



# Personal Electronic Devices Policy

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Prepared/Updated : March 2023  
Review Frequency : Every 2 years  
Next Review Due : March 2025

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## Statement of intent

Penwortham Priory Academy accepts that personal mobile phones and tablets are often given to pupils by their parents to ensure their safety and personal security.

Mobile phones, digital music players and other personal electronic devices have become more widely available.

As a school, we must make a sensible and practical response. We understand that parents wish their children to carry a mobile phone for their personal safety, whilst students may wish to bring additional devices to school for other reasons.

Listening to music and using mobile phones are an important part of modern life for most of today's children. They are an accepted and necessary aspect of the developed world's communication vehicles. Music and phones play important roles in helping students to feel part of a community. Music reflects the culture and society we live in and so listening to it can enable students to better understand the world they live in. Phones are an increasingly powerful tool to help children network socially, research using the internet, take photographs and video, listen to music and organise their activities. We provide opportunities for all our students to develop the skills towards appreciating mobile technology and a wide variety of musical forms and to begin to make judgements about the appropriate use of their phones and the quality of the music they listen to on these and other mobile devices.

Despite these points, with mobile phones and music devices being such a prominent feature of modern society and with most of our pupils owning these, Penwortham Priory Academy has to recognise a number of issues that they can present for schools:

- The high value of many mobile phones and music devices leading to them being desirable items for thieves
- The inappropriate use of such devices during lessons.
- The inappropriate lyrics used in some songs.
- The health effects (potential or actual) related to using mobile phones
- The health effects (potential or actual) related to listening to music through headphones.
- The potential risk to children accessing social networking sites, using the internet and downloading or uploading content.

Pupils who choose to bring mobile phones and music devices into school, do so entirely at their owner's risk. The school cannot accept any responsibility for theft, loss, damage or health effects (potential or actual) resulting from their use. Students and parents should be aware, however, that mobile phones and music devices are a target for theft and accordingly, they should always be stored securely in lockers whilst at school. Staff will not take personal responsibility for looking after pupils' phones during lessons. The only exception to this rule is if a mobile phone is confiscated as per our standard procedures; a pupil chooses to leave their mobile phone with our pastoral team in order to have some 'time out' from it, or before going into an exam, when pupils must hand their phones into the office for safekeeping. A system for their safe storage and return is in place.

Advice for pupils and parents on the use of mobile phones:

Parents and guardians should be aware that whilst there are obvious benefits to students having a mobile phone in terms of personal safety there are also some associated risks such

as potential for theft, bullying and inappropriate contact, including grooming by unsuitable persons.

- Don't give out your number or friends' numbers to people you don't know, especially in Instant Messenger or Chat Rooms.
- Keep your security code or PIN number private.
- If you get texts, which upset you, don't reply but keep a record and tell an adult. In serious cases you can report it to the police.
- If you receive a rude or embarrassing image or text about someone don't forward it to others.
- Distributing sexual images of other young people is harassment and is illegal. If you receive something like this tell an adult immediately.
- Ask permission before taking a picture of your friends and think before sending it on. Once sent you have lost control of it and it could become public before you know it.
- See Kidsmart at [www.kidsmart.org.uk](http://www.kidsmart.org.uk) for more information on staying safe, leaflets and interactive games.

Signed by:

_____	<b>Headteacher</b>	Date: _____
_____	<b>Chair of Governors</b>	Date: _____

## 1. Key roles and responsibilities

- 1.1. **The governing body** has overall responsibility for the implementation of the personal electronic devices policy and procedures of Penwortham Priory Academy.
- 1.2. **The governing body** has overall responsibility for ensuring that the Personal Electronic Devices Policy, as written, does not discriminate on any grounds, including but not limited to ethnicity/national origin, culture, religion, gender, disability or sexual orientation.
- 1.3. The governing body has overall responsibility for reviewing the Personal Electronic Devices Policy every two years.
- 1.4. **The headteacher** has responsibility for handling complaints regarding this policy as outlined in the school's Complaints Policy.
- 1.5. **The headteacher** will be responsible for the day-to-day implementation and management of the personal electronic devices policy and procedures of Penwortham Priory Academy.

## 2. General property

- 2.1. Pupils are responsible for their own belongings.
- 2.2. School accepts no responsibility whatsoever for theft, loss, damage or health effects (potential or actual) relating to mobile phones or music devices.
- 2.3. It is the responsibility of parents and students to ensure these are properly insured and that when listening to music, the lyrics of songs are appropriate for the age of the student and the culture and society we live in.
- 2.4. Exercise books, planners, text books, electronic equipment, stationery and folders issued by Penwortham Priory Academy remain the property of the school and should be treated as such.
- 2.5. Pupils are responsible for replacing lost or damaged school property, including electronic devices.

## 3. Personal electronic devices

- 3.1. Personal electronic devices include, but are not limited to, existing and emerging:
  - Mobile communication systems and smart technologies (mobile phones, iPhones, Smartphones, Smart Watches, internet-enabled phones, etc.).
  - Personal Digital Assistants (PDA) (Palm organizers, pocket PCs, etc.)
  - Handheld entertainment systems (video games, CD players, compact DVD players, MP3 players, iPods, earphones, etc.).
  - Portable internet devices (mobile messengers, iPads, etc.).
  - Wireless handheld technologies or portable information technology systems (used for word processing, wireless internet access, image capture/recording, sound recording, and information transmitting/receiving/storing, etc.).

- 3.2. Penwortham Priory Academy acknowledges the increasing use of mobile technology as part of the curriculum.
- 3.3. Parents/carers should be aware if their child takes a mobile phone or tablet to school.
- 3.4. Penwortham Priory Academy accepts no responsibility for replacing lost, stolen or damaged mobile devices either at school, or travelling to and from school.

#### **4. Acceptable use**

- 4.1. Mobile phones, smart watches and/or music playing devices must be **'off and out of site'**, always.
- 4.2. They should not be used in any manner or place that is disruptive to the normal routines of the School or to other people. Usage includes the sending and receiving of text messages or data, taking and receiving video or photographic images.
- 4.3. At all other times, mobile devices (including smart watches) should be **'off and out of sight'**, always.
- 4.4. Mobile phones should only be used by students in cases of emergency or genuine need in school and only then in the presence of a member of staff, e.g. to phone home and tell a parent that an event has been cancelled, the student has forgotten some necessary medication, etc.
- 4.5. Students who need to contact home during school hours for any reason, e.g. feeling unwell and needing to go home, organising for equipment to be brought to school by a parent, etc., must arrange this through the school's reception or pastoral staff. Where appropriate, staff will contact the pupil's home or allow the pupil to use the school's phone. In the event that a pupil needs to go home, staff will make contact with the child's form tutor and/or House Progress Leader to make them aware.
- 4.6. Under no circumstances may students use either mobile phones or pay phones to contact home and make arrangements to leave school, except through the reception or pastoral staff and with the agreement of their form tutor / House Progress Leader.
- 4.7. Mobile phones must not be taken into examinations.
- 4.8. Parents and students should ensure that such phones are properly and adequately insured as personal property.
- 4.9. Students are not permitted to use mobile phones during field trips, excursions or other off-campus supervised activities except at the discretion of the party leader. Arrangements will be in place for communication with staff members in the case of an emergency.

- 4.10. Mobile devices should not be used in any manner or place that is disruptive to the normal routine of the school.
- 4.11. Pupils are responsible for protecting their own personal information including their phone number.
- 4.12. In certain circumstances, music may be played over the classroom's speaker system to the class as a whole.
- 4.13. During such sessions, the volume of the music must be set so that the student can still hear any instruction or intervention by the teacher.
- 4.14. Devices must always be put away, out of sight and not listened to when travelling between lessons.
- 4.15. Under no circumstances should any device be taken into any examination in school.

## 5. Unacceptable use

- 5.1. Mobile phones must be **'off and out of sight'**, always.
- 5.2. They should not be seen on the school site at any time.
- 5.3. All pupils have a locker, so we advise them to store phones securely in their locker at the start of the day.
- 5.4. If not in their locker, then they should be kept in their bags, but they must be **'off and out of sight'**, always.
- 5.5. The only exception is that they may be used in the school reception area after 3:20pm to contact parents regarding travel arrangements, with the permission of a member of staff.
- 5.6. If your daughter or son needs to contact home for any reason during the school day, they should go to either the school reception or the Pastoral office, at either break or lunchtime, and we will allow them to use a school phone.
- 5.7. To support us in implementing our procedures, we would ask that if parents or guardians need to contact your daughter or son during the school day, that you ring the school and a message will be passed on to your daughter or son by a member of staff.
- 5.8. If you require a response to the message from your daughter or son, a member of staff will allow them to use a school phone to call you.
- 5.9. Pupils who bring mobile phones into school do so entirely at their own risk.
- 5.10. The school cannot accept any responsibility for theft, loss, damage or health effects (potential or actual) resulting from their use.
- 5.11. Unless express permission is granted, mobile devices should not be used to make calls, send SMS messages, iMessages or emails, take photos or use any other application during school and other educational and pastoral activities.

- 5.12. Files should not be sent between mobile devices and Bluetooth and WIFI functions should be disabled while on school premises.
- 5.13. If pupils fall ill during school hours, they must not use their mobile device to contact parents/carers; they should use the agreed procedures.
- 5.14. Under no circumstances should mobile devices be taken into examinations.
- 5.15. Under no circumstances should mobile devices be used in changing rooms or toilets.
- 5.16. Personal laptops, mobile phones or tablets must not be plugged in to outlets on school premises without the express permission of the **facilities manager** and an up-to-date portable appliance test (PAT).
- 5.17. Staff must not give their phone number(s) to pupils.

## **6. Cyberbullying**

- 6.1. At Penwortham Priory Academy, cyber bullying is taken seriously.
- 6.2. Incidents of cyber bullying will be dealt with and reported along the same chain as the Anti-Bullying Policy.
- 6.3. As part of our on-going commitment to the prevention of cyber bullying, regular education and discussion about e-safety will take place as part of computing and PSHE.

## **7. Spot checks**

- 7.1. Pupils are required to comply with any request to check their mobile phone, tablet or flash drive.
- 7.2. Pupils are required to comply with any request to disable the screen lock function of their phone and show any teacher or staff member what they are doing.
- 7.3. If staff suspect that a pupil has taken video or photographs in or out of school that would breach the safety or rights of others, they must report their suspicions, and seek guidance and support from the Designated Senior Persons (DSP's) in school.
- 7.4. In circumstances where there is a suspicion that material on the mobile may provide evidence relating to a criminal offence, the phone will be handed over to the police for further investigation. Parents or guardians will be informed of our actions and will need to recover the phone from the police in such circumstances.

## **8. Accessing Data**

- 8.1. Downloading and accessing inappropriate websites and data on school/academy personal electronic devices is strictly prohibited.
- 8.2. Using the personal data of any pupil or member of staff for non-work related activity is strictly prohibited.



- 8.3. If staff knowingly look through images / video responding to a suspicion that there is pornographic content that would contravene child safety; you are in breach of the law. Do not do this. Always report your suspicions, and seek guidance and support in these instances from the DSP in school.
- 8.4. More information about accessing data can be found in our Data Protection Policy.

## 9. Consequences:

- 9.1 Any pupil seen by a member of staff with a mobile phone will have the device confiscated by that member of staff for it not being '**off and out of sight**'.
- 9.2 Mobile phones confiscated by a member of staff at breaks or lunch time, will be taken to the Pastoral office, where they will be named and locked away securely until the end of the day.
- 9.3 If a mobile phone is confiscated by a member of staff during a lesson, a member of the Pastoral Team or SLT will come to the lesson to collect the mobile phone and take it to the Pastoral office for secure storage.
- 9.4 Confiscated mobile phones may be collected by the pupil, from the Pastoral Office, at the end of the day, and they will be issued with an SLT After School Detention.
- 9.5 If any pupil refuses to give any member of staff their mobile phone for it not being '**off and out of sight**', the pupils' parent/guardian will be contacted, and the pupil will be sent home.
- 9.6 The following morning, the parent/guardian will need to come into school with their daughter or son to meet with a member of the Senior Leadership Team.
- 9.7 Persistent flouting of the mobile phone rules will result in inclusion in our isolation and reflection room.
- 9.8 As such, a pupil who persistently has their mobile phone confiscated will result in the device being placed in the school safe until a parent or guardian is able to come to school to collect the device and speak to a member of the Senior Leadership Team.
- 9.9 Remember, '**Off and out of sight**', always.
- 9.10 Bullying via mobile device will be disciplined in line with Penwortham Priory Academy's Anti-Bullying Policy.
- 9.11 Pupils caught taking mobile phones or tablets into examinations will be banned from bringing devices into school and will have their device confiscated until parents/guardians come into school to collect it.

## Time Out

Finally, being a teenager is hard enough, but the pressures faced by young people through the use of mobile phones are arguably unique to this digital generation. It is vitally important

therefore, that we not only put safeguards in place, but in so doing, provide our pupils with some welcome 'time out' from their phones to focus on their learning.

With this in mind, pupils can also choose to hand their mobile phones in to us at the Pastoral office, for safe storage, for a period of time should they so wish. This may be a for a day, a week, or longer, and we are happy to accommodate any such request, with parent's or guardian's approval. Pupils' preparing for exams for example, in a bid to avoid any unnecessary distractions, may find this particularly useful as part of their approach to revision. Please do speak to your daughter or son about this, as a viable option at certain times in their learning journey with us.

## **10. Policy review**

10.1 This policy is reviewed every **two years** by the **Headteacher**.

10.2 The scheduled review date for this policy is **March 2025**