Linton School

Mobile Phone Policy

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1. Introduction and aims

At Linton School we recognise that mobile phones and similar devices, including smartphones, are an important part of everyday life for our YPs, parents/carers and staff, as well as the wider school community.

Our policy aims to:

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

Note: throughout this policy, 'mobile phones' refers to mobile phones and similar devices.

2. Relevant guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the Department for Education's non-statutory mobile phone guidance and behaviour guidance. Further guidance that should be considered alongside this policy is Keeping Children Safe in Education.

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 Staff

All staff (including teachers, support staff and supply staff) are responsible for consistently 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.

Sean Di Sora (Headteacher) is responsible for monitoring the policy every year, reviewing it, and holding staff and YPs accountable for its implementation.

Staff will address any questions or concerns from parents/carers quickly, and clearly communicate the reasons for prohibiting the use of mobile phones.

4. Use of mobile phones by staff

The DfE's non-statutory mobile phone guidance says that staff should not use their own mobile phone for personal reasons in front of YPs throughout the school day.

There are times when it is to be used for school use regarding class dojo points etc. which is acceptable.

4.1 Personal mobile phones

Staff (including volunteers, contractors and anyone else otherwise engaged by the school) are not permitted to use their personal mobile phone, while young people are present. Use of personal mobile phones must be restricted to non-lesson time, and to areas of the school where YPs are not present (such as the staffroom/school office).

There may be circumstances in which it's appropriate for a member of staff to have use of their phone during lesson time for personal reasons. For instance (this list is non-exhaustive):

- 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 number 01772 957062 as a point of emergency contact.

4.2 Data protection

Staff must not use their personal mobile phones to process personal data, or any other confidential school information, including entering such data into generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools such as chatbots (e.g. Chat GPT and Google Bard).

Please refer to further policies such as AI, data protection and ICT policies which can be found on the school website.

4.3 Safeguarding

Staff must not give their personal contact details to parents/carers or YPs, 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/carers or YPs.

Any correspondence between staff and parents should by via school email, school mobile, school landline or via the Class Dojo app

Staff must not use their personal mobile phones to take photographs or recordings of YPs, their work, or anything else that could identify a YP. If it's necessary to take photos or recordings as part of a lesson/school trip/activity, this must be done using school equipment such as school mobiles, school cameras or school iPads.

4.4 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:

- Issuing homework, rewards or sanctions
- Use of multi-factor authentication
- Emergency evacuations
- Supervising off-site trips
- Supervising residential visits
- Class Dojo Points

In regards to educational visits and time away from school premises, staff are permitted to use personal mobile phones only in the event of an emergency.

In these circumstances, staff will:

- Use their mobile phones in an appropriate and professional manner, in line with our staff code of conduct
- Not use their phones to take photographs or recordings of YPs, their work, or anything else that could identify a YP
- Refrain from using their phones to contact parents/carers. If necessary, contact must be made via the school office

4.5 Work phones

Linton School has a mobile phone which is primarily in the care of Sean Di Sora (Headteacher). Staff are permitted to use this mobile if contacting parents etc, ensuring they:

- 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

4.6 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 YPs

YPs are not to use their mobile phones during the school day, this includes during lessons, in the time between lessons, at breaktimes and at lunchtimes.
Under special circumstances, YPs are allowed to have their school mobile on their person if agreed by school, parents and any other professionals involved with the care of the young person, for example social services.
For those YP that bring their mobile schools to school, YP must (unless otherwise agreed):

- Hand mobile phones in to a member of staff upon arrival
- Phones must be turned off to avoid any Bluetooth connections via watches or headphones
- Staff will ensure that the YP phone is locked away in a lockable drawer either in their class or the office.
- If a YP refuses to hand in their phone then they will incur a phone ban for the following week, this will mean that their phone must stay at their home and not brought into school.
- Failure to hand in a phone will result in a phone call being made to their place of residence where arrangements will need to be made for person/persons to travel to school to collect phone.
- If YP still refuses to hand in phone then YP will be asked to leave school premises due to safeguarding issues related to other YP, which would result in a suspension.

5.1 Use of smartwatches by YPs

The DfE's non-statutory mobile phone guidance includes in the term 'mobile phones' all devices with communications and smart technology that the school chooses to include in their policy.
Smartwatches are wristwatches with smart technology in them. They can be used to tell the time, send and receive text and voice messages, make calls and listen to music. Some smart watches have wellness and health-related features.

Smart watches are allowed to be worn by YPs providing these are unconnected to their phones at the start of the school day. this will be monitored by staff and any refusal to adhere to these rules will incur a ban on SMART feature watches for that YP. During Exam conditions, the watches will not be allowed (please see the exams policy for further information).

5.2 Exceptions

- YPs travelling to school by themselves will be able to bring the mobile device to school with them, and then follow the procedure in handing them in.

- YPs travelling a long distance to school, will be able to bring the mobile device to school with them, and then follow the procedure in handing them in.
- Young carers who need to be contactable, will be able to bring the mobile device to school with them, and then follow the procedure in handing them in. Should they need to make a call this can be done in the school office through the school phone.
- YPs with diabetes who use their phones to monitor their blood sugar
- Special circumstances agreed by all parties involved with the YP care

5.3 Sanctions

Failure to adhere to the school policy related to mobile phones and their use will result in sanctions as detailed below:

- Failure to hand in a phone will result in a phone call being made to their place of residence where arrangements will need to be made for person/persons to travel to school to collect phone.
- If a phone is confiscated for any reason then this must be collected by a member of staff and handed to the headteacher (Sean Di Sora).
- If YP still refuses to hand in phone then YP will be asked to leave school premises due to safeguarding issues related to other YP. This will result in a suspension.

In each case, the sanction given must be reasonable and proportionate. The school will also consider whether:

- There are any relevant special circumstances (for example, age, religious requirements, special educational needs, disability)
- The YP's behaviour may indicate they may be suffering, or at risk of, harm. If this is suspected, staff will follow the appropriate procedure set out in Part 1 of Keeping Children Safe in Education

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

6. Use of mobile phones by parents/carers, volunteers and visitors

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.

This means:

- Not taking pictures or recordings of YPs, unless it's at 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 YPs

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.

7. Loss, theft or damage

YPs bringing mobile phones to school must ensure that the phones are appropriately labelled and are stored securely when not in use.

YPs must secure their mobile 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 YPs are travelling to and from school.

Confiscated phones will be stored in the (School office in a lockable drawer, or within the classroom lockable drawer).

Lost phones should be returned to Sean Di Sora at the school office. The school will then attempt to contact the owner.

8. Monitoring and review

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

- Feedback from parents/carers and YPs
- Feedback from staff
- Records of behaviour and safeguarding incidents
- Relevant advice from the Department for Education, the local authority and any other relevant organisations

If there are any concerns regarding this policy, these should be brought to the attention of Sean Di Sora in a timely manner.

9. Appendix 1: [Code of conduct/acceptable use agreement] for YPs allowed to bring their phones to school due to exceptional circumstances

You must obey the following rules if you bring your mobile phone to school:

1. You may not use your mobile phone during lessons, during breaks, or at any other time during the school day.
2. Phones must be switched off (not just put on 'silent').
3. You may not use your mobile phone in the toilets or changing rooms. This is to protect the privacy and welfare of other YPs.
4. You cannot take photos or recordings (either video or audio) of school staff or other YPs without their consent.
5. Avoid sharing your contact details with people you don't know, and don't share other people's contact details without their consent.
6. Don't share your phone's password(s) or access code(s) with anyone else.
7. Don't use your mobile phone to bully, intimidate or harass anyone. This includes bullying, harassing or intimidating YPs or staff via:
    a. Email
    b. Text/messaging app
    c. Social media
8. Don't use your phone to send or receive anything that may be criminal. For instance, by 'sexting'.
9. Rules on bullying, harassment and intimidation apply to how you use your mobile phone even when you aren't in school.
10. Don't use vulgar, obscene or derogatory language while on the phone or when using social media. This language is not permitted under the school's behaviour policy.
11. Don't use your phone to view or share pornography or other harmful content.
12. You must comply with a request by a member of staff to switch off, or hand over, a phone. Refusal to comply is a breach of the school's behaviour policy and will be dealt with accordingly.
13. Mobile phones are not permitted in any internal or external exam or test environment. If you have a mobile phone, you will be asked to store it appropriately, or turn it over to an exam invigilator, before entering the test room. Bringing a phone into the test room can result in your exam being declared invalid.