pornographic images, or if it is being/has been used to commit an offence or cause personal injury. [DfE's guidance on searching, screening and confiscation](#).

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)
- Up skirting
- Threats of violence or assault

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- Abusive calls, emails, social media posts or texts directed at someone on the basis of someone's ethnicity, religious beliefs or sexual orientation

7. Use of mobile devices by parents/carers, volunteers and visitors on school site

Parents/carers, visitors and volunteers (including governors and contractors) must adhere to this policy as it relates to staff if they are on the school site during the school day. A reminder of the policy will be given to parents/carers/volunteers and visitors when they arrive at reception.

This means:

- they must not take or obtain images of other students or staff and then share online, photographs, videos etc., without permission, unless it's a public event (such as a school fair), or of their own child
- using any photographs or recordings for personal use only, and not posting on social media without consent
- not using phones in lessons, or when working with students

Parents/carers or volunteers supervising school trips or residential visits must not:

- Use their phone to make contact with other parents/carers
- Take photos or recordings of students, their work, or anything else which could identify a pupil
- Parents/carers or volunteers supervising trips are also responsible for enforcing the school's policy for students using their phones, as set out in section 4 above.
- Parents/carers must use the school office or SSO 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.

7. Loss, theft or damage

Students bringing phones to school must ensure that phones are appropriately stored securely in their lockable pouches.

Students must secure their phones as much as possible, including using passwords or pin codes to protect access to the phone's functions. Staff must also secure their personal phones, as well as any work phone provided to them. Failure by staff to do so could result in data breaches.

The school accepts no responsibility for mobile phones that are lost, damaged or stolen on school premises or transport, during school visits or trips, or while students are travelling to and from school.

Lost phones and lost phone pouches should be returned to the school office. The school will then attempt to contact the owner.

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8. Monitoring and review

The school is committed to ensuring that this policy has a positive impact of students' education, behaviour and welfare. When reviewing the policy, the school will take into account:

- Feedback from parents/carers and students
 - Feedback from teachers
 - Records of behaviour and safeguarding incidents
 - Relevant advice from the Department for Education, the local authority or other relevant organisation
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Polices linked to this document include:

- Acceptable User Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Trips policy
- Data protection policy
- Code of conduct

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Appendix I. Sanctions

Issue	Consequence
Student forgets pouch	Hand in phone and collect from office at end of the day
Student has a phone in possession which has not gone in pouch	Phone confiscated Student placed in Internal (B4) Parent/carers or nominated adult to collect
Student brings a dummy phone or magnet into school in order to avoid using the pouch	Phone confiscated Student placed in Internal (B4) Parent/carers or nominated adult to collect
Student attempts to damage, tamper with, or otherwise force open their pouch	Student placed in Internal (B4) Parent/carers or nominated adult to pay for replacement phone pouch
Student refuses to lock their phone away in their pouch when required to do so or refusal to hand over	Fixed Term Suspension (FTE)

All parents will be informed by the school office when a device requires collection.

If non-compliance continues to be a concern, sanctions will escalate.