

# Montgomery High School

## Mobile Phones: Acceptable Use Policy (Students)

### 1. Purpose

- 1.1. The widespread ownership of mobile phones among young people requires that school administrators, teachers, students, parents and carers take steps to ensure that mobile phones are used responsibly at school. This Acceptable Use Policy is designed to ensure that potential issues involving mobile phones can be clearly identified and addressed, ensuring the benefits that mobile phones provide (such as increased safety) can continue to be enjoyed by our students.
- 1.2. Our School has established the following Acceptable Use Policy for mobile phones that provides teachers, students, parents and carers guidelines and instructions for the appropriate use of mobile phones during school hours.
- 1.3. Students, their parents or carers must read and understand the Acceptable Use Policy as a condition upon which permission is given to bring mobile phones to school.
- 1.4. The Acceptable Use Policy for mobile phones also applies to students during school visits and extra-curricular activities both on the school grounds and off-site.

### 2. Rationale

- 2.1. Our North Shore setting and the wide travel to work area for our parents presents challenges when it comes to communications. The school recognises that personal communication through mobile technologies is an accepted part of everyday life but that such technologies need to be used appropriately.
- 2.2. Personal safety and security - Our School accepts that parents/carers give their children mobile phones 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 phone gives parents reassurance that they can contact their child if they need to speak to them urgently.

### 3. Responsibility

- 3.1. It is the responsibility of students who bring mobile phones to school to abide by the guidelines outlined in this document.
- 3.2. The decision to provide a mobile phone to their children should be made by parents or carers. It is incumbent upon parents to understand the capabilities of the phone and the potential use/misuse of those capabilities.
- 3.3. Parents/carers should be aware if their child takes a mobile phone to school. It is assumed household insurance will provide the required cover in the event of loss or damage. The school cannot accept responsibility for any loss, damage or costs incurred due to its use.
- 3.4. Students are responsible for keeping the school informed should they lose their phone, however, the school will support the student(s) in trying to retrieve the device should it be misplaced or lost within the school grounds.
- 3.5. 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.

#### 4. **Acceptable Uses**

- 4.1. Mobile phones should be switched off and kept out of sight during classroom lessons and while moving between lessons. Exceptions may be permitted only in **exceptional circumstances** if the parent/carer specifically requests it. Such requests will be handled on a case-by-case basis and should be directed to Mrs G. Smith (Assistant Principal). Parents/carers are requested that in cases of emergency they contact the school first so we are aware of any potential issue and may make the necessary arrangements.
- 4.2. While on school premises at break times and lunch times mobile phones must be switched off and kept out of sight.
- 4.3. Mobile phones should not be used in any manner or place that is disruptive to the normal routine of the school (see below).
- 4.4. Students should protect their phone numbers by only giving them to close friends and keeping a note of who they have given them to. This can help protect the student's number from falling into the wrong hands and guard against the receipt of insulting, threatening or unpleasant voice, text and picture messages.
- 4.5. The school recognises the importance of emerging technologies present in modern mobile phones e.g. camera and video recording, internet access, MP3 and MP4 playback, blogging etc. In the future teachers may wish to utilise these functions to aid teaching and learning and Students may have the opportunity to use their mobile phones in the classroom. On these occasions Students may use their mobile phones in the classroom when express permission has been given by the teacher. The use of personal mobile phones in one lesson for a specific purpose does not mean blanket usage is then acceptable.

#### 5. **Unacceptable Uses**

- 5.1. Unless express permission is granted, mobile phones should not be used to make calls, send SMS messages, surf the internet, take photos or use any other application during school lessons and other educational activities, such as assemblies.
- 5.2. The Bluetooth function of a mobile phone must be switched off at all times and not be used to send images or files to other mobile phones.
- 5.3. Mobile phones must not disrupt classroom lessons with ring tones, music or beeping. They should be turned off during lesson times.
- 5.4. Using mobile phones to bully and threaten other students is unacceptable. Cyber bullying 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.
- 5.5. It is forbidden for students to "gang up" on another student and use their mobile phones to take videos and pictures of acts to denigrate and humiliate that student and then send the pictures to other students or upload it to a website for public viewing. This also includes using mobile phones to photograph or film any student or member of staff without their consent. It is a criminal offence to use a mobile phone to menace, harass or offend another person and almost all calls, text messages and emails can be traced.
- 5.6. Mobile phones are not to be used or taken into changing rooms or toilets or used in any situation that may cause embarrassment or discomfort to their fellow students, staff or visitors to the school.

- 5.7. Should there be more than one disruption to lessons caused by a mobile phone, the responsible student may face disciplinary actions as sanctioned by the Principal. This may include a mobile phone ban in school.
- 5.8. It is unacceptable to take a picture of a member of staff without their permission. In the event that this happens the student will be asked and expected to delete those images.
- 6. Theft or damage**
- 6.1. Students should mark their mobile phone clearly with their names.
- 6.2. Students who bring a mobile phone to school should ensure that it is safely put away in their locker/bag when they arrive. To reduce the risk of theft during school hours, students who carry mobile phones are advised to keep them well concealed and not 'advertise' they have them.
- 6.3. Mobile phones that are found in the school and whose owner cannot be located should be handed to front office reception.
- 6.4. The school accepts no responsibility for replacing lost, stolen or damaged mobile phones.
- 6.5. The school accepts no responsibility for students who lose or have their mobile phones stolen while travelling to and from school.
- 6.6. It is strongly advised that students use passwords/pin numbers to ensure that unauthorised phone calls cannot be made on their phones (e.g. by other students, or if stolen). Students must keep their password/pin numbers confidential. Mobile phones and/or passwords may not be shared.
- 6.7. Lost and stolen mobile phones in the U.K. can be blocked across all networks making them virtually worthless because they cannot be used.
- 7. Inappropriate conduct**
- 7.1. Mobile phones are banned from all examinations. Any student found in possession of a mobile phone during an examination will have that paper disqualified. Such an incident may result in all other exam papers being disqualified.
- 7.2. Any student who uses vulgar, derogatory, or obscene language while using a mobile phone will face disciplinary action.
- 7.3. Students with mobile phones may not engage in personal attacks, harass another person, or post private information about another person using SMS messages, taking/sending photos or objectionable images, and phone calls. Students using mobile phones to bully other students will face disciplinary action.  
*N.B. It should be noted that it is a criminal offence to use a mobile phone to menace, harass or offend another person. As such, the school may consider it appropriate to involve the police.*
- 7.4. Students must ensure that files stored on their phones 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 and could be reported to the police.
- 8. Sanctions**
- 8.1. Students who infringe the rules set out in this document could face having their phones confiscated by teachers. If the phone is being used inappropriately the student must give it to a teacher if requested.

- 8.2. On the first infringement of this policy the mobile phone would be confiscated by the teacher and taken to a secure place within the school office or pastoral offices. Given the size of the school it may be kept securely with a member of the senior team. The student will be able to collect the mobile phone at the end of the school day and a record will be made of the incident. A letter will also be sent to the parent/carer to inform them of the incident. The location and form of the secure place will be one deemed appropriate by the Behaviour Management Team.
- 8.3. On the second infringement the mobile phone would be confiscated by the teacher and taken to a secure place within the school office. Parents will be notified and the pupil will not be permitted to collect the phone without a parent/carer's consent. If a parent/carer is unable to attend the school they are permitted to phone and give verbal consent for their child to collect the phone and must speak to a member of the management team or student support. The incident will be recorded.
- 8.4. Any further infringements of the mobile phone code of conduct may result in a ban on bringing a mobile phone to school.
- 8.5. 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.