



## Mobile Phone Guidance and Procedure

Headphones are subject to the same rules a mobile phones

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## Legal Framework

- 1 This document will have consideration for the following legislation and guidance:
  - Education and Inspections Act 2006
  - DfE, 2023, 'Keeping children safe in education'
  - DfE, 2024, "Mobile phones in schools: Guidance for schools on prohibiting the use of mobile phones throughout the school day"
- 2 This document operates in conjunction with:
  - Behaviour Policy
  - Anti-Bullying Policy
  - Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
  - Equality Policy

## Mobile Phone Rationale (Headphones are subject to the same rules as Mobile Phones)

- 3 Mobile Phones are banned items at Alderbrook School.
- 4 The school expects the support of parents in this matter.
- 5 In February 2024, the Government announced its plan to prohibit mobile phones in schools across England as part of their plan to minimise disruption and improve behaviour in classrooms.
- 6 To this end, the Education Secretary has issued new guidance to all schools. Although Alderbrook's policy on Mobile Phones being banned in school has not changed, in order to ensure compliance with this directive, the below guidance gives greater clarity around this to parents, students and staff.

## Safeguarding

- 7 Updated guidance with regards to 'Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023' states that schools are responsible for monitoring the content that students are accessing online during the school day. This extends to content being accessed via mobile phones and not just school computers.
- 8 As a school, we cannot ensure that all students are accessing appropriate content and cannot prevent them from distributing inappropriate content either.
- 9 As a result of this, mobile phones greatly increase the risk of child-on-child abuse, cyberbullying, and data protection issues.

## Wellbeing

- 10 The average screen time for a young person is over 8 hours per day.
- 11 Too much screen time can have significant detrimental effects on young people's wellbeing such as increased anxiety, poor sleep patterns, poor self-esteem, and mood swings. The recommended screen time is 2 hours per day and research suggests there is a dose-response relationship, meaning the less time spent in front of a screen, the smaller the detrimental effect will be.

## Socialisation

- 12 Three in ten pupils cite making and maintaining friendships and their mental health as a cause of worry, anxiety or depression. By removing mobile phones, children and young people can spend more time staying active and socialising face to face with their peers.

## Outcomes for learners

- 13 Studies have shown a positive correlation between banning phones and improving outcomes. A London School of Economics Study found test scores of students increased by 6.4% in a number of UK schools that introduced a mobile phone ban. This is equivalent to adding five days to the school year or an additional hour a week.

## Resilience

- 14 It has come to our attention that, despite phones being banned in school, some pupils are calling parents and / or carers at time during the school day to discuss friendship issues or even something that may have happened in a classroom.
- 15 There has been a rise in the number of occasions parents have arrived at school to discuss an incident, which undermines the authority of staff within the school to deal with issues as they arise.
- 16 See point 32 –Emergencies – How Parents Can be Contacted during the school day.

## Mobile Phone Procedure

- 17 Alderbrook School is strictly a mobile-free site at all times of the day.
- 18 If a parent allows their child to bring a mobile phone on site, because, for example, they need to be contactable for meeting / travel home at the end of the school day, this is entirely at the student's own risk.
- 19 The device must be switched off and kept out of sight in the student's bag or locker where appropriate.
- 20 If for any reason, a student is not able to store their phone safely out of sight, it is to be handed in immediately at the start of the school day at the KS3 / KS4 Pastoral Offices.
- 21 Although the school takes the utmost care with student's property, the law clearly states that, in the unlikely event that a mobile phone, or any other electronic device, is lost, stolen or damaged while in a school's possession, the school is not liable.

## Consequences for Non-Adherence

- 22 NOTE: 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.
- 23 If a student is seen or heard on the school site at any time of day with a mobile phone, whether actively using or not, it will be confiscated immediately, with no argument.
- 24 The examples below are not acceptable excuses:

- Checking timetable or classcharts – all students are issued a timetable, classcharts can be accessed by form tutors or pastoral teams at appropriate times.
- Checking the time – use a watch or school clock
- Listening to music through headphones will not be allowed in any lesson. Atmospheric music to enhance learning, may be played at the teacher’s discretion and control through classroom speakers.

25 Upon discovering a mobile phone, the following sanctions will apply:

- 1st Offence – Phone confiscated. Student will receive a debit; parents will be notified.
- 2nd Offence – Phone confiscated. Student will have a 30-minute detention after school. Parents will have to collect the phone from our Main Reception at the end of the school day.
- 3rd Offence – Phone confiscated. Student will have a 60-minute detention after school. Parents will have to collect the phone from our Main Reception at the end of the school day.
- 4<sup>th</sup> Offence - Phone confiscated. Student will have a day in our Reflection Room. Parents will have to collect the phone from our Main Reception after having a meeting with a member of the Pastoral Team.

### If a student refuses to have their phone confiscated

- After a short period of reflection and a conversation with a trusted adult, they will be given a further opportunity to make the right choice.
- Any student who, despite this, persists in refusing to hand in their mobile phone to a member of staff upon request, or initially refuses on more than one occasion is at risk of internal or external suspension.
- As the DfE has introduced statutory guidance for schools on prohibiting the use of mobile phones, Alderbrook School expects the full support of parents in implementing this policy

### Students in Years 12-13

- 26 Students at Alderbrook School Sixth Form are permitted to use phones in the Sixth Form area and workspaces only.
- 27 Whilst laptops are permitted where appropriate, phones should not be used in lessons. Sixth Form students who use their phone elsewhere around the school site will have it confiscated.
- 28 It can be collected from the office at the end of the day. Repeated instances of non-compliance with this policy will be dealt with on an individual basis.

### Members of Staff

- 29 Members of staff are asked to use phones in staffrooms, offices and workspaces only.
- 30 We would encourage all staff as a professional courtesy not to use phones in meetings, either internal or external.

## Emergencies

- 31 If a student needs to contact their parents/carers, during the school day they will be allowed to use a school phone during break and lunchtime. This will be coordinated by the Head of Year / Pastoral Manager. In this instance, student should go to the Key Stage 3 or 4 Pastoral Office as appropriate.
- 32 If parents/carers need to contact students urgently, they should phone the school office and a message will be relayed promptly.