

THE WESTGATE SCHOOL

Hampshire's First 4-16 'All Through' School

*"The Westgate School is a community of learners where partnerships inspire success for all:
learning together – achieving excellence"*

Headteacher: Mrs F A Dean, MA (Ed)

Initial Policy date	May 2024	Next scheduled review	July 2025
Governor approved	July 2024	Key person/people	DHT – Ethos & Inclusion
Model Policy	No	Model localised	Yes – in partnership with linked primary schools, local secondary schools and parent consultation
Pupil leadership team review	Yes – June 2024		

Mobile Device Policy - Pupils

The Westgate School recognises that the use of mobile devices (eg smartphones, smart watches) form part of everyday life for the vast majority of people. When referring to mobile devices in this policy, it includes smart phones, smart watches, iPads/tablets or any mobile device that has the facility to send/receive messages or calls, use the internet, take pictures or recordings.

This policy has been created in partnership with local primary and secondary schools as part of a wider collaboration on safeguarding.

There is no need for pupils to carry a mobile phone/device in order to fully participate in school life. Home learning should be recorded in Pupil Handbooks for Learning that are brought into school every day. Pupils can book clubs and other activities outside of the school day (using EduLink) or during the school day, directly with the club leader.

Carrying a mobile device in school is a privilege that can be withdrawn at any time. The purpose of this policy is to define acceptable standards of behaviour and conduct in relation to the use of mobile devices by all pupils.

The School does not accept liability or responsibility for devices brought on site.

The policy is not exhaustive of all eventualities but will be applied in accordance with the principles of the policy and at the professional discretion of adults in school.

Rationale

Unfortunately, across the country there have been instances where children and young people have been unsafe due to the use of mobile devices so this policy is in place to protect all pupils whilst in school. Schools do not have the ability to limit children's access to material that is done through their own device and through mobile phone networks.

The situations reported nationally have included:

- Inappropriate content being accessed via a child's own internet connectivity and device;
- Extremist material being accessed via a child's own internet connectivity and device;
- Use of mobile devices for taking inappropriate images;
- Pupils taking pictures or videos of others – including adults – against their wishes or knowledge;
- The creation of memes, distorting of images and publishing online;
- Using images of other pupils for the purpose of humiliation bullying via social media;
- Inappropriately sharing personal data online.

The removal of access to mobile devices for pupils during the school day creates a safer environment where pupils are protected from the risks and dangers associated with social media. Furthermore, since pupils are not permitted to use their phones during the school day, they should not feel compelled to be checking for messages from friends who similarly, should be following the expectations of the school.

Outside of these harmful behaviours, research shows that "*incoming notifications or the mere proximity of a mobile device can be a distraction, leading to students losing their attention from the task at hand*" (UNESCO education report, 2023) and that young people are distracted unnecessarily which can lead to disruption and diversion. By removing these distractions, we enable pupils to be "*fully present and engaged*" (DfE guidance "Mobile Phones in School", February 2024).

Behaviour that would be unacceptable in person is also unacceptable online including with mobile devices. This policy works in conjunction with other school policies.

- There is *no requirement or expectation* for pupils at The Westgate School to have any mobile device to engage with learning during the school day.
- Where the policy states, pupils are permitted to bring mobile devices.

The School's policy for the use of mobile phones/smart watches is in accordance with DfE Guidance 'Mobile Phones in Schools' (DfE, 2024) and, in the interests of ensuring that learning is not interrupted or compromised by the use of a mobile device.

Specific and further detail can also be found in other policy documents including: Online Safety, Anti-bullying, Exams, Safeguarding and Child Protection.

The School supports parents/carers in taking the decision for their child not to have a mobile device or, to limit its use, through this policy.

If pupils are carrying mobile phones (or similar devices), they must be:

- Switched-off from 8.30 am-3.05 pm (school day);
- Not seen on site;
- Not used at any time when on the school site at any time.

By permitting their child to carry a mobile device, parents agree to support this policy.

Primary Phase – specific additions

Pupils in Years R to 4 are not permitted to carry a mobile phone/device in school at all.

Pupils in Years 5 or 6: The School strongly discourages any pupil bringing a mobile phone/device to School. This includes for travel to and from School as this poses increased risk to safety with children potentially looking at phones/devices whilst crossing roads or, because they are carrying expensive equipment. Any mobile device that a pupil brings into school must be switched off and handed in at the beginning of the day. These devices will then be stored safely in the office and will be returned at the end of the school day at 3:20pm.

No device should be with a pupil during the school day and if a device is found or used by a child during the day, it will be confiscated and require parents/carers to collect it a time specified by the School. Pupils must not use mobile devices at any time on the School site, including outside of the building or along Green Lane. This is for safety reasons.

Smart watches with the ability to send/receive messages or calls are not permitted at any time in the Primary Phase.

Secondary Phase – specific additions

Pupils who follow the School's expectations on the use of mobile devices when on site will be permitted to carry them in school. The school reserves the right to rescind this permission where expectations are not followed or, as part of a consequence, to other non-compliance with the School's behaviour policy.

By allowing their children to bring a mobile device to school, parents are agreeing to support this policy in practice.

Pupils' responsibilities – Secondary Phase

- Pupils are responsible for the security of any mobile device that is bought into school. The Westgate School does not accept any responsibility for their loss, theft or damage. The School will also not accept responsibility for any adverse effects on health caused by the use of such devices, whether potential or actual.
- Any mobile device that is bought in to school must be switched off and out of sight between 8.30am and 3.05pm (Secondary Phase). Any smart watch should be set not to receive messages or and must never be used as a device for recording.
- If a pupil needs to contact home, this must be done via main reception, the School's welfare officer or with support from a Year/Assistant Year Leader in the Annexe.
- The School will not respond to parental requests received in response to contact from their child during the school day where the pupil has not used the correct means to make contact or followed the correct process in school for resolving difficulties. Exceptions to this will be pre-agreed with parents/carers as part of reasonable adjustments for supporting pupils with SEND.
- Any mobile device must be kept out of sight – including at break and lunchtimes.
- Mobile devices must never be taken into an examination room, or into an area where an exam is taking place in accordance with JCQ regulations.
- If a user of a mobile device receives any form of communication that could cause offence to themselves or others, be harassing in nature or menacing pupils should report it to an adult in school immediately.
- If a pupil is found to have used their device during the school day without permission from an adult in school, a consequence will be applied including potentially the rescinding of permission to carry a device in school.

It is a criminal offence under Section 43 of the Telecommunications Act 1984 and the Malicious Communications Act 1988 to use a mobile phone to menace, harass or offend another person.

The school will involve the police should such an action occur either between pupils or pupils towards adults.

Parental responsibilities - all-through

- If a pupil needs to contact home, this can be done via the class teacher in primary phase, main reception, the school's Welfare Officer or with support from a Year/Assistant Year Leader in the Annexe.
- If a parent needs to get an urgent message to their child during the day (8.30 am to 3.05pm), please do not use your child's mobile phone but instead, contact the school office on contact@westgate.hants.sch.uk or, 01962 854757
- Parents should not contact their child during the school day via a mobile device but instead, if there is an urgent message, contact reception who will enable this to be passed-on.
- By allowing their child to carry a device to school, parents are agreeing to support this policy in practice.

Unacceptable use – all-through

The Westgate School considers the following to be examples of unacceptable use of a mobile device and a serious breach of the school's behaviour policy:

- Bullying, intimidating or harassing any member of the school community by text, email, social media or social media messaging.
- Photographing or filming adults or other pupils without their knowledge or permission.
- Photographing or filming in toilets, changing rooms or similar areas.
- Refusing to turn off or hand over mobile device at the request of an adult in school.
- Using a mobile device in a way that undermines the good functioning of the school eg meeting up with peers, asking to leave lessons for the toilet and instead using a device or meeting with friends etc.
- Using a device to contact others during the school day as this causes disruption to teaching and learning.
- Using a device to contact parents/carers instead of through the usual routes of support for all pupils in school.

Consequences – all-through

Parents will be contacted if there has been a breach of the policy. Consequences will be given in response to the breach and be proportionate to the severity of the behaviour. Pupils are aware that unacceptable behaviour involving a mobile device will result in a confiscation of the device, communication with parents/carers along with any other consequence deemed necessary.

- The School is within its rights to confiscate a mobile device if the School's policy has not been followed and by allowing their child to carry a device to school, parents are agreeing with this policy in practice.
- If a mobile device is confiscated, parents are likely to be required to collect the device from school at a given time eg end of the day.
- Pupils and parents must be aware that if a mobile device has been used in any way linked to suspected criminal activity, then the police will be informed immediately.

If a pupil uses a mobile device to cause alarm, distress or any form of harassment towards another pupil or adult within the school community then this may lead to a permanent exclusion. The impact on the victim will always be considered.

Confiscation Procedure – all-through

If a mobile device is confiscated during the school day, then it will be returned at the end of the school day which is 3:05pm in Secondary Phase and 3.20pm in Primary Phase. In the Secondary Phase the pupil will be told that it can be collected from the Annexe where it will be stored. In the Primary Phase it will be returned by the class teacher. The confiscation will be recorded via EduLink. A process is in place to ensure that the correct device is returned to the correct person.

If there are repeated instances where a mobile device is confiscated due to a pupil not following the expectations, then it will be necessary for a parent/carer to collect the device by appointment with the respective Year/Assistant Year Leader.

A serious misuse of a device may lead to an extended ban on bringing a mobile device into school which will be at the discretion of the Headteacher. Where it is needed for travel to and from school an arrangement will be made such that this is possible, or parents will be required to provide a device that can only facilitate phone calls or text messaging that can be handed to reception on arrival and collected at the end of the day.

Safeguarding – all-through

Where there is belief that a device forms part of a wider safeguarding concern then these devices will be confiscated, and the above procedure followed. The Designated Safeguarding Lead will be informed immediately. Parents will be informed that the device has been confiscated. If it is believed that a device may contain images or information that may be of a criminal nature or endangering the safety of a pupil or adult, then the device will not be returned to the pupil or parent until directed by the police. Any issue relating to safeguarding or potential safeguarding concern will be referred to Children's Services and the police.

Reasonable Adjustments – Secondary Phase

In a limited number of cases, a reasonable adjustment to this policy may be applied through an agreement between parents/carers and the School. In such cases, these will be recorded on a child's medical care plan and/or through their SEND notes:

- A child using a mobile device to monitor diabetes
- A child using a mobile device to support a specific learning need as recorded through the SEND register.

On occasion, Secondary Phase pupils may be permitted to carry a mobile device on a school trip. This will be communicated as part of the arrangements for the event.

Use of Devices for Curriculum – Secondary Phase

Pupils may sometimes be permitted to use their mobile device as part of GCSE Art, Sculpture, Photography and/or Media Studies. In such circumstances, expectations around safe use will be made clear to pupils by class teachers and if a pupil does not have their own device, provision will be made for an alternative by the school.

Further information

Technology in education: GEM Report 2023 | Global Education Monitoring Report (unesco.org)

Mobile phones in schools - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)