

# **Parklands High School An Academy**



## **Mobile Phone and Smartwatch Responsible User Policy**

**Parklands High School**

**Last Reviewed; October 2023**

**Next Review; October 2025**

**Version 202325.v1**

## **RATIONALE**

Our school motto, *LEARN, RESPECT, ASPIRE, ACHIEVE* underpins everything we do at Parklands. The occasional inappropriate use of mobile devices (such as mobile phones, tablets, and Smartwatches) undermines this.

The widespread ownership of mobile devices among young people nationally requires that all schools, teachers, pupils, parents and carers take steps to ensure that mobile devices are used responsibly at school. This Responsible Use Policy is designed to ensure that potential issues involving mobile devices can be clearly identified and addressed. This will ensure the benefits that such devices provide (such as increased safety) can continue to be enjoyed by our pupils whilst at the same time ensuring they do not interfere with learning.

Just like many schools nationally, Parklands has established the following Responsible Use Policy for mobile devices that provides teachers, pupils, parents and carers with guidelines and instructions for the appropriate use of them during school hours and when on the school site.

Pupils, their parents or carers must read and understand the Responsible Use Policy as a condition upon which permission is given to bring mobile devices to school.

The Responsible Use Policy for mobile devices also applies to pupils during school trips and extra-curricular activities both on the school site and off-site, unless alternative arrangements have been made.

## **CONTEXT**

In order for this policy to be effective it is inextricably linked with other school policies. It should be read in conjunction with the Behaviour policy.

We recognise that personal communication through mobile technologies is an accepted part of everyday life but that such technologies need to be used well.

We understand that mobile devices are owned by a significant number of pupils and recognise the need for parents to give their children mobile devices to protect them from everyday risks involving personal security and safety. There is also increasing concern about children travelling alone on public transport or commuting long distances to school. It is acknowledged that providing a child with a mobile device can give parents reassurance that they can contact their child if they need to speak to them urgently.

We do not consider it realistic or desirable to prohibit such devices being brought to school, nor is it logistically possible for school to collect mobile devices in each morning and return them in the afternoon. It is the responsibility of pupils who bring such devices to school to abide by the guidelines outlined in this document. The decision to provide a mobile device to their children should be made by parents or carers. It is incumbent upon parents to understand the capabilities of these devices and the potential use/misuse of them.

Parents/carers should be aware if their child takes a mobile device to school it is assumed household insurance will provide the required cover in the event of loss or damage. It is our policy to allow pupils to have a mobile device with them in school under the conditions outlined in this policy.

Despite this the use of mobile devices does present a number of issues for us as a school. For example:

- The high monetary value of many devices. They are a valuable piece of equipment prone to loss and theft.
- The integration of cameras into these devices, leading to potential child protection and data protection issues with regard to pupils filming events, each other, inappropriately taking pictures of events/each other and using or distributing images inappropriately.
- The potential for mobile technology to be used to bully other students.
- The potential to use the mobile device for messaging whilst in class.
- Accessing the internet using personal data, and bypassing the school's web filtering.

## **RESPONSIBLE USE**

Pupils are required to use mobile devices responsibly at all times.

1. The school is a workplace and mobile devices can interfere with the atmosphere and good order of the workplace. At Parklands we expect these devices to be kept in bags/blazers during and between lessons. Mobile devices should be handed into the valuables box in PE before going into the changing room and before all examinations.
2. Unless express permission is granted, mobile devices should not be used during school lessons and other educational activities, such as assemblies. Pupils may use their devices outside the main school building at break and lunchtimes.
3. If a member of staff sees a pupil using a mobile device outside of break time and lunchtime, it will be confiscated by the member of staff. If a pupil wants to look at the time he/she should wear a watch or look at the classroom clock.
4. Mobile devices must not disrupt classroom lessons with ring tones, music or notifications.
5. Should there be more than one disruption to lessons caused by a mobile device, the responsible pupil may face disciplinary actions as sanctioned by the Headteacher. This may include a ban in school, detention or time in Isolation.
6. Pupils must ensure that files stored on their devices do not contain violent, degrading or offensive images. The transmission of some images/information can be a criminal offence and will be dealt with as such by the school. A fixed penalty notice can be issued by the Police for misuse of technology.
7. If a pupil breaches any of these rules, the mobile device will be confiscated and given to the Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher. It will be returned at the end of the day to the pupil, or if confiscated after lunch it will be returned the following day, and in some circumstances, we will expect parents/carers to collect it.
8. The school accepts no responsibility for replacing lost, stolen or damaged mobile devices, whether in school, or whilst traveling to/from school.

## **INAPPROPRIATE CONDUCT**

1. Mobile devices are banned from all examinations nationally. Pupils must hand the device to invigilators before entering the exam hall. Any pupil found in possession of a mobile device during an examination will have that paper disqualified. Such an incident may result in all other exam papers being disqualified.
2. Cyber-bullying is completely unacceptable, and will be followed up by the school as serious misbehaviour in line with our Anti-Bullying policy. Using mobile devices to bully and threaten other students is totally unacceptable and will not be tolerated. In some cases it can constitute criminal behaviour. If the use of technology humiliates, embarrasses or causes offence it is unacceptable regardless of whether 'consent' was given.
3. It is forbidden for students to victimise another pupil and use their mobile device to take videos and pictures of acts to denigrate and humiliate that pupil and then send the pictures to other pupils or upload it to a website or social media for public viewing. This also includes using mobile devices to photograph or film any pupil or member of staff without their consent. In the event that this happens the pupil will be asked and expected to delete those images immediately and given a suitable punishment. It is a criminal offence to use a mobile device to menace, harass or offend another person and almost all calls, text messages and emails can be traced by the Police.
4. Any pupil who uses vulgar, derogatory, or obscene language whilst using a mobile device will be given an appropriate sanction.
5. Pupils must ensure that files stored on their mobile device do not contain violent, degrading, racist or pornographic images. The transmission of such images is a criminal offence. Similarly, 'sexting' – which is the sending of personal sexual imagery – is also a criminal offence. School will hand all such evidence to the Police.

## **SANCTIONS**

Pupils who infringe the rules set out in this document will face having their mobile device confiscated by teachers. If the device is being used inappropriately the pupil must give it to a teacher when requested. Failure to do so will incur a sanction.

On the first infringement of this policy the mobile device would be confiscated by the teacher and taken to the Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher. The pupil will be able to collect the device at the end of the school day, or the following day, if the device was confiscated after lunchtime. In some instances, parents/carers will be asked to collect the device. If the device was confiscated after lunch on Friday, the device will be returned the following Monday, unless it is the end of a term/half term.

Any further infringements of the mobile device code of conduct may result in a ban on bringing the device to school.

At Parklands we are fully aware that some types of harassing or threatening behaviour or communications could be a criminal offence, for example under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997, the Malicious Communications Act 1988, the Communications Act 2003 and the Public Order Act 1986.

Under the Malicious Communication Act 1988, it is an offence for a person to send an electronic communication to another person with intent to cause distress or anxiety or to send an electronic communication which conveys a message which is indecent or grossly offensive, a threat, or information which is false and know or believed to be false by the sender. If school feel an offence may have been committed by a pupil in this way the Head teacher will seek guidance from the Police as to the next course of action.

As set out in the previous section, failure to heed the rules set out in this document may result in an alleged incident – of a serious nature – being referred to the Police for investigation. In such cases, the parent or carer would be notified immediately.

### **EMERGENCIES**

If a pupil needs to contact his/her parents/carers in exceptional circumstances they will be allowed to use the school phone. If a parent needs to contact their child urgently they should phone the school office and a message will be relayed promptly. The school's number is 01257 264596.

Parents/carers are reminded that in cases of emergency, the school office remains a vital and appropriate point of contact and can ensure your child is reached quickly and assisted in any relevant way. Passing on messages through school reception also reduces the likelihood of disrupting lessons inadvertently.

### **RESPONSIBILITY FOR MOBILE DEVICES**

School accepts no responsibility whatsoever for theft, loss, damage or health effects (potential or actual) relating to mobile devices. It is the responsibility of parents/carers and pupils to ensure mobile devices are properly insured.

This policy will be reviewed every two years.

Date of review: October 2023

Date of next review: October 2025