



# **MARK RUTHERFORD SCHOOL**

## **AN ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY FOR MOBILE PHONES AND HAND HELD DEVICES**

Handheld devices include: ipods, gaming devices (e.g. PSP, Nintendo), mp3 and mp4 players, PDAs, Blackberrys, iphones, (this list is not exhaustive).

**Policy Owner: Kathie Hughes**  
**Policy Author:**  
**Policy Review Date: March 2018**  
**Next Review Date: March 2020**

## **Purpose**

- 1.1 The widespread ownership of 'mobile phones and devices' (referred to as mobile devices) among young people requires that school administrators, teachers, students, and parents take steps to ensure that mobile devices are used responsibly at schools. This Acceptable Use Policy is designed to ensure that potential issues involving mobile devices can be clearly identified and addressed, ensuring the benefits that mobile devices provide (such as increased safety) can continue to be enjoyed by our students.
- 1.2 Mark Rutherford School has established the following Acceptable Use Policy for mobile devices that provides teachers, students and parents/guardians guidelines and instructions for the appropriate use of mobile devices during school hours.
- 1.3 Students, their parents or guardians (referred to as parents in the policy) must read and understand the Acceptable Use Policy before students are given permission to bring mobile devices to school.
- 1.4 The Acceptable Use Policy for mobile devices also applies to students during school excursions, camps and extra-curricular activities. Where applicable, exceptions may be permitted.

## **1. Rationale**

### **1.1 Personal safety and security**

Mark Rutherford School accepts that parents give their children mobile devices to protect them from everyday risks involving personal security and safety. There is also increasing concern about children travelling alone on public transport or commuting long distances to school. It is acknowledged that providing a child with a mobile device gives parents reassurance that they can contact their child if they need to speak to them urgently.

- 1.2 With the continuing advances in technology and its applications the school accepts that mobile technology can support students' learning and effective teaching.

- 1.3 This policy needs to be read alongside the child protection policy, with specific reference to Peer on Peer disclosures P7-9.

## **2. Responsibility**

- 2.1 It is the responsibility of students who bring mobile devices to school to abide by the guidelines outlined in this document.
- 2.2 The decision to provide a mobile device to their children should be made by parents.
- 2.3 Parents should be aware if their child takes a mobile device to school.
- 2.4 Permission to have a mobile device at school while under the school's supervision is contingent on parent permission in the form of a signed copy of this policy. Parents may revoke approval at any time.

## **3. Acceptable Use**

- 3.1 Mobile devices should be switched off and kept out of sight during classroom lessons unless expressly directed to make use of the devices to support learning and teaching activities by the supervising teacher. Exceptions may be permitted only in exceptional circumstances if the parent specifically requests it. Such requests will be handled on a case-by-case basis and should be directed to your child's Head of House. Parents are reminded that in cases of emergency, the school Office/ main reception remains a vital and appropriate point of contact and can ensure your child is reached quickly and assisted in any appropriate way.
- 3.2 Students should only use their mobile devices before or after school or during morning break and lunch breaks. While on school premises, students should use soundless features such as text messaging, answering services, call diversion and vibration alert to receive important calls.
- 3.3 Mobile devices should not be used in any manner or place that is disruptive to the normal routine of the school.
- 3.4 Students should protect their phone numbers by only giving them to friends and keeping a note of who they have given them to. This can help protect the student's number from falling into the wrong hands and guard against the receipt of insulting, threatening or unpleasant voice, text and picture messages.

#### **4. Unacceptable Uses**

- 4.1 Unless express permission is granted, mobile devices should not be used to make calls, send SMS messages, surf the internet, take photos or use any other application during school lessons and other educational activities, such as assemblies.
- 4.2 Mobile devices must not disrupt classroom lessons with ringtones or beeping.
- 4.3 Using mobile devices to bully and threaten other students is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. In some cases it can constitute criminal behaviour.
- 4.4 It is forbidden for students to “gang up” on another student and use their mobile devices to take videos and pictures of acts to denigrate and humiliate that student and then send the pictures to other students or upload it to a website for public viewing. This also includes using mobile devices to photograph or film any student without their consent. It is a criminal offence to use mobile devices to menace, harass or offend another person and almost all calls, text messages and emails can be traced.
- 4.5 Mobile devices are not to be used in changing rooms or toilets or used in any situation that may cause embarrassment or discomfort to fellow students, staff or visitors to the school.
- 4.6 Should there be repeated disruptions to lessons caused by a mobile device, the responsible student may face disciplinary actions as sanctioned by the Leadership Team and the School’s Behaviour Policy.
- 4.7 Where a student uses their electronic device in an unacceptable way a consequence will be applied in line with behaviour policy this could lead to a fixed term exclusion.

#### **5. Theft or damage**

- 5.1 Students should mark their mobile device clearly with their names.
- 5.2 To reduce the risk of theft during school hours, students who carry mobile devices are advised to keep them well concealed and not ‘advertise’ they have them.
- 5.3 Mobile devices that are found in the school and whose owner cannot be located should be handed to Student Reception.
- 5.4 The school accepts no responsibility for replacing lost, stolen or damaged mobile devices.

5.5 The school accepts no responsibility for students who lose or have their mobile device stolen while travelling to and from school.

5.6 It is strongly advised that students use passwords/pin numbers to ensure that unauthorised phone calls cannot be made on their phones (e.g. by other students, or if stolen). Students must keep their password/pin numbers confidential. Mobile devices and/or passwords may not be shared.

## **6. Inappropriate conduct**

6.1 Any student/s caught using a mobile device to cheat in exams or assessments will face disciplinary action as sanctioned by the Leadership Team and by the regulating exam boards/QCA

6.2 Any student who uses vulgar, derogatory, or obscene language while using a mobile device will face disciplinary action as sanctioned by the Leadership Team and in line with the Behaviour policy.

6.3 Students with mobile devices listed may not engage in personal attacks, harass another person, or post private information about another person using SMS messages, email, taking/sending photos or objectionable images, and phone calls. Students using mobile devices to bully other students will face disciplinary action as sanctioned by Leadership Team and Anti Bullying Policy

## **7. Sanctions**

7.1 A mobile device will be confiscated if it is used other than described in the Acceptable Use section. The device will be placed in the school safe as soon as the teacher confiscating the phone can do so. If this is a first offence the device can be collected by the student from the School Office at the end of the school day from a member of the leadership team, when they are available. A letter will be sent to parents informing them of the situation.

7.2 For students who offend a second time the device will be kept in the school safe until it is collected by the student together with the parent or guardian. Parents will be notified of this in writing. However in exceptional circumstances the mobile device may be returned to the student at the end of the day, by a member of the leadership team, after taking into account all the context and having made contact with parents.

7.3 As set out in the previous section, failure to heed the rules set out in this document may result in an alleged incident being referred to the Leadership Team for investigation. In such cases, the parent or guardian would be notified immediately and a more serious sanction may be applied.

7.4 The school reserves the right to ban individual students or groups of students from bringing mobile devices on site.

### **Additional Useful information for students and parents**

There are a number of resources available to support parents and pupils to promote the safe use of mobile phones, digital devices and other technologies both in school and at home. Below is a list of resources currently available and a short description of what each one contains. These resources have been drawn from a variety of sources, including Government information, voluntary organisations and Mobile Network Organisations.

The resources below are grouped by their audience for ease of reference. This does not mean that they are suitable for that audience only. Links to Mobile Network Provider information, including resources, are contained at the end of the document.

#### **For Pupils**

[http://news.bbc.co.uk/cbbcnews/hi/newsid\\_4490000/newsid\\_4498700/4498719.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/cbbcnews/hi/newsid_4490000/newsid_4498700/4498719.stm)

Fresh gives advice and information for primary aged children on dealing with bullying

Hi-Tech Bullying & Internet Safety information, including 'happy slapping' and 'internet safety' are available from bullying.co.uk at

<http://www.bullying.co.uk/pupils/videomugging.php>

The Thinkuknow website aims to get pupils to share what they do know about the use of mobile phones and the internet, and to find out if there's information that they don't already know.

<http://www.thinkuknow.co.uk>

<http://www.kidsmart.org.uk/> - advice about using the internet and mobile devices safely

[www.phonebrain.org.uk](http://www.phonebrain.org.uk) A website with loads of good information about mobiles!

[www.chatdanger.com](http://www.chatdanger.com) A website about staying safe when chatting on the internet

[www.thinkuknow.co.uk](http://www.thinkuknow.co.uk) Information about staying safe from strangers online

[www.there4me.com](http://www.there4me.com) → new address → <http://www.achance2talk.com> A confidential interactive web service designed to help young people aged 12 to 16 by giving information, advice and support.

## **For Parents**

Bullying on mobile phones and digital devices offers practical advice on how to deal with bullying, who to contact and an explanation of the law.

Mobile phones and digital devices: What parents need to know provides help and advice about modern mobile phones and digital devices for families and carers.

[http://www1.orange.co.uk/documents/regulatory\\_affairs/guide\\_for\\_parents.pdf](http://www1.orange.co.uk/documents/regulatory_affairs/guide_for_parents.pdf)

What your child's mobile can do aims to give parents and guardians an understanding of the breadth and benefits of mobile services, how they can help make life easier, safer and more fun. It also explores issues of how mobile services can be exploited disreputably and in harmful ways by some people, as well as what to look out for.

[http://www.o2.com/media\\_files/What\\_your\\_mobile\\_can\\_do.pdf](http://www.o2.com/media_files/What_your_mobile_can_do.pdf)

Sensible use of camera phones sets out a few tips to get you started and to help sensible and careful use. It is available from

[http://www.o2.com/media\\_files/o2\\_camera\\_use.pdf](http://www.o2.com/media_files/o2_camera_use.pdf)

Safe use of mobile chatrooms explains the risks associated with children accessing chat facilities (chatrooms) where they might meet and talk with 'friends' that they do not know in the real world. In particular, it sets out advice on what to do when children make contacts who may behave negatively towards them.

[http://www.o2.com/media\\_files/safeuse1.pdf](http://www.o2.com/media_files/safeuse1.pdf)

Helping children deal with nuisance calls provides safety tips for children on how to deal with calls or text messages that annoy, offend or threaten, either from people they know or from complete strangers.

[http://www.o2.com/media\\_files/nuisancecalls.pdf](http://www.o2.com/media_files/nuisancecalls.pdf)

Protecting your child against crime provides advice about being alert to dangers and more careful about what they do, children can help prevent themselves and their phones being targeted.

[http://www.o2.com/media\\_files/Againstcrime.pdf](http://www.o2.com/media_files/Againstcrime.pdf)

### **Mobile Network**

Mobile Network Operators have information on mobile phone safety and bullying available from their websites for parents, schools and young people, some of the network's resources may be highlighted above. Below are links to the information provided by each of the networks.

O2

<http://protectourchildren.o2.co.uk/PreventBullying.jsp>

Virgin Mobile

[http://about.virginmobile.com/aboutus/corp\\_resp/consumers/](http://about.virginmobile.com/aboutus/corp_resp/consumers/)

Vodafone

[http://online.vodafone.co.uk/dispatch/Portal/appmanager/vodafone/wrp?\\_nfpb=true&\\_pageLabel=template12&pageID=PAV\\_0080](http://online.vodafone.co.uk/dispatch/Portal/appmanager/vodafone/wrp?_nfpb=true&_pageLabel=template12&pageID=PAV_0080)

Ofcom is the independent regulator and competition authority for the UK communications industries, with responsibilities across television, radio, telecommunications and wireless communications services. Its website contains research on media literacy in all the Nations of the UK:

[www.ofcom.org.uk](http://www.ofcom.org.uk)

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### **Parent/Guardian Permission**

I have read and understood the above information concerning appropriate use of mobile devices at Mark Rutherford School. I understand that this form will be kept on file at the school and the details may be used (and shared with a third party) if necessary to assist identify a device should the need arise (e.g. if lost, or if the device is being used inappropriately).

I give my child permission to carry a mobile device to school and understand that my child will be responsible for ensuring that the mobile device is used appropriately and correctly while under the school's supervision, as outlined in this document.

Parent/Guardian name (print): \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Student name (print): \_\_\_\_\_

Mobile phone number: \_\_\_\_\_

Student signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

School Representative name (print): \_\_\_\_\_

School Representative signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

If you have comments or suggestions, please contact Miss K Gwynne,  
Office Manager, [karlee.gwynne@mrus.co.uk](mailto:karlee.gwynne@mrus.co.uk)