



## Policy Reference P15

### Mobile Phone Policy

Every school within Cumbria Futures Federation aims to provide a safe and hardworking environment where every child can be successful, whatever their abilities.

#### Our Values

- Courage and Compassion
- Inclusion and Equality
- Respect and Courtesy
- Optimism and Perseverance
- Forgiveness and Tolerance
- Ambition and Achievement

Version No	Author/Owner	Date Written	Note of amendments made
01-2019	JS	July 2019	New policy covering both schools
01-2022	JR	May 2022	Updated policy in line with behaviour policy

## Context

There has been significant coverage in the news in recent years over the use of mobile phones in schools, how they affect learning in schools, how they can lead to problems with relationships in schools and students' abilities to socialise, and inappropriate internet usage. Schools experience issues in dealing with parents and carers, or other adults, who arrive unannounced in schools expecting immediate access to staff following a text or call from a student during school hours which is difficult to manage. Students in IRL have sent messages to students in lessons. Asking students to relinquish phones when they are using them inappropriately in this way causes issues which are easily avoidable. Students have received messages from others, including parents, which have disturbed learning in lessons. It has never been appropriate for phones to be seen or heard in lessons.

The London School of Economics conducted a comparative study on schools that had banned mobile phones from school premises or required students to hand phones in at the beginning of the school day against schools who permitted mobile phones. On average, the chances of achieving five good quality GCSE grades at schools where a ban was in place increased by an average of 2%. This achievement was even more marked amongst students at the lower end of the ability range where the average increased by 4%.

While we recognise the benefits that mobile phones can bring, and whilst the vast majority of our students are able to use mobile phones appropriately, we are concerned that increasing numbers of students are bringing mobiles to school and using them at breaks and lunchtimes, with a resultant detrimental affect on their ability to socialise. The Federation believes that students deserve an opportunity to be mobile phone and associated anxieties free while at school.

This policy aims to clarify the Federation's schools' policy on mobile phones and to ensure that students and staff are safeguarded against incidents involving the use of mobile phones. This policy was initiated by students at Beacon Hill and has already been successfully trialled for two terms. We have discussed the issue with the student council at Solway and they agree that none of the perceived issues students may have with this policy are insurmountable; we will work with the students to make sure their concerns are addressed.

We understand that some parents may wish their child to carry a mobile phone in case of emergencies on the journey to and from school and therefore the procedure surrounding mobile phones is as follows:

- School advice is for students not to bring mobile phones to school
- Students who wish to carry a phone on the way to and from school must hand it in at reception at the beginning of the school day, and collect it at the end of the day
- Mobile phones handed in to reception will be kept safely in a named plastic wallet
- School is not responsible for the loss or damage to mobile phones while on the premises
- If a student is found with a phone, whether switched on or not, will have the phone confiscated and handed into the office for safekeeping
- Refusal to hand over a mobile phone will result in immediate IRL
- Parents will be informed. If parents wish the phone to be returned to the student for the journey home this will be agreed on the first offence. Otherwise, the phone must be collected by parents from the school office; therefore it may not be possible to return the phone on the day it is confiscated
- Should a second offence occur, parents will be asked to collect the phone and it will not be returned to the student
- Repeat breaches of the school's policy will result in more serious sanctions being given
- There may be some instances when staff will allow students to use mobile phones to contact parents; for example during sports fixtures after school where transport/pick up arrangements may change, or in the event of school closure due to adverse weather situations. Students may only use their mobile phones when given clear direction and permission from senior staff
- Should a student need to contact parents during the day, or if a parent needs to get in touch with a student, this can be done via the school office, as has always been the case

Please support us by encouraging your child to leave their mobile phone at home.

Additional points:

- The term 'phone' in this policy denotes mobiles phones, iPods, iPads, MP3, MP4 players and any similar portable electronic devices. This includes the use of 'Smart' or Apple watches – the use of these is not allowed as they are effectively mobile phones and will be treated as such.
- Students should not use their phone to listen to music/make calls/text/use the internet if they are cycling to school. Students should also be mindful of traffic and dangerous situations if using their phone when walking to and from school.
- When issues with mobile phones exist that involve serious misuse of the phone, transmitting images, cyber bullying etc.; parents will be brought into school and the Malicious Communications Act will be explained to them. This states that parents are responsible for the phone and any issues resulting from the phone when it is used by a 'minor'.
- Responsibility for loss and disclaimer. As previously stated it is understood why parents may want their child to bring a mobile phone into school in a rural community. Whereas this is understood and as such we have provided facilities at the school reception for these phones to be placed in, the School retains no liability for any phone that is brought into school which is either lost, stolen or damaged or used in a manner which is against the owner's consent. The school's advice is to leave mobiles at home. If however you opt to leave your child's phone at the school reception for the day the responsibility for that phone rests with you.

### **There is stepped approach to persistent misuse of electronic devices, including mobile phones.**

Items are taken by the member of staff and placed securely in reception in an envelope with the student's name and date on the envelope and parents informed.

First occasion

- Students can collect the phone/device from the office at the end of the school day.

Second occasion

- Parents requested to collect the phone/device at the end of the day

Third occasion

- letter sent home via the office
- Item is returned to parents

Records are kept throughout the students' school career and does not start afresh each year.

### **Use of Personal Mobile Phones for Staff**

The school recognises that personal mobile phones have the potential to be used inappropriately. Personal mobile phones should not be used to take photographs or video of children unless given specific permission by the Headteacher to do so.

Personal mobile phones should not generally be needed or used by staff, except as set out in the guidelines below:

- Should staff need to use their mobile phone, best practice is that mobile phones, wherever possible, should not be used in the presence of students
- Mobile phones must not be used during lesson times either to make or receive calls, unless there is an emergency
- Staff should never give their mobile phone number to any pupils. This also includes former students under 18

- Staff should exercise caution when giving their mobile number to parents as this could be misconstrued. The school is aware that some staff members are also parents at the school. If in doubt discuss this with a member of the SLT
- PE staff may use their mobile phones during PE sessions and when responsible for children away from school, only to communicate arrangements to parents or colleagues or for emergency purposes
- Trips and visits offsite: the staff member in charge of the trip should have a school mobile number to use when communicating with parents. Other staff members on the trip or offsite should carry their mobile phones so they can communicate with colleagues when necessary or in an emergency
- Staff personal mobile phones could contain confidential information regarding other members of staff such as personal phone numbers, e-mail addresses or pictures. Therefore all mobile phones brought onto the premises (including personal mobile phones) should have a password locking system enabled to ensure that their contents remain secure in the case of loss