



## Mobile Phone Policy

### Introduction and aims

At Bishop's Stortford College we recognise that mobile phones, including smart phones and other devices are an important part of everyday life for our pupils, parents and staff, as well as the wider school community. This policy aims to promote safe and responsible phone use and should be read in conjunction with related policies – Acceptable use Policy, E-Safety Policy, Anti-Bullying Policy, and the Behaviour Policy.

This policy is based on guidance from the Department for Education, 2024. [Mobile phones in schools - February 2024 \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1214442/mobile-phones-in-schools-february-2024.pdf).

As such it aims to address some of the challenges posed by mobile phones and other devices in school, such as:

- Risks to child protection
- Data protection issues
- Potential for lesson disruption
- Risk of theft, loss, or damage
- Appropriate use of technology in the classroom

Sixth Form students and all pupils were consulted in the drafting of this policy via the Pupil Council.

### Roles and responsibilities

All staff (including teachers, support staff, and supply staff) are responsible for enforcing this policy.

Volunteers, or anyone else otherwise engaged by the school, must alert a member of staff if they witness, or are aware of, a breach of this policy.

The Deputy Head, Pastoral is responsible for monitoring the policy every year, reviewing it, and holding staff and pupils accountable for its implementation.

## Use of Mobile Phones in the Senior School

We understand that mobile phones and similar devices (including headphones and earpods) are a part of modern life and are a really useful resource for keeping in touch and staying safe.

### Use of mobile phones by 4th Form

**4<sup>th</sup> form pupils are not permitted to use their mobile phones in school under any circumstances. Pupils may bring their mobile phone to school for the sole purpose of travel to and from school. Their mobile phone must be handed in to the House office each morning where it will be stored securely until the end of the school day. 4<sup>th</sup> form pupils are not permitted to keep their mobile phone on their person or in their bag throughout the day. Sanctions will apply to any pupils who do not comply with this policy. These may include a detention and parents/carers being asked to collect the mobile phone.**

### Use of mobile phones by Lower 5<sup>th</sup> and Upper 5<sup>th</sup>

Pupils may have a mobile phone and headphones with them, but they will need to:

- Keep them switched off in an inside pocket or bag at any point during the school day including at break and during lunchtime between 08.15 AM and 4.45 PM.
- Make sure mobile phones and similar devices are **never used, seen or heard** (unless directed to be used by a member of staff in an emergency).

This will enable pupils to be fully focused on their learning in class, and to enjoy social interaction at break and lunchtime, not just in the Dining Hall but also in Houses.

If working in the Pre-Prep building, pupils must hand their mobile phone in to the Pre-Prep office. It will be returned on signing out.

### Use of mobile phones by Sixth Formers

Sixth Form students may use their mobile phone **when not near or in the presence of younger pupils** in 4<sup>th</sup> Form, L5th, and U5th. Sixth Formers are role models and need to set a good example. When in the Sixth Form Learning Centre, or House workrooms, use is permitted. In Main Common Rooms in Houses, mobile phones must **not** be used if younger pupils are present.

If working in the Pre-Prep building, pupils must hand their mobile phone in to the Pre-Prep office. It will be returned on signing out.

## Sanctions

Families and pupils should be aware of the following:

- If a pupil is seen using any device during the school day, including at break and lunchtime, it will be confiscated immediately.

This also applies to Sixth Formers if they are using it when younger pupils are present.

The following sanctions will be imposed if a pupil is found to be using a mobile device in school without permission:

- o **1st offence** – mobile phone confiscated, removed to reception or House office, pupil can collect the device at the end of the day.
- o **2nd offence** – mobile phone confiscated, removed to reception or House office, pupil to receive a school detention.
- o **3rd offence** – mobile phone confiscated, removed to reception or House, pupil to receive a 90-minute Deputy Head's detention.
- o **4th offence** – mobile phone confiscated, removed to reception or House, pupil to receive a two-hour Head's detention. Parents will be contacted to discuss the persistent misuse of the mobile phone, and the phone will need to be handed in each morning for a week.

If a phone is being used around school or in lessons when not permitted, a member of staff may take the phone to reception to be handed in or ask the pupil to report to directly to reception to hand it in themselves. A record of phones in/out will be kept by reception, and phones stored securely.

Phones will be stored securely in Houses.

NB: Schools are permitted to confiscate mobile phones from pupils under sections 91 and 94 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006.

## Use of Mobile Phones in the Prep School

Pupils in the Prep School are not permitted to use their mobile phones in school under any circumstances. Pupils may bring their mobile phone to school for the sole purpose of travel to and from school. Their mobile phone must be handed in at the Prep School reception prior to morning registration, where it will be securely looked after until the end of the school day.

Pupils in the Prep School are not permitted to keep their mobile phone on their person or in their bag throughout the day. Prep School sanctions will apply to any pupils who do not comply with this policy. These may include a detention and parents/carers being asked to collect the mobile phone.

NB: Schools are permitted to confiscate mobile phones from pupils under sections 91 and 94 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006.

### **Misuse of mobile phones**

In addition, there may be times when staff are concerned regarding the content on a pupil's mobile phone (e.g., video footage, images, etc.). Staff members have the power to search pupils' phones, as set out in the DfE's guidance on searching, screening and confiscation and in the College's 'Searching Pupils and Possessions' policy. The checking of content on a mobile phone must be completed with two staff members present. Certain types of conduct, bullying or harassment can be classified as criminal conduct. The school takes such conduct extremely seriously and will involve the police or other agencies as appropriate. Further information is available in the Anti-Bullying Policy, Safeguarding Policy and Discipline Policy.

Such conduct includes, but is not limited to:

- Sexting (consensual and non-consensual sharing nude or semi-nude images or videos)
- Upskirting
- Threats of violence or assault
- Abusive calls, emails, social media posts or texts directed at someone based on someone's ethnicity, religious beliefs or sexual orientation

### **Loss, theft or damage**

Pupils bringing phones to school must ensure that phones are appropriately labelled and are stored securely when not in use.

Pupils must secure their phones as far as possible, including using passwords or pin codes to protect access to the phone's functions.

The school accepts no responsibility for mobile phones that are lost, damaged or stolen on school premises or transport, during school visits or trips, while pupils are travelling to and from school, or if they have been handed in or confiscated

Lost phones should be taken to the school reception who will then attempt to contact the owner.

## **Monitoring and review**

Bishop's Stortford College is committed to ensuring that this policy has a positive impact of pupils' education, behaviour and welfare. When reviewing the policy, the school will consider:

- Feedback from parents and pupils (via the Pupil Council)
- Feedback from teachers
- Records of behaviour and safeguarding incidents
- Relevant advice from the Department for Education, the local authority or other relevant organisations.