

Mobile Phone Policy

Introduction

1. At OMG Education Independent School (OMG), we recognise that mobile phones, including smartphones, are an important part of everyday life for our pupils, parents and staff, as well as the wider school community. We also, however, recognise the problems that can come with smartphone use, especially for pupils and teenagers, and therefore understand that the school, like all schools, has a vital role to play in protecting pupils from the problems of smartphones and social media, while also educating pupils in their use, and continuing to enable access to educationally beneficial technologies.

Aim of this Policy

2. Our policy therefore aims to:
 - 2.1. Promote and set an example for safe and responsible phone use.
 - 2.2. Set clear guidelines for pupils, staff, parents and volunteers on the use of mobile phones.
 - 2.3. Support and work in conjunction with the school's other policies, including the Safeguarding Policy, Behaviour and Exclusion Policy and ICT Acceptable Usage Policy.
3. This policy also aims to mitigate some of the practical challenges posed by mobile phones in school, such as:
 - 3.1. Data protection issues;
 - 3.2. Potential for lesson disruption; and
 - 3.3. Risk of theft, loss, or damage.

Rationale

4. By age 12, 97% of pupils own a mobile phone, but using mobile phones in school can lead to distractions and disruption and increase the risk of online bullying.
5. The government has introduced guidance that encourages all schools to introduce rules that prohibit the use of phones at school to help pupils focus on their education and the friends and staff around them. The guidance may be found at the following link: [Mobile Phones in Schools - February 2024](#)
6. This new guidance says that:

- 6.1. Schools should prohibit the use of mobile phones, but gives them autonomy on how to do this.
- 6.2. Schools may allow phones to be brought onto the premises but recommend that they are not used during school hours.
7. This brings England into line with other countries that have implemented similar rules, including France, Italy, and Portugal.
8. The guidance states that there will be some limited cases where pupils should be exempt from the rules for medical reasons or because they have special educational needs and/or disabilities. This will include situations where, for example, a diabetic pupil may need to use their phone as a monitoring device, as required by the Equality Act 2010.
9. The school also recognises that parents/carers in the community feel the need for their children to have access to a mobile phone for communication. This helps with pupil welfare and safeguarding, especially in the long, dark winter months.
10. OMG supports this approach wholeheartedly, and the policy is written in support of this guidance.
11. However, this policy seeks to enable parents to continue to use mobile phones to communicate with their children where appropriate.

Roles and Responsibilities

12. All pupils are responsible for adhering to this policy.
13. All staff (including teachers, support staff, and supply staff) are responsible for adhering to and enforcing this policy.
14. 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.
15. The Senior Leadership Team (SLT) are responsible for monitoring the policy, reviewing it, and holding staff and pupils accountable for its implementation.

Online Safety

16. OMG is committed to monitoring and managing the use of mobile devices in the context of safeguarding and adhering to our obligations under the Department of Education's Filtering and Monitoring Standards.
17. All mobile phone use at the school must comply with our ICT Acceptable Usage Policy and Safeguarding Policy.

Use of Mobile Phones by Pupils

18. Pupils are allowed to bring mobile phones to and from school.
19. On arrival at school, all pupils must hand in their mobile phones. Phones will be returned when a pupil leaves.
20. Mobile phones should be switched off or kept silent upon arrival at school and not used until the end of the school day.
21. Breaches of this policy will result in sanctions being applied to the relevant pupils, as outlined in the Behaviour and Exclusion Policy.
22. The Headteacher reserves the right to allow phones for selected pupils, given individual circumstances, such as a medical condition.

In the Event of an Emergency

23. Pupils who need to contact parents in an emergency should speak to the School Office or their tutor, who will provide a phone.

Sanctions

24. If a member sees a staff phone, they will confiscate it. Once confiscated, it will be handed into the School Office, where it will be stored safely.
25. Using mobile phones to bully and threaten other young people is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. It is forbidden for young people to use their mobile phones to take videos and pictures to denigrate and humiliate other young people and then send the images to other young people or upload them for public viewing.
26. The school accepts no responsibility for replacing lost, stolen, or damaged mobile phones. It is strongly advised that young people use passwords/PINs to ensure that unauthorised phone calls cannot be made on their phones (e.g., by other young people or if stolen). Young people must keep their password/PIN numbers confidential. Mobile phones and/or passwords may not be shared.
27. We do not expect young people to use vulgar, derogatory, or obscene language at any time, including while using a mobile phone. Young people should not engage in personal attacks, harass another person, or post private information about another person using messages, taking/sending photos or objectionable images, or phone calls. Any incidents of this nature that have repercussions in school, or

any child found to be using a mobile phone to bully other young people, will face disciplinary action as sanctioned by the headteacher.

28. Young people who infringe the rules in this document will not be allowed to bring their mobile phones into school.

29. On the first infringement, young people will be reminded of the contents of this policy.

30. On the second infringement of this policy, the parent or carer will be contacted by phone to inform them of the incident.

31. On the third infringement. Parents will be notified, and the young person will not be permitted to collect the phone without a parent/carer's consent.

32. After the third infringement, the school will withdraw the agreement to allow the young person to bring the mobile telephone to school.

33. Failure to comply with these rules will result in sanctions and restrictions on access to school facilities.

Use of Mobile Phones by Staff

34. Personal Mobile Phones

34.1. Staff (including volunteers, contractors, and anyone else otherwise involved/employed by the school) are expected to set an example and, wherever possible, adhere to the principle that they do not use their phones in front of pupils, unless for an express work purpose, such as:

34.1.1. Taking a register in class.

34.1.2. Authentication Apps

34.1.3. Emergency evacuations

34.1.4. Supervising off-site trips

34.1.5. Supervising residential visits

34.2. In these circumstances, staff will use their mobile phones appropriately and professionally, in accordance with our Staff Code of Conduct.

35. Work Mobile Phones

35.1. The school provides some staff with a mobile phone for work purposes. Only authorised staff are permitted to use school phones; access to the phone must not be provided to anyone without authorisation.

35.2. Staff must ensure that communication or conduct linked to the device is always appropriate and professional, in line with our Staff Code of Conduct.

Use of Mobile Phones by Parents

36. Parents must adhere to this policy as outlined above for staff who are on the school site during the school day.
37. Parents will be informed of the rules for mobile phone use when they sign in at reception or attend a public event at school.
38. In particular, parents must:
- 38.1. Do Not take pictures or recordings of pupils unless it is a public event or of their child and
 - 38.2. Use any photographs or recordings for personal use only;
 - 38.3. Not post pictures or recordings on social media without the school's consent.

Use of Mobile Phones by Volunteers and Visitors

39. Visitors and volunteers (including governors and contractors) must adhere to this policy as outlined above for staff if they are on the school site during the school day.

Use of Mobile Phone to Contact Pupils

40. Parents are asked to use the School Office as the first point of contact if they need to contact their child/ren during the school day. We have a well-established and efficient system for sending messages to pupils and providing pastoral support if needed. They should not try to contact their child/ren on their mobile during the school day.
41. Parents wishing to contact their child after the school day should ring the School Office.

Loss, Theft or Damage of Mobile Phones

42. Mobile phones are personal possessions and must be protected from loss, theft or damage accordingly, either by their owner or, if they have been surrendered to a staff member, by the school.
43. Mobile phones that have been confiscated will be stored in the School Office in a secure location.
44. Mobile phones found unattended on school premises should be returned to the School Office.

Monitoring and Review

45. The school is committed to ensuring that this policy positively impacts pupils' education, behaviour, and welfare. When reviewing the policy, the school will consider relevant advice from the Department for Education, the local authority, or other appropriate organisations.