Mobile Phone Policy

Meole Brace School

Approved by:	Local Governing Body
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1. Statement of Principle

Meole Brace school is a mobile phone-free school.

Our expectation is that all students leave their mobile phone at home.

We recognise that some students travel independently to and from school by bus or on foot and that parents may wish their child to carry a mobile phone for safety before and after school.

Where a phone is brought onto the school site, it must be switched off immediately upon arrival and handed to the student's Form Tutor during morning tutor time. The phone will remain securely stored in a safe throughout the school day and will only be returned at the end of the school day.

Students will not have access to mobile phones during lessons, social times or movement around school unless authorised by the Headteacher because of an agreed medical or safeguarding need. These will be considered on an individual basis.

This policy forms part of the school's commitment to providing a calm, safe, respectful and purposeful learning environment in which every student can learn without unnecessary distraction.

2. Introduction

This policy sets out the school's expectations regarding mobile phones and other personal smart devices.

It has been written in accordance with current Department for Education guidance and should be read alongside the schools:

- Behaviour and Attitudes Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- E-Safety Policy

The policy applies to:

- all students;
- all members of staff;
- governors;
- volunteers; contractors and visitors to school site.

Throughout this policy, the term **mobile phone** includes smartphones and any personal communication device capable of sending or receiving calls, messages or internet-based communications. The school will also apply this policy to smartwatches and similar wearable devices where they have communication capability.

3. Aims of the Policy

The aims of this policy are to:

- create a mobile phone-free learning environment;
- maximise students' engagement in learning;

- reduce distractions during lessons and around the school site;
- encourage positive face-to-face interaction between students;
- reduce incidents involving cyberbullying and social media;
- promote positive mental health and wellbeing;
- provide clear expectations for students, parents and staff;
- ensure a fair and consistent approach to the management of mobile phones across the school.

The school believes that removing mobile phones from the school day supports both academic achievement and personal development, allowing students to engage fully with their education and with one another.

4. Why We Are a Mobile Phone-Free School

As part of updated Department for Education (DfE) expectations regarding mobile phones in schools, we have introduced new arrangements for the storage of pupil mobile phones during the school day.

At Meole Brace School, we believe that students achieve their best when they are fully engaged in learning and free from unnecessary distractions.

Whilst mobile phones have become an important part of everyday life, there is increasing evidence that access to phones during the school day can have a negative impact on learning, behaviour and wellbeing.

Mobile phones can:

- reduce concentration and engagement during lessons;
- interrupt learning through notifications and messaging;
- contribute to anxiety linked to social media;
- increase opportunities for cyberbullying;
- encourage inappropriate photography or filming;
- create unnecessary conflict between students.

By removing access to mobile phones throughout the school day, we aim to create an environment where students:

- concentrate fully in lessons;
- interact positively with their peers;
- develop stronger relationships with staff;
- spend social time communicating face-to-face;
- enjoy a calmer and more purposeful school environment.

This policy is not intended to prevent students from owning or using mobile phones. Rather, it provides every student with a break from the pressures and distractions associated with mobile technology.

The success of this policy depends upon the support of students, parents and staff working together with a shared commitment to placing learning first.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

5.1 Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for ensuring that this policy is implemented consistently across the school and that appropriate systems are in place for the secure storage of mobile phones.

The Headteacher will:

- ensure staff receive appropriate training on the implementation of the policy;
- ensure parents, students and staff understand the expectations of the policy;
- monitor the effectiveness of the policy;
- review the policy annually or sooner where legislation or operational practice changes.

5.2 Staff

All members of staff are responsible for consistently implementing this policy.

Staff will:

- actively promote the school's mobile phone-free environment;
- challenge any student found using or carrying a mobile phone during the school day;
- ensure phones handed in during tutor time are securely stored in the tutor room safe;
- report breaches of this policy through the school's behaviour systems;
- support students in understanding the reasons behind the policy.

Staff should apply the policy consistently and fairly to all students.

5.3 Form tutors

Form tutors play a key role in the successful operation of this policy.

Each morning tutors will:

- receive mobile phones from students and check that they are named;
- ensure phones are switched off before being stored;
- record which students' hand in phones;
- place phones into the tutor room safe;
- lock the safe immediately following tutor time.

Each afternoon tutors will:

- unlock the safe during afternoon tutor time;
- supervise the return of phones to students;
- ensure all phones are collected before students leave school.

Tutors should report any concerns or repeated breaches to the relevant Head of Year.

5.4 Students

Students are expected to:

- leave their mobile phone at home wherever possible;
- switch off any phone brought to school before entering the school building;
- ensure that their phone is clearly labelled with their first and last name;
- hand their phone directly to their Form tutor during morning tutor time;

- collect their phone only during afternoon tutor time;
- follow all reasonable instructions given by members of staff relating to this policy.

Students must not:

- keep a mobile phone on their person during the school day;
- use a mobile phone anywhere on the school site;
- ask another student to store their phone;
- attempt to retrieve a phone during the school day without permission.

5.5 Parents and Carers

Parents and carers are asked to support the policy by:

- encouraging their child to leave their phone at home whenever possible;
- reinforcing the expectations of the policy;
- contacting Reception if an urgent message needs to be passed to their child;
- collecting confiscated phones where required.

The school values the support of parents in ensuring this policy is implemented successfully.

6. Expectations for Students

Our expectation is straightforward:

Leave your phone at home.

Students who do not need a mobile phone for their journey to and from school should leave it at home.

Students who bring a mobile phone because they travel independently may do so only on the understanding that:

- it is switched off before entering school;
- it is handed to their Form tutor during morning tutor time;
- it is clearly labelled with their first and last name;
- it remains securely stored in their tutor room throughout the school day;
- it is collected at the end of the day.

At no point during the school day should students have access to their phone unless authorised by the Headteacher or another senior member of staff due to an agreed medical need.

7. Mobile Phone Storage Procedures

Each tutor group will be provided with a secure safe located within the tutor room for the storage of mobile phones during the school day.

Morning tutor time will be used for the collection of mobile phones.

The procedure will operate as follows:

1. Students arrive at tutor time as normal.
2. Any student bringing a mobile phone to school must ensure it is switched off.
3. The phone must clearly be labelled with their first and last name.

4. The phone is handed directly to the Form tutor.
5. The Form tutor will keep a register of who hands in a phone.
6. The Form tutor places the phone into the tutor room safe.
7. The safe is secured before students leave for Period 1.

Once stored, mobile phones will remain securely locked away for the duration of the school day.

Phones will be returned only during the afternoon tutor session immediately prior to students leaving the school site, unless an authorised exception applies.

Authorised members of staff who may access tutor room safes include:

- Form tutors;
- Heads of Year;
- Senior Leadership Team;
- Reception staff, where appropriate;
- any other member of staff authorised by the Headteacher.

Each safe will operate using an agreed access procedure known only to authorised members of staff. This ensures that, where necessary, phones can be retrieved quickly for students who become unwell during the school day or need to leave unexpectedly whilst maintaining the security of all devices. Reception staff will have access to a set of keys that can open each safe.

Students must never attempt to access the safe themselves or request another student to collect a phone on their behalf.

Mobile phones remain the property of the student at all times.

Any student who chooses to bring a mobile phone into school does so entirely at their own risk, and the School and Trust will not be held responsible for any loss or damage.

8. Monitoring, Searches and Detection Wands

The success of this policy relies upon the consistent application of expectations across the school.

Whilst most students are expected to comply with the policy, the school reserves the right to investigate where there are reasonable grounds to believe that a student has retained a mobile phone or is using one during the school day.

<u>Detection Wands</u>

The school may use handheld electronic detection wands to help determine whether a student is carrying a mobile phone.

Detection wands will only be used where there are reasonable grounds to suspect that a student has not complied with this policy.

Examples may include, but are not limited to:

- a phone being seen during the school day;
- a phone ringing, vibrating or making notification sounds;
- information received from members of staff or other students;
- reasonable suspicion that a student has retained a phone rather than handing it in.

The use of a detection wand is intended to support the fair and consistent implementation of this policy and is not used as a routine screening measure.

Students are expected to cooperate fully with reasonable requests made by staff.

Failure to cooperate may result in further behaviour sanctions in accordance with the school's Behaviour Policy.

Confiscation

Where a student is found to be carrying or using a mobile phone in breach of this policy, the phone will be confiscated by a member of staff.

Confiscated phones will be stored securely in reception until they are collected by a parent or carer.

Students will not be permitted to collect a confiscated phone themselves.

Where staff believe that the contents of a mobile phone may present a safeguarding concern or indicate that a criminal offence has been committed, the school will act in accordance with the Department for Education's guidance on Searching, Screening and Confiscation and Keeping Children Safe in Education. This may include referring the matter to the Designated Safeguarding Lead and, where appropriate, the Police.

9. Sanctions

The Mobile Phone Policy links with the school's Behaviour and Attitudes Policy.

Failure to comply with this policy will result in behaviour sanctions. These sanctions are intended to ensure consistency, fairness and the effective operation of a mobile phone-free school.

First Breach

Where a student:

- fails to hand in a mobile phone;
- is found carrying a phone during the school day; or
- uses a mobile phone anywhere on the school site,

the following will apply:

- the phone will be confiscated immediately;
- the phone will be securely stored by the school;
- the incident will be recorded on the school's behaviour management system;
- an appropriate behaviour sanction will be issued.

Refusal to Hand Over a Phone

If a student refuses to hand over a mobile phone when instructed by a member of staff, this will be treated as a refusal to follow a reasonable instruction.

In addition to the confiscation of the phone, the student may:

- receive further behaviour sanctions in line with the Behaviour and Attitudes Policy;
- have parents or carers contacted immediately.

Phone Found Following Detection Wand Check

Where a student has failed to declare or hand in a mobile phone and it is subsequently located following the use of a detection wand:

- the phone will be confiscated;
- the incident will be recorded as a serious breach of the Mobile Phone Policy.

Persistent Breaches

Repeated breaches of this policy demonstrate a refusal to comply with the school's expectations.

Where a student repeatedly breaches the policy, sanctions will escalate and may include:

- meetings with parents or carers;
- a Behaviour contract agreed;
- daily monitoring on arrival to school;
- additional checks where reasonable grounds exist to suspect further breaches;
- suspension from school where repeated breaches amount to serious misconduct or repeated defiance in accordance with the Behaviour and Attitudes Policy.

The school reserves the right to move directly to a higher level of sanction where the circumstances of an incident warrant this.

10. Safeguarding Considerations

The school recognises that, in some cases, misuse of a mobile phone may indicate wider safeguarding concerns.

Where an incident involves:

- bullying or cyberbullying;
- threatening behaviour;
- inappropriate photography or filming;
- the sharing of indecent images;
- online harassment;
- criminal activity.

Staff will immediately inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

The school will respond in accordance with its Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and, where appropriate, seek advice from external agencies, including Children's services or the Police.

The welfare of the child will remain paramount in all decisions taken under this policy.

11. Staff Use of Mobile Phones

The school expects all staff to model the high standards of conduct expected of students.

Personal mobile phones should not be used in the presence of students during the school day unless there is a legitimate professional reason to do so.

Personal Mobile Phones

Members of staff should keep personal mobile phones out of sight during lessons and while supervising students.

Personal phones may be used:

- during non-contact time;
- in staff-only areas;
- during break or lunch when students are not present;
- in an emergency.

Exceptional circumstances, such as urgent family matters, should be discussed with a member of the Senior Leadership Team.

Professional Use

There may be occasions when staff are required to use a mobile phone for legitimate educational or operational purposes, including:

- educational visits;
- emergency situations;
- multi-factor authentication;
- school communication systems.

Staff must not:

- photograph or record students using a personal device;
- communicate with students through personal messaging services or social media;
- use personal devices to store confidential school information.

School-issued devices should be used wherever possible.

12. Parents, Visitors and Volunteers

The school asks all visitors to support our mobile phone-free environment.

Parents, visitors, volunteers, governors and contractors should:

- keep mobile phones on silent whilst on site;
- avoid using mobile phones where students are present;
- not photograph or record students or staff without permission;
- respect the privacy of all members of the school community.

Parents needing to contact their child during the school day should do so through the school Reception.

Students who need to contact home will be supported by Reception or another authorised member of staff.

Volunteers accompanying educational visits should not use personal mobile phones whilst supervising students except where authorised by the Visit Leader.

13. Loss, Damage and Liability

Any student who chooses to bring a mobile phone into school does so entirely at their own risk, and the School or Academy Trust will not be held responsible for any loss or damage.

Meole Brace 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 pupils are travelling to and from school.

As such, we strongly advise that parents/carers ensure appropriate personal insurance cover is in place, as the school will not be able to accept liability or process claims for any loss or damage.

Any phone found on school premises should be handed immediately to Reception.

14. Monitoring and Review

The Headteacher is responsible for monitoring the implementation and effectiveness of this policy.

Senior leaders will regularly review:

- behaviour data;
- safeguarding incidents;
- confiscation records;
- feedback from students;
- feedback from parents and carers;
- staff feedback;
- operational effectiveness.

The Governing Body will receive updates as part of the school's monitoring arrangements.

This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner should legislation, Department for Education guidance or operational requirements change.

Appendix A – Visitor Information

Mobile Phone-Free School

Welcome to Meole Brace School.

To support our students' learning and wellbeing we operate a Mobile Phone-Free School Policy.

While on site we ask that you:

- keep your mobile phone on silent;
- avoid using your phone where students are present;
- do not photograph or record students or staff without permission;
- respect the privacy of all members of our school community.

Thank you for helping us maintain a calm, safe and purposeful learning environment.