



Walton Hall Academy

Mobile Phone Policy



Document Owner:	Laura Paget
Approved By:	Academy Council
Queries to:	Laura Paget
Review period:	3 yearly

1. Introduction

At Walton Hall Academy we recognise that mobile phones, including smart phones, are an important part of everyday life for our students, staff and visitors. In February 2024, the government released some specific guidance regarding the use of mobile phones in schools. This guidance is covered within this policy.

Our policy aims to:

- Promote, and set an example for, safe and responsible phone use.
- Set clear guidelines for the use of mobile phones for students, staff, parents and volunteers.
- Support the school's other policies, especially those related to safeguarding and behaviour.

This policy also aims to address some of the challenges posed by mobile phones in school, such as:

- Risks to child protection.
- Data protection issues.
- Potential for lesson disruption.
- Risk of theft, loss, or damage.
- Appropriate use of technology in the classroom.

Below are some examples of things that have happened in UK schools and why we need to ensure all our students and adults are safe.

- Use of mobile devices for up-skirting and obtaining imagery of genitals.
- Adults taking pictures of children for theirs and others' sexual gratification.
- Pornography and violent content accessed by children's own internet connectivity whilst in school.
- Gang culture, knives, extremism, Drill and Grime music accessed by children's own internet connectivity.
- Inappropriate and violent games accessed and played including 'Blue Whale' which requests users to undertake a series of tasks; the final one being suicide.
- Pornographic and violent interpretations of known children's cartoons accessed inadvertently.
- Inappropriate and 'dangerous' material stored on personal devices by family members, then accessed without internet connectivity in school.
- Students contacting family members/ birth family against parental permission.

- Students taking pictures and videos of staff, creating memes and using VI to distort images, meaning and publishing online, leading to suspension and disciplinary action.
- Using images taken of other students for bullying and humiliation on social media.
- Sharing of personal data on social media inappropriately.

2. Roles and responsibilities

All staff (including teachers, support staff, residential 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 Senior Leadership Team (SLT) are responsible for monitoring the policy every 3 years, reviewing it, and holding staff and students accountable for its implementation. Should guidance change the policy will be reviewed.

3. Mobile phone use for students

Key stage 3 and 4 students:

- **No mobile phones on the school premises at any time.**
- If a child requires a mobile phone for a trip or visit, you will be notified of this and informed of the processes for mobile phone use for the visit.
- A child accessing residence is advised not to bring in a mobile phone, however if they do it MUST be handed into a member of the residence team on arrival to school. Children will NOT be allowed to have their phones in their residential bedrooms overnight and any use is supervised by the residential team. The following morning, student phones will be signed into the office where they will be kept in a safe ready for students to collect at the end of the day.
- In exceptional circumstances, if a child requires a phone in school, it must not be a smart phone with a camera. This needs to be agreed with the senior staff team (laura.paget@walton.set.org) and the phone must be handed into the office for safe keeping.

Post 16 Students:

As Post 16 is a college for young adults, it has been agreed that mobile phones will be allowed, but with strict rules that must be adhered to, to ensure the safety of all students and staff.

- Mobile phones must never be seen or heard during lesson time or when moving around the school site.
- Phones can only be used in the designated classroom whilst supervised by a member of staff during break times and lunchtimes.
- To ensure appropriate usage, staff will ask to see phones during this time to ensure that students are keeping themselves safe.
- Students may be allowed to use a phone during a lesson if it supports learning and permission is given from the teacher.
- The same rules regarding residence outlined above apply for Post 16 students also.

All students will be required to sign an agreement that states they have understood and will follow this policy.

Should a student breach any aspect of these rules the following consequences will apply:

- Mobile phone will be confiscated and handed to the office for the remainder of the day.
- Negative class charts points will be issued.
- Continual breaches of the policy will result in the phone being confiscated and not returned until a meeting has been had with parents in school.

The government guidance states that schools do have the power to confiscate mobile phones or similar devices as a disciplinary penalty. The law protects staff from liability in any proceedings brought against them for any loss or damage to items they have confiscated as a sanction, providing they have acted lawfully.

Headteachers are backed by the DfE to confiscate mobile phones and similar devices for the length of time they deem proportionate.

Headteachers and members of SLT have statutory power to search a child if we suspect they are in possession of a prohibited item.

The role of the parents

Parents have an important role in supporting the school's policy and to reinforce the policy at home.

When parents need to contact their child during the school day they should call the school office. We have a well-established and efficient system for getting messages to children when needed.

If a child needs to contact parents during the course of the school day, they should speak to their class teacher who will enable this if deemed necessary.

4. Use of mobile phones by staff

4.1 Personal mobile phones

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

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

- For emergency contact by their child, or their child's school
- In the case of acutely ill dependents or family members

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

4.2 Safeguarding

Staff must refrain from giving their personal contact details to parents or children, including connecting through social media and messaging apps.

Staff must avoid publicising their contact details on any social media platform or website, to avoid unwanted contact by parents or children.

Similar details and guidance can be found in the Code of Conduct Policy alongside the ICT Acceptable Use Policy.

Staff must not use their mobile phones to take photographs or recordings of children, their work, or anything else which could identify a student. If

it is necessary to take photos or recordings as part of a lesson/school trip/activity, this must be done using school equipment.

4.3 Using personal mobiles for work purposes

In some circumstances, it may be appropriate for staff to use personal mobile phones for work. Such circumstances may include, but are not limited to:

- Emergency evacuations
- Supervising off-site trips
- Supervising residential visits
- Receipt of school information

In these circumstances, staff will:

Use their mobile phones in an appropriate and professional manner, in line with our code of conduct.

4.5 Sanctions

Staff that fail to adhere to this policy may face disciplinary action. See the school's staff disciplinary policy for more information.

5. Use of mobile phones by parents, volunteers and visitors

Parents, 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.

This means:

- Not taking pictures or recordings of children, unless it is a public event, 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 children.
- Parents, 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.
- Parents or volunteers supervising trips are also responsible for enforcing the school's policy for children using their phones.

6. Loss, theft or damage

Where a mobile phone is brought into school, it is entirely at the child's and parents' own risk. The school accepts no responsibility for the loss, theft or damage of any phone or electronic device brought into school.

Ref: Section 94, Education and Inspections Act 2006 states that "where a teacher disciplines a pupil by confiscating an item, neither the teacher nor the school will be liable for any loss or damage to that item".

Equally, there is no statutory liability on schools for items that go missing in other ways.

Confiscated phones will be stored in the school office in a secure safe.

Appendix 1: Student agreement.

MOBILE PHONE RULES

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I sign to acknowledge that I have understood the rules outlined in Walton Hall Academy's Mobile Phone Policy. I will follow these rules and accept that sanctions will be applied should I breach them.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Appendix 2:

Template mobile phone information slip for visitors

Use of mobile phones in our school:

- Please keep your mobile phone on silent/vibrate while on the school grounds.
- Please do not use phones where children are present. If you must use your phone, you may go to the staff room.
- Do not take photos or recordings of children or staff.
- Do not use your phone in lessons, or when working with children.
- The school accepts no responsibility for phones that are lost, damaged or stolen while you are on the school grounds.

A full copy of our Mobile Phone Policy is available from the school office.

Policy Review Information

Date	Details of change or review	Reviewer Name
Sept 2024	Policy Written	Julie Wood
Feb 2025	Policy Updated	Laura Paget

Walton Hall Academy
Stafford Road
Eccleshall
ST21 6JR

Shaw Education Trust Head Office
Kidsgrove Secondary School Gloucester
Road
Kidsgrove
ST7 4DL

Facebook
Call
Email
Visit

Walton Hall Academy
01785 850420
office@walton.set.org
waltonhallacademy.org.uk

Twitter
LinkedIn
Call
Email
Visit

@ShawEduTrust
@ShawEducationTrust
01782 948259
info@shaw-education.org.uk
shaw-education.org.uk

