



## **The South Wolds Academy and Sixth Form**

### **Appropriate Use of Mobile Phones & Electronic Devices Policy**

## POLICY OUTLINE

This policy applies to school years 7 through to 11. Sixth form students are free to bring their phones into school but they must be used discreetly, rather than in plain sight of younger students.

Mobile phones and, in particular, the new generation of smart phones, such as the iPhone, now include many additional functions such as an integrated camera, video recording capability, instant messaging, mobile office applications and mobile access to the internet. These allow immediate access to email, searching for information on the internet and other functions such as access to social networking sites e.g. Facebook, twitter, snapchat and blogging sites.

For many young people today the ownership of a mobile phone is considered a necessary and vital part of their social life. When used creatively and responsibly the smart phone has great potential to support a pupil's learning experiences.

In recent years we have had incidents of poor conduct where mobile phone use has been a feature. This has been particularly difficult to address if it is an element in bullying. Bullying, intimidation and harassment are not new in society; however bullying using a mobile phone represents a new challenge for schools to manage.

The South Wolds Academy recognises that parents may wish their children to have mobile phones for use in cases of emergency. However, mobiles can be used inappropriately and are potentially targets for theft and bullying and the school sees no reason for students to bring other electronic music or games devices to school. Mobile phones can also, if used inappropriately, undermine the essential work the school does to safeguard both young people and staff. The Governing Body has, therefore, adopted the following policy which will be rigorously enforced.

1. Mobile phones and other electronic music or games devices should not be used on school premises by students at any time and students who choose to bring mobiles to school should keep them **switched off and out of sight**. Students know that mobile phones (and other electronic music or games devices) are not to be used whilst at school and that they will be confiscated if **seen, used or heard**.
2. Parents and carers are reminded that in cases of emergency, main reception remains a vital and appropriate point of contact and can ensure your child is reached quickly and in the appropriate way.
3. Students who ignore this policy and use a mobile or other unauthorised device on school premises will be required to give their phone/device to a member of staff immediately. Students will be asked to collect it from main reception at the end of the day. If the phone (or other electronic music or games device) is confiscated on a second occasion a parent or carer will be expected to collect it personally from school.
4. Failure to hand the phone/device over to a member of staff when requested, will be seen as refusing staff instructions and will therefore lead to serious sanctions such as isolation-or even exclusion. We ask that parents/carers support us in this policy so that students are aware that this is a shared responsibility.
5. If a member of staff of the school has any suspicion that a mobile phone (or other electronic music or games device) has unsuitable material stored on it, students will be required to hand over the phone/device and parents will be asked to collect it from a senior member of staff. In circumstances where the confiscating staff member has reasonable grounds to suspect that the material on the mobile/device may provide evidence relating to a criminal offence the phone/device will be handed over to the police for further investigation. Parents will need to recover the phone/device from the police in such circumstances. (Appendix A).
6. Students remain responsible for their own property and will bear the responsibility of any losses. The South Wolds Academy and Sixth Form, the Local Governing Body and school staff accept no responsibility for replacing mobile phones (or other electronic music or games devices) that are lost, stolen or damaged whilst on school premises, school events or travelling to and from school.
7. Mobile phones, smart watches and other electronic devices are not allowed in examination rooms.

8. Any failure to comply with the above guidelines may result in disciplinary action, up to and including the consideration of permanent exclusion of the student concerned. Sanctions will reflect the level of misuse and will be guided by the school's behaviour management policy.

Parents should be aware that whilst there are obvious benefits to students having a mobile phone in terms of personal safety there are also some associated risks such as potential for theft, bullying and inappropriate contact, including grooming by unsuitable persons. In the case of other electronic devices, the risks far outweigh any leisure benefit. The wearing of headphones in particular is a safety risk.

## **GENERAL ADVICE AND GUIDANCE ON THE SAFE USE OF MOBILES OUTSIDE OF SCHOOL**

Using your mobile can be great fun but you need to be careful and keep safe.

1. Ask permission before taking a picture of your friends and think before sending it on. Once sent you have lost control of it and it could become public before you know it. You remain responsible for the sharing of any data from your own mobile device.
2. Do not give out your number or friends' numbers to people you do not know, especially in Instant Messenger or Chat Rooms.
3. Keep your security code or PIN number private.
4. If you receive messages which upset you, do not reply but keep a record and tell an adult. In serious cases you can report it to the police.
5. If you receive an inappropriate, offensive or embarrassing image or text about someone do not forward it to others. Distributing sexual images of other young people is a criminal offence. If you receive something like this tell an adult immediately.

See Kidsmart at [www.kidsmart.org.uk](http://www.kidsmart.org.uk) for more information on staying safe, leaflets and interactive games.

## **THE POTENTIAL RISKS**

Mobiles are valuable and can be lost or stolen.

Inappropriate use of mobile phones can result in serious sanctions being taken.

Students can be bullied by text messaging or silent phone calls.

Mobiles can be used to communicate inappropriate material.

Unsuitable people are known to use mobile phones and text messages to make inappropriate contact with young people.

Reviewed by: LGB

Date: February 2021

Next review date: February 2022

## Appendix A

DfE's Searching, screening and confiscation guidance (2018).

1.1 Schools do have the power to search with or (in certain circumstances) without a pupil's consent for prohibited items.

1.2 More detail on these powers can be found in the DfE's Searching, screening and confiscation guidance (2018) – please note the following provisions, in particular:

- i. Searches with consent - *If a member of staff suspects a pupil has a banned item in his/her possession, they can instruct the pupil to turn out his or her pockets or bag and if the pupil refuses, the teacher can apply an appropriate punishment as set out in the school's behaviour policy. A pupil refusing to cooperate with such a search raises the same kind of issues as where a pupil refuses to stay in a detention or refuses to stop any other unacceptable behaviour when instructed by a member of staff – in such circumstances, schools can apply an appropriate disciplinary penalty.*
- ii. Searches without consent - *Headteachers and authorised staff can also search for any item banned by the school rules which has been identified in the rules as an item which may be searched for. Teachers can only undertake a search without consent if they have reasonable grounds for suspecting that a pupil may have in his or her possession a prohibited item. The teacher must decide in each particular case what constitutes reasonable grounds for suspicion.*
- iii. *Where the person conducting the search finds an electronic device that is prohibited by the school rules... they may examine any data or files on the device where there is a good reason to do so. They may also delete data or files if they think there is a good reason to do so, unless they are going to give the device to the police..... there is no need to have parental consent to search through a young person's mobile phone if it has been seized in a lawful 'without consent' search and is prohibited by the school rules.*