



The South Wolds Academy and Sixth Form

Appropriate Use of Mobile Phones and Electronic Devices Policy

March 2024

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 and Sixth Form recognises that parents and carers 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, residential trips, trips outside of normal school hours 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 and carers 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.

Post-16 students

For all post-16 students at South Wolds, mobile devices are allowed on site but **must** be used discreetly. This is to reflect this period of education as one of increased independence and responsibility, without compromising the strong no-phone culture at South Wolds. This includes:

- Mobile devices and/or headphones are not to be visible in any lesson or assembly/registration time unless the teacher has given permission for a mobile device to be used as part of their learning at that time;
- Mobile devices should not be used in corridors or other shared places across the school site, other than in the sixth form common room and sixth form study room;
- Refusal to abide by the above may result in a device being confiscated and appropriate sanctions issued, as defined by the school. The decision of the Head teacher in these cases is final.

The Use of Mobile Phones and electronic devices outside of the school day

If students are involved in residential trips or trips outside of the normal school day, it is the responsibility of the trip leader to communicate expectations regarding the use of mobile phones and electronic devices. This communication will take place during the organisation of the trip so that all students involved, and their parents/carers, are clear about expectations of use. At all times it is imperative that students' educational experience on a school trip is not disrupted by the presence of mobile phones.

GENERAL ADVICE AND GUIDANCE ON THE SAFE USE OF MOBILES OUTSIDE OF SCHOOL FOR ALL STUDENTS

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 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.

Appendix A

DfE's Searching, Screening and Confiscation Advice for schools (2022).

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 Advice for schools (2022).

Reviewed by: LGB

Date: March 2024

Next review date: March 2025