

Mobile Phones & Handheld Devices Policy

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Governors Committee:	C&P
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Next Review Due:	November 2021
Review Cycle:	Every Two Years

Related policies:

Students, Parents/Carers and Staff Acceptable Use
Behaviour
Code of Conduct for Staff
Complaints
Safeguarding

Copies of this policy and the policies listed above are available on the school website www.cedarsacademy.org.uk and from the school office.

This policy applies to all staff, pupils, parents/cares, trustees and partner agencies we may work with now or in the future.

This policy also applies to those students who are educated off site. For example, those students accessing local further education college provision.

1. Rationale & Mission Statement

Ours is a community of learning, where secure partnerships create opportunities for students, staff, governors, parents and carers alike to participate and grow to become intellectually, emotionally and socially *fit for life....*

The emotional health and well-being of all members of Cedars Academy is fundamental to our philosophy and aims.

We aim to promote positive emotional health and well-being to help pupils and staff to understand and express their feelings and build their confidence and emotional resilience and therefore their capacity to learn, accept change and move forward.

We are a specialist school for young people aged 3 to 19 years with physical, sensory and medical needs, speech, language and communication disorders, autism, and a wide range of other complex needs often associated with emotional vulnerability. It is within this context that we have developed our Mobile Phones and Handheld Devices Policy.

The school recognises that personal communication through mobile technologies is an accepted part of everyday life but that such technologies need to be used appropriately and safely.

2. Purpose

Cedars Academy has established the following Acceptable Use Policy for mobile phones that provides teachers, pupils, parents and carers guidelines and instructions for the appropriate use of mobile phones during school hours.

Pupils, their parents or carers must read and understand the Acceptable Use Policy as a condition upon which permission is given to bring mobile phones to school.

The Acceptable Use Policy for mobile phones also applies to students during school excursions, camps and extra-curricular activities both on the school campus and offsite.

3. Mobile Phones and Personal Devices General Guidance for Students

The use of mobile phones and personal devices by students for personal use is strictly forbidden within the Cedars Academy and their devices must be switched off at all times.

- Electronic devices of all kinds are the responsibility of the user. Cedars Academy Trust accepts no responsibility for the loss, theft or damage of such items.
- The sending of abusive or inappropriate messages or content via mobile phones or personal devices is forbidden by any member of the Cedars Academy Trust community and any breaches will be dealt with as part of the Trust's Behaviour Policy
- If a student breaches the school/college Policy then the phone or device will be confiscated and will be held in a secure place in Access to Learning (AtL) and handed directly to parent/carers
- If the phone or personal device is suspected of containing material or possible evidence relating to a criminal offence it may be searched by the AtL team and handed over to the police for further investigation
- Mobile phones and devices must not be taken into examinations. Students found in the possession of a mobile phone will be reported to the appropriate examining body. This may result in the student's withdrawal from either that or all examinations
- If a student needs to contact their parents they will be allowed to use a school/college phone. Parents/carers are advised not to contact their child via their mobile phone during the school day, but to contact Reception
- Students should protect their phone numbers by only giving them to trusted friends and family. Students will be instructed in safe and appropriate use of mobile phones and devices, and will be made aware of boundaries and consequences and encouraged to use PIN's and other security as necessary

If a pupil needs to contact his or her parents or carers, they will be allowed to use a school phone. Parents are advised not to contact their child via their mobile phone during the school day, but to contact the school office.

Pupils will be provided with school mobile devices (e.g. Learn pads) to use in specific learning activities under the supervision of a member of staff. Such mobile devices will be set up so that only those features required for the activity will be enabled as necessary.

4. Student breaches of Policy

If a pupil breaches the school policy then the phone or device will be confiscated and will be held in a secure place in the school office. Mobile phones and devices will be released to parents or carers in accordance with school policy.

5. Personal Devices Guidance for Staff

Staff are permitted to use mobile phones and personal devices within the grounds of the school/college but they must comply with the guidelines below:

- Staff will be issued with a school/college phone where contact with students or parents is required and, therefore, should not use their own personal phones or devices for contacting students within or outside of the school/college in a professional capacity. Staff should never use personal phones during lessons or in the corridors or in front of students except in an emergency
- Mobile phones and devices should be switched off or switched to 'silent' mode, Bluetooth communication should be 'hidden' or switched off and mobile phones or devices should not be used during teaching periods unless permission is given by a member of the Senior Leadership Group in emergency circumstances.
- Staff should not use a personal device such as a mobile phone, tablet or camera to record digital images or video footage of students, their work or any aspects of Cedars Academy Trust's work
- Where staff members are required to use a mobile phone for school duties, for instance in case of emergency during offsite activities, or for contacting parents, they should use their own devices and hide (by inputting 141) their own mobile numbers for confidentiality purposes.
- Staff should ensure that their phones are protected with PIN/access codes in case of loss or theft.
- Staff should never contact pupils from their personal mobile phone, or give their mobile phone number to pupils. If a member of staff needs to make telephone contact with a parent, a school telephone should be used.
- Staff should never store parents' or pupils' telephone or contact details on their mobile phone, as this allows the possibility of inappropriate contact.

6. Students bringing mobile phones and personal devices into school

6.1 Personal safety and security

Cedars Academy accepts that parents/carers may give their children mobile phones to protect them from everyday risks involving personal security and safety. There is also increasing concern about children travelling alone. It is acknowledged that providing a child with a mobile phone gives parents reassurance that they can contact their child if they need to speak to them urgently.

6.2 Responsibility

It is the responsibility of pupils who bring mobile phones to school to abide by the guidelines outlined in this document.

The decision to provide a mobile phone to their children should be made by parents or carers. It is incumbent upon parents to understand the capabilities of the phone and the potential misuse of those capabilities.

Parents/carers should be aware if their child takes a mobile phone to school it is assumed household insurance will provide the required cover in the event of loss or damage. The school cannot accept responsibility for any loss, damage or costs incurred due to its use.

Parents/carers are reminded that in cases of emergency, the school office remains the first and appropriate point of contact.

Passing messages through school reception also reduces the likelihood of disrupting lessons inadvertently.

6.3 Acceptable Uses

All children's mobile phones and personally-owned devices must be switched off and/or handed in to reception if they are brought into school and not used.

Parents/carers are requested that in cases of emergency they contact the school first. This ensures that staff are aware of any potential issue and may make the necessary arrangements.

Mobile phones should not be used in any manner or in any location that could cause disruption to the normal routine of the school.

Pupils should protect their phone numbers by giving them only to close friends and family. This will help protect the pupil's number from falling into the wrong hands and guard against insulting, threatening or unpleasant communications.

If asked to do so, pupils will show the content requested or hand their phone to a teacher or other designated adult such as the police.

6.4 Theft or damage

The school accepts no responsibility for pupils who lose or have their mobile phones stolen while travelling to and from school.

Pupils should mark their mobile phone clearly with their full name.

When a mobile phone is found on the school premises and the owner cannot be located, it should be handed into the front office reception.

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

Lost and stolen mobile phones in the U.K. can be blocked across all networks making them virtually worthless to the thief. Call your network provider as soon as possible after your phone has been lost or stolen. This can be a temporary measure in case it is recovered.

7. Inappropriate conduct

Using mobile phones to bully or threaten pupils or staff is unacceptable.

Cyberbullying will not be tolerated. In some cases it could constitute criminal behaviour. Using technology to humiliate, embarrass or cause offence will not be tolerated; regardless of whether 'consent' was given.

It is forbidden for pupils to use their own or other pupil's mobile phones to take videos and pictures of acts to denigrate or humiliate others. This also includes using mobile phones to photograph or film any pupil or member of staff without their consent. It is a criminal offence to use a mobile phone to menace, harass or offend another person and almost all calls, text messages and emails can be traced.

Any pupil who uses vulgar, derogatory, or obscene language while using a mobile phone will face disciplinary action.

Pupils may not engage in personal attacks, harass another person, or post private information using SMS messaging, taking/sending photos or objectionable images, and phone calls. Pupils using mobile phones to bully other pupils will face disciplinary action. [It should be noted that it is a criminal offence to use a mobile phone to menace, harass or offend another person. As such, the school may consider it appropriate to involve the police.]

Pupils must ensure that files stored on their phones do not contain violent, degrading, racist or pornographic images. The transmission of such images is a criminal offence. Similarly, 'sexting' – which is the sending of personal sexual imagery - is also a criminal offence.

8. Sanctions

Pupils who infringe the rules set out in this document could face having their phones confiscated by teachers.

If the incident involves pupils under the age of 13 or is deemed illegal or inappropriate then the school has a duty to inform the Local Area Designated Officer for safeguarding (LADO) and may refer the incident to the police.

Note: The school may wish to add their own sanctions to fit with their own school disciplinary procedures.

9. Evaluation

This policy and associated procedures will be evaluated every year by the Department Team Leader (T&L) in collaboration with the Governing Body (Curriculum & Pupils sub-committee) to ensure it is still fit for purpose. Circumstances may require more frequent modifications.

Ratified by Cedars Academy Governing Body
Chair of the GB

UNCRC Reference: Articles 3, 5, 19

Signature

Date: November 2019

Print Name