

039 Mobile Phone and other Electronic Devices Acceptable Use Policy

Responsibility: EE
Date: Sept 2025
Next Review: Sept 2027

For the purposes of this policy, all references to 'mobile phone(s)' should be taken to include any electronic communication and/or recording technology. Examples of these include camera phones, MP3/4 devices, handheld computers (e.g. iPad), Wi-Fi connectivity enabled devices (e.g. Apple Watch). This is not a definitive list.

Aim of this policy

The widespread ownership of mobile phones among young people requires that school, teachers, pupils, 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.

Holmfirth High 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.

Pupils, their parents or carers must read, understand and accept this policy as a condition upon which permission is given to bring mobile phones to school.

The Acceptable Use Policy for mobile phones also applies to students during school excursions, camps and extra-curricular activities both at school and off-site.

Rationale

Our rural setting and wide travel to work area for working 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 well.

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, commuting long distances to school and walking home via rural and isolated routes. 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. This policy has been written to take account of these risks, the need to ensure the school can meet its statutory responsibility for safeguarding students and to reflect parents views about safeguarding their child.

Responsibility

It is the responsibility of pupils who bring mobile phones to school to abide by the rules outlined in this policy.

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 mobile phone and the potential use/mis-use of those capabilities.

Parents/carers should be aware if their child takes a mobile phone to school the school cannot accept responsibility for any loss, damage or theft incurred due to its use at school. The school would advise parents to check that their household insurance covers loss or damage of mobile phones.

Parents/carers are reminded the school office must be the initial point of contact during the normal school day and can ensure your child is reached quickly and assisted in any relevant way. Passing on messages through school reception also eliminates lessons being inadvertently disrupted.

Acceptable Uses

Mobile phones should be switched off immediately upon arrival to school and **before entering school grounds.** The mobile phone must be kept out of sight at all times during the school day. Exceptions may be permitted only in exceptional time-limited circumstances if the parent/carer specifically requests it. Such requests must be handled on a case-by-case basis and must be directed to the Headteacher. Parents/carers are requested that in cases of emergency they must contact the school first so we are aware of any potential issue and may make the necessary arrangements.

This policy also applies on school trips and visits, however students should follow the instructions from the trip leader regarding social times when phone use may be acceptable.

Pupils 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.

The school recognises the importance of emerging technologies present in modern mobile phones e.g. camera and video recording, internet access, blogging and podcasting, all forms of social media.

Pupils are allowed to use their mobile phone for their bus pass however, the mobile phone must only be taken out and switched on when the bus arrives on the school site at the bus park. Pupils must not be using their mobile phone for any other purpose at this time other than to access their digital bus pass.

Smart watches may be worn, however should be used only as a watch. Any student found using their smart watch as a digital device (e.g. as a mobile phone or for gaming) on the school site will risk confiscation in line with the procedure below.

Unacceptable Uses

Please see Appendix 1 for a definitive list of unacceptable uses under this policy.

Theft or damage

The theft and/or damage of mobile phones will follow the policy guidance in Appendix 2 of this policy.

Exams and Inappropriate conduct

Please see Appendix 3 of this policy.

Sanctions

Pupils who infringe the rules set out in this document will have their phones confiscated by teachers. If the phone is being used inappropriately the student must give it to a teacher if requested.

On the first infringement of this policy the mobile phone would be confiscated by the teacher and taken, in the first instance to the House Office, where it will be enveloped and the infringement logged. It will then be passed to the finance office where it will be securely locked within the school safe. The phone will be kept in the school safe and will be returned when the child's parent/carer comes to collect the phone. The child's Head of House or Deputy Head of House will contact home to inform the parent/carer that the phone has been confiscated for the first time and the parents/carer must collect the mobile phone and sign a contract to say that if the phone is confiscated for a second time, it has been agreed to be kept for seven days.

On the second infringement the mobile phone would be confiscated by the teacher and taken, in the first instance to the House Office, where it will be enveloped and the infringement logged. It will then be passed to the finance office. The phone will be kept for a seven days and the parents/carer must collect the mobile phone.

A third or subsequent infringement the mobile phone policy will result in the phone being confiscated and taken, in the first instance to the House Office, where it will be enveloped and the infringement logged it will then be passed to the finance office. The phone will be kept for four weeks (twenty-eight days), and parents/carers will be invited in to school for a meeting with the Head of House.

The school reserves the right to ban a student on bringing a mobile phone to school given repeated infringements of this policy or in the case of a serious misuse of a mobile phone. The school also reserves the right to ask a child to hand in their mobile phone for a prolonged period of time, if there has been a infringement of this policy or a safeguarding concern raised about the students use of a mobile phone.

As set out in the previous section, failure to heed the rules set out in this policy may result in an alleged incident – of a serious nature - being referred to the police for investigation.

Confiscation Under Investigation

The school will hold a pupils mobile phone securely when requested to do so by the Police and/or where the school suspects a criminal offence has taken place and are awaiting further advice from the police. Under these circumstances the school is not permitted to return the phone unless instructed otherwise by the Police. This is in line with Policy 055 Behaviour.

Pupils are informed regarding online safety and the sanctions for breach of this policy via Safeguarding half termly assemblies and as part of the Computing curriculum.

Appendix 1

Unacceptable Uses

Mobile phones must be switched off upon arrival to school and **before entering school grounds.** They must not be switched on until pupils have left the school grounds or are sat on the school bus. Pupils may switch their mobile phones on when they have left the school grounds

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 devices.

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. Any breach of this whether taken place within school or out of school will be acted on in accordance to the schools Safeguarding & Behaviour policies.

Any pupil who uses vulgar, derogatory, or obscene language while using a mobile phone will face disciplinary action.

Pupil with mobile phones may not engage in personal attacks, harass another person, or post private information about another person using messaging platforms, taking/sending photos or objectionable images, and phone calls or through the use of social media. Pupils using mobile phones to bully other students will face disciplinary action. [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.]

It is forbidden for students to "gang up" on another pupil 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 pupils or upload it to a website for public viewing. This also includes using mobile phones to photograph or film any pupil 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.

Pupil 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.

Mobile phones must not be used in 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, in accordance with the schools safeguarding policy – upskirting.

It is unacceptable to take a picture or video 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 and a serious sanction will be implemented.

It is unacceptable to make videos, memes (or similar) of staff or other pupils at the school using images/videos found on line. A serious sanction will be implemented for breach of this rule.

Mobile phones should not be in bedrooms during residential trips, and should be handed to a member of staff for safekeeping overnight.

Appendix 2

Theft or damage

Pupils should mark their mobile phone clearly with their names.

Pupils who bring a mobile phone to school must switch the phone off immediately upon arriving to school and before entering school grounds and are strongly advised to leave it locked away in their locker/bag. To reduce the risk of theft during school hours, pupils who carry mobile phones are advised to keep them well concealed. They should be placed in bags and not carried around in pockets where they are visible for other pupils and staff to see.

Mobile phones that are found in the school and whose owner cannot be located should be handed to the finance office.

The school accepts no responsibility for replacing lost, stolen or damaged mobile phones.

The school accepts no responsibility for pupils who lose or have their mobile phones stolen while travelling to and from school.

It is strongly advised that pupils use passwords/pin numbers to ensure that unauthorised phone calls cannot be made on their phones (e.g. by other students, or if stolen). Pupils are strongly advised to keep their password/pin numbers confidential. Mobile phones and/or passwords may not be shared.

Appendix 3

Exams and Inappropriate conduct

As per instructions by JCQ (Joint Council for Qualifications), mobile phones are banned from all examinations. Consequently, students **must not** bring mobile phones to any external examination. Students who arrive to examinations with a mobile phone **must** hand their mobile phone to the invigilator before entering the exam hall. The phone will be returned to the student after the examination. In this instance contact will be made with the parent / carer to ensure the student does not bring a phone to any future examination. Any student found in possession of a mobile phone during an examination risks having that paper disqualified by the exam board and JCQ. Such an incident may result in all other exam papers being disqualified. The school has a statutory responsibility to ensure the integrity of examinations and must report all such infringements to JCQ.