



THE DOWNS
MALVERN

Mobile Phone and Camera Policy

This policy is relevant to all sections of the school, EYFS, Pre-prep and The Prep School

It is a specific legal requirement that providers have a policy and procedure that covers the use of mobile phones and cameras in the setting (3:4 Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage 2017). The Downs School pays regard to this Framework

Introduction and Aims

At The Downs Malvern the welfare and well-being of our pupils is paramount.

The aim of the Mobile Phone Policy is to allow users to benefit from modern communication technologies, whilst promoting safe and appropriate practice through establishing clear and robust acceptable mobile user guidelines. This is achieved through balancing protection against potential misuse with the recognition that mobile phones are effective communication tools.

It is recognised that it is the enhanced functions of many mobile phones that cause the most concern, offering distractions and disruption to the working day, and which are most susceptible to misuse – including the taking and distribution of indecent images, exploitation and bullying.

However, as it is difficult to detect specific usage, this policy refers to ALL mobile communication devices.

Scope

This policy applies to all individuals who have access to personal mobile phones on site.

- Use of phones (including receiving/sending texts and emails) should be limited to non-contact time when no children are present e.g in office areas, staff room, empty classrooms.
- Staff must prevent unauthorised access to their phone through passwords and similar.
- Should there be exceptional circumstances (e.g acutely sick relative), then staff should make the Headmaster and office staff aware of this so messages can be relayed promptly. On weekends or holidays, when the office is not usually manned, they may have their phone available in case of needing to receive an emergency call. If possible the phone should still be on silent.
- Staff are not at any time permitted to use recording equipment on their mobile phones, for example: to take recordings of children, or sharing images.
- Staff should report any usage of mobile devices that causes them concern to the Headmaster.

- Staff on duty may have their phones with them but may only use these in emergency situations to either call the School Office or the emergency services. **(Remember IB procedures)**

Mobile Phones for work related purposes

We recognise that mobile phones provide a useful means of communication on off-site activities. However, staff should ensure that:-

- Mobile use on these occasions must be appropriate and professional.
- Mobile phones should not be used to make contact with parents during school trips – all relevant communications should be made via the School Office.
- Where parents are accompanying trips they are informed not to make contact with other parents (via calls, text, email or social networking) during the trip or use their phone to take photographs of children.

Personal Mobiles – Pupils

We recognise that mobile phones are part of everyday life for many children and that they can play an important role in helping pupils to feel safe and secure. However, we also recognise that they can prove a distraction in school and can provide a means of bullying or intimidating others.

From time to time, children might be allowed to take mobile ‘phones on trips but this will be under close control and with clear instructions and boundaries. Children may not use 3G/4G or wi-fi access whilst on trips and will only use the mobile device to listen to music, take appropriate photos for projects, fieldwork, etc... or to call home or the school in an emergency.

Day Pupils

- Day pupils are not permitted to have mobile phones at school or on trips.
- If children do bring a mobile phone to school but they must leave it, turned off, at Reception and collect it at the end of the school day. Whilst we will endeavour to look after these phones in safe storage the school takes no responsibility for any accidental loss or damage to mobile phones brought into school.
- Mobile phones brought to school without permission will be confiscated and returned at the end of the day.
- Unauthorised use of mobile phone during the school day will be deemed to be unacceptable behaviour.

Boarders:

Children who board and wish to bring their mobile phones to school may do so if they wish, but there are some rules and reminders, which must be observed. Boarders failing to observe the rules will be asked to leave their phones and electronic equipment at home.

- Everything must be clearly named.
- They may be used during quiet time in the Boarding house, but must be handed in to the duty staff immediately afterwards for safe keeping.
- They are not allowed to be taken into school or school trips during the day. If they are they will be confiscated.
- The school can accept no responsibility for loss or damage.

Where mobile phones are used in or out of school to bully or intimidate others then the Headmaster does have the power to intervene 'to such an extent as it is reasonable to regulate the behaviour of pupils when they are off the school site'.

Volunteers, Visitors, Proprietors, Advisers and Contractors All Volunteers, Visitors, Proprietors, Advisers and Contractors

All are expected to follow our mobile phone policy as it relates to staff whilst on the premises. On arrival, such visitors will be informed of our expectations around the use of mobile phones.

Parents

While we would prefer parents not to use their mobile phones while on school premises, we recognise that this would be impossible to regulate and that many parents see their phones as essential means of communication at all times. We, therefore, ask that parents' usage of mobile phones, whilst on the school site is courteous and appropriate to the school environment. We do allow parents to photograph or video school events such as shows or sports day using their mobile phones – but insist that parents do not publish images (eg on social networking sites) that include any children other than their own.

Parents/carers are reminded of this at the start of every school performance, on sports day, etc and will receive written reminder in the Newsletter at the start of the academic year.

On joining the school, parents are asked to consent to photographs of their children being used for internal and external marketing literature (including the media and Internet).

Dissemination

The mobile phone policy will be shared with staff and volunteers as part of their induction. It will also be available to parent via the school office and website The impact of this policy on staff workload has been considered.

Alastair S Cook
Headmaster
August 2021

Review August 2022