



Mobile Phone Policy

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Mobile Phone Policy

Introduction

Technology has become embedded throughout society and has transformed the way we expect to engage with services and consume content. This is especially true for young people, where, according to an Ofcom survey in 2017, 46% of 5-15-year olds have their own smartphone, and 49% have their own tablet. At Al Islah Girls High School, we embrace the use of Educational Technology and we will help and support our students to navigate and make sense of the digital world around them.

At Al Islah, we believe our number one priority is the safety and happiness of every child. We have a legal obligation to keep children safe from harm and ensure we exercise our duty of care to teach students how to keep themselves safe. In September 2018 the updated statutory guidance for schools, Keeping Children Safe in Education, puts legal responsibility on schools to ensure we are actively supervising and monitoring what students are accessing online. This legal duty upon schools does not just relate to what students access in lessons on school computers, but also includes any content they might access on the way to school when wearing school uniform, on the school bus or at breaks and lunchtimes on their phones via 3G and 4G.

Mobile phones and, in particular, the new generation of smartphones, 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 and blogging sites. There has been an increase in the number of issues to do with online abuse via mobile phone technology and social media. As a result, students' wellbeing and mental health is being affected by this abuse of mobile phone technology.

We appreciate that there is a positive side to mobile phone technology and students often carry mobile phones so that they can contact parents before and after school. Beyond this, there is no need for students to use their mobile phones in school. Pupils can bring a mobile phone to school if needs be but they must hand in to the school office in the morning and collect when they leave school after 2.30pm. The school accepts no responsibility for the safekeeping of any mobile phone.

Online safety, social media and the safe use of mobile phones will be addressed with students in ICT and PSHE lessons.

Policy Outline

SMART Mobile Phones are not to be used or brought into school.

Exceptional circumstances

Parents can request permission for students to carry a phone for use before and/or after school. For safeguarding and safety purposes, we recommend models without cameras, without apps, and without internet connection.

If students are entrusted to carry their non-smart mobile phones with them for use before and after school, the following should be noted:

- Mobile phones must be switched off before handing it in. It is not acceptable for phones merely to be put on silent or pager mode.
- No student may take a mobile phone into a room or other area where examinations are being held.

Breaches

● Any form of misuse of a mobile phone will be dealt with as a serious breach of the student commitment and will be dealt with in line with the Behaviour for Learning Policy N.B. This applies to the smartphones which are brought into school without permission. The following are examples of misuse (the list is not exhaustive). 'Misuse' will be at the discretion of the Headteacher:

- sending inappropriate messages

- sending inappropriate messages or posts to social networking or blogging sites
- taking photographs and/or videos in school
- photographing or filming staff or other students without their knowledge or permission
- photographing or filming in toilets, changing rooms and similar areas
- bullying, harassing, humiliating or intimidating staff or students by the use of text, email or multimedia messaging
- refusing to switch a phone off or hand over the phone at the request of a member of staff
- using the mobile phone outside school hours to intimidate or upset staff and students will be considered a breach of these guidelines in the same way as unacceptable use which takes place in school time.
- using a mobile phone outside school hours in such a way that it undermines the stability of the school and compromises its ability to fulfil the stated aim of
- providing 'a clear moral and ethical lead'
- the deliberate engineering of situations where people's reactions are filmed or photographed in order to humiliate, embarrass and intimidate by publishing to a wider audience such as on Facebook or YouTube
- bullying by text, image and email messaging
- the use of a mobile phone for 'sexting' (the deliberate taking and sending of provocative images or text messages)
- posting material on social network sites with no thought to the risks to their personal reputation and sometimes with the deliberate intention of causing
- harm to others
- making disrespectful comments, misrepresenting events or making defamatory remarks about teachers or other students
- general disruption to learning caused by students accessing phones in lessons students phoning parents
- students phoning parents immediately following an incident so that the ability of staff to deal with an incident is compromised
- publishing photographs of vulnerable students, who may be on a child protection plan, where this may put them at additional risk.

Dealing with breaches

Misuse of the mobile phone will be dealt with using the same principles set out in the school's Behaviour for Learning Policy, with the response being proportionate to the severity of the misuse. Students are aware that serious misuse may lead not only to the confiscation of their mobile phone, but may include the student being internally or externally excluded from school. If the offence is serious it will be reported to the Police.

If the mobile phone is found to be switched on during the day, the phone will be confiscated and only be returned to a parent/carer in person.

Where it is deemed necessary to examine the contents of a mobile phone this will be done by a member of staff. N.B. Parental permission is not required for this. The action will be properly recorded in case it later becomes evidence of criminal activity. The record will include the time, who was present and what was found. This includes messages, emails, pictures, videos, sound files.

Where a mobile phone is confiscated, it will be stored in the safe in the main office and it will be recorded and kept securely.

Sanctions

Students and parents are notified that appropriate action will be taken against those who are in breach of the acceptable use guidelines, following the school's Behaviour for learning Policy.

In addition:

- students and their parents should be very clear that the school is within its rights to confiscate the phone where the guidelines have been breached.

- if a phone is confiscated, it will require a parent/carer to collect the phone from school.
- students should be aware that the police will be informed if there is a serious misuse of the mobile phone where criminal activity is suspected.
- if a student commits an act which causes serious harassment, alarm or distress to another student or member of staff the ultimate sanction may be exclusion. School will consider the impact on the victim of the act in deciding the sanction.

Confiscation procedure

If a mobile phone is confiscated then:

- it will be held until a parent/carer collects the phone in person from the school.
- the confiscation will be recorded in the school behaviour log for monitoring purposes.
- school will ensure that confiscated equipment is stored in such a way that it is returned to the correct person.
- in the case of repeated or serious misuse the phone will only be returned to a parent/carer who will be required to visit the school by appointment to collect the phone.
- where a student persistently breaches the expectations, following a clear warning, the Headteacher may impose an outright ban from bringing a mobile phone to school. This may be a fixed period or permanent ban.
- Where the phone has been used for an unacceptable purpose the Headteacher or a designated staff member will have the right to view files stored in confiscated equipment and, if necessary, seek the cooperation of parents in deleting any files which are in clear breach of these guidelines unless they are being preserved as evidence.
- If required, evidence of the offence or suspected offence will be preserved, preferably by confiscation of the device and keeping it secure or by taking photographs of the screen.
- School will consider whether an incident should be reported to the local safeguarding board.
- The designated staff member should monitor repeat offences to see if there is any pattern in the perpetrator or the victim which needs further investigation.