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| Policy | Mobile Phone Policy | | |
| Reviewer | Mr Patrick Crossley, Deputy Head | | |
| Reviewed Changes | Autumn Term 2024 | Next review | Autumn Term 2027 |
| Governing Sub Committee | Governance Leadership and Management | | |

Overview

This policy contains information on:

- **Use of mobile phones in school**
- **Action to be taken by teachers**
- **Sanctions for students using mobile phones**
- **Logistical procedures if phones are confiscated**

The aim of this document is to make it clear what the expectations are about students' use of mobile phones in and around school. If you have any questions about its implementation then please see either Anthony Griffin, Assistant Head Student Progress, or Patrick Crossley, Deputy Head.

Rationale

Whilst mobile phones and electronic devices can offer benefits, these must be weighed up against the negative outcomes that may occur as a result of their unchecked use in a school environment.

There is growing international evidence that the use of mobile phones negatively affects the learning and wellbeing of pupils. A study conducted by Haute Vallee school shows that pupils in schools that ban mobile phones see an increase in examination results equivalent to extending the school week by more than one hour every week. Internationally acclaimed author of "Positively Teenage and Life Online", Nicola Morgan, states that simply having a mobile phone near to you leads to a 10% drop in concentration and performance. Increasing numbers of UK and international schools are now recognising this concerning trend, and are implementing 'phone-free school' policies in an attempt to safeguard the learning of their pupils, and to reduce social pressures associated with unregulated social media use.

It is our goal at Victoria College to promote the welfare and learning of our pupils, and we believe that implementing a broad 'phone-free school' policy will have a positive impact on both. Electrical devices are not permitted to be used at any time during the school day for Year 7-11 and only in the Sixth Form Centre, and at teachers' discretion in lessons, for Years 12-13. The use of headphones is not permitted at any time for all year groups.

We feel that the added maturity of boys in the Sixth Form, together with the additional requirements for independent research in their studies in Key Stage 5, means that discretionary use of mobile devices for educational purposes is acceptable for Years 12-13.

If a pupil refuses to hand over their phone for confiscation, this will be treated as a failure to follow instructions and the school behaviour policy will be applied as in all cases of defiance towards a member of staff.

This means that:

1. Phones must be *switched off* and kept out of sight.
2. Phones cannot be used anywhere during the school day for Years 7-11
3. If a student needs to call a parent they should attend the school office and the office will contact the relevant parent.
4. Boys will not be permitted to use phones during lessons in Years 7-11
5. Any phone or device that is seen by a member of staff will be confiscated.
6. Students in Y12-13 only may use their devices in the Sixth Form Study Centre. Any student seen using a phone outside this area will be asked to put it away, unless it the student is causing disruption by using it. Then the above steps apply.
7. Teachers of lessons in Y12-13 may, at their discretion, permit phones to be used for research or UCAS purposes only.

From September 2024, Y7 will be required to lock their mobile phone in a designated and personal locker in their Tutor Room. They will do this at the start of the day and collect it at the end of the day. The tutors, as well as members of the Leadership Group, have master keys.

Smart watches (such as Apple Watch or Garmin devices) may be worn in College as timekeepers, but active use of them, clearly associated with a link to a mobile phone, is not permitted.

Sanction for students in Years 7 – 13

Confiscated phones will be handed into the school office for collection by the student at the end of the day.

A record of this will be made on the College's management information system (SIMS) and it will be recorded as "Mobile phone confiscation", automatically accruing a behaviour point.

Students who refuse to hand over a phone when asked to by a teacher will face disciplinary procedures for showing defiance.

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Both scenarios will then be dealt with in line with the College's broader Culture & Ethos policy, section on rewards and sanctions.

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Actions by Teachers

Teachers will follow the guidelines below:

- Where a student is seen using a mobile phone s/he will ask the student to turn off the phone and hand it over. In Year 12/13 this will apply if the student is seen with a phone outside of the Sixth Form Centre or uses it without express permission by a teacher in lesson.
- The teacher will take the phone and hand it in to main Reception as soon as it is practical to do so. The School Office staff will complete the necessary paperwork and contact parents/carers.
- The teacher will sign the mobile phone register to confirm s/he has handed the named student's phone over.
- Teachers will not look at any content on the phone. Should the teacher have any safeguarding or child protection issues they should report this to the Designated Safeguarding Lead, Mr Griffin, or Deputy Safeguarding Lead, Mr Crossley, using the school's established procedures.

Actions by Reception

The Office will maintain a spreadsheet of mobile phone violations. The spreadsheet will detail:

- Student name, year group, House.
- Date that the phone was handed in.
- Visible state of the phone at the time it is handed in to the office.
- Number of times that a phone has been handed in. Repeated instances of confiscation will be taken into account and may lead to further disciplinary action.
- Phones will be labelled with the name of the student, year group, and House.
- Phones will be stored in a secure location.

Actions by Parents

Parents are encouraged to enter into a positive dialogue with their sons about how they use their mobile phones. Mobile phone use should be monitored at home, especially with younger students. This is particularly relevant where students have unfettered access to web content using mobile data and/or WiFi. Please talk to your mobile phone provider to see what services they provide. More information is available from:

<http://www.pcadvisor.co.uk/test-centre/software/best-parental-control-software-2016-3587080/>

<http://www.saferinternet.org.uk/>

<http://www.itglobal.com/Jersey/Personal/Broadband/Also-in-Broadband/e-safety/>

<http://consumers.ofcom.org.uk/internet/online-safety-and-security/parental-controls-for-mobile-phones/>

<http://www.theguardian.com/teacher-network/2016/mar/08/children-mobile-phone-distraction-study-school>

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Use of mobile phones by teachers and support staff:

Staff should use mobile phones in areas where students are present only when there is an emergency, or a pressing need to use the device. E.g. calling for a member of LG to assist with a classroom incident. At other times, staff are expected to model the best practice expected of students. This means phones should not be visible nor should they be used. Staff may use mobile phones freely within offices or the SCR area.

The charging of mobile phones in College

Students are not permitted to charge their phones in College. This violates PAT testing/inspection regulations and is a Health and Safety risk.

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Mobile Phone Policy FAQs for Parents

What is the mobile phone policy?

Between 8.25am-3.25pm students in school should make sure that their phones are switched off and kept out of sight. If they are seen they will be confiscated by a member of staff and taken to the School Office from where they can be collected at 3.25pm by the student in the first instance.

Why have we done this?

There are three main reasons. Firstly, studies show that too much time on a phone leads to a drop in performance and concentration. Secondly, encouraging students to interact in person will help develop their communication skills. Thirdly, it will reduce the social pressures associated with unregulated social media use.

What about before 8.25am?

As at present, boys should put their phones away as they enter the school site, in the Bistro, in the Library and in the playground. However, boys are able to use their phones in the House Rooms. If a boy is using his phone anywhere other than the House Room, he will be told to put it away.

And after 3.25pm?

Boys can use their phones.

Are boys allowed to use their phones in the Year Group Room at break time and lunchtime?

No. The boys should use this time to speak to one another, or to avail themselves of any clubs and other co-curricular opportunities on offer during the lunch break.

What time does the office open until?

The School Office is open until 4pm.

What if I can't get to the School Office before 4pm?

The School Office will be open from 8am the next day to collect the phone.

What if the students need to use their phones in lessons?

This shouldn't be necessary. Victoria College has five computer suites available for classes to use, as well as iPads that can be booked and departmental cameras where necessary. Teachers are well prepared to provide the necessary resources for lessons.

Are boys allowed to use their phones in Tutor Time?

No. Tutor times are for tutors to check in with their tutees, relay important messages, organise House teams and, in Y10&11, for the delivery of PSHE.

What if my son needs to contact me?

He should use the phone at the School Office.

What if I need to contact my son?

Please contact the School Office on 01534 638200. We have a system in place to ensure that messages are passed on.

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What about after school clubs?

Students are allowed their phones at after school clubs, although they should be for the sole purpose of making or receiving contact with their parents.

What if my son needs to check ShowMyHomework?

ShowMyHomework is accessible through all of the computers at school. The log in is with the Office 365 email address, which is the same as the network log in.

Does this apply to the Sixth Form?

Yes, although there is the privilege of using mobile phones in the Sixth Form Centre and at teacher discretion for the purposes of academic research or work related to UCAS or careers.

Does this apply to staff?

Our staff are our best role models. They are aware that they should be setting the correct example to students. However, for obvious emergency situations and matters of safeguarding, staff will sometimes need to use their mobile phones during the school day.

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