ABBOTSHOLME

AN EDUCATION FOR LIFE

Acceptable Pupil Use of Mobile Phones & Personal E-Devices Policy

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V1.1	26/01/2026	Updated to include use of mobile phones. Aligned with new behaviour policy

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Acceptable Pupil Use of Mobile Phones & Personal E-Devices Policy

For some young people today, owning a personal mobile phone or e-device is considered a vital part of their life. When used creatively and responsibly, these devices have great potential to support a pupil's learning and enhance their life. However, the potential for misuse in school makes clear policy guidelines necessary. These guidelines are intended to outline the school's expectations for pupil use of mobile phones and e-devices and provide clear guidance to staff, pupils, and parents about the consequences of misuse.

The Department for Education has now made its position explicit: **all schools should operate as phone-free environments for the entire school day**, including lessons, movement between lessons, breaktimes and lunchtimes. This updated guidance is intended to remove ambiguity, support consistent boundaries, and reinforce the role schools play in protecting pupils' learning, behaviour, and wellbeing.

This policy should be read alongside the school's:

- Acceptable Use Policy, including the use of school devices.
- Bring Your Own Device Policy
- Safeguarding Policy, incorporating online safety provisions.
- Behaviour Policy.

All pupils will receive age-appropriate guidance and education about the safe and responsible use of mobile phones and e-devices in Digital Learning and PSHE lessons. This education will include the risks of cyberbullying, sexting, AI, and accessing inappropriate content, in line with statutory guidance such as Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) and UK Data Protection Act 2018.

General Principles

1. Security of Devices:
    - The security of devices is the pupil's responsibility. It is recommended that all devices are password/PIN-protected.
    - Pupils should regularly change their passwords and never share them with others.
    - Lost or found devices must be handed in to Reception.
2. Responsible Use:

- Pupils must not bring age-inappropriate material into school on their devices or access such material online.
- The school expects pupils to report concerns of misuse or abuse promptly.

Rules for Acceptable Use

Who, When, and Where?

- Pre-Prep Pupils: Mobile phones are not permitted
- Prep School Pupils: Phones must be handed to their class teacher on arrival and collected at the end of the school day.
- Senior School Pupils (Years 7 - 11): Phones must be handed in to tutors at the start of the day and can be collected from reception at the end of the school day.
- Sixth Form Pupils: Phones may be carried and used sensibly in the sixth form common room only.

Prohibited Use:

- With the exception of sixth form pupils in the sixth form centre, mobile phones are not permitted to be used by pupils anywhere on the school site - indoors or outdoors.

Unacceptable Use

The following actions are considered serious breaches of this policy and may result in serious sanctions:

- Taking or sharing images, videos, or sound recordings without explicit permission.
- Using devices for sexting, cyberbullying, or harassment.
- Accessing or sharing age-inappropriate or illegal content.
- Disrupting lessons with device use.
- Refusing to comply with a staff member's request to hand over a device.
- Using devices outside school hours to intimidate or harm others, or to access inappropriate content.

Screening and Monitoring

In line with KCSIE and data protection laws, the school reserves the right to monitor and review content on confiscated devices when there is reasonable cause. Parents will be informed of any review, and the school will work with them to address any breaches of

this policy. Evidence of serious misuse will be preserved and, if necessary, shared with law enforcement.

Promoting Digital Well-being

The school emphasises the importance of digital well-being and responsible device use through:

- Regular PSHE lessons focusing on online safety and the emotional impact of misuse.
- Assemblies and workshops to educate pupils about cyberbullying, sexting, and maintaining a healthy balance with technology.

Accessibility and Equal Opportunities

The school recognises that some pupils with SEND or medical needs may require access to their devices during the school day. Individual arrangements will be made to ensure their needs are met, in compliance with the Equality Act 2010.

Dealing with Breaches

Breaches of this policy will be dealt with proportionately and may include:

- Confiscating the device.
- Recording the breach on the school's MIS (ISAMS)
- Informing parents and imposing further sanctions as outlined in the Behaviour Policy.
- In cases of serious misuse, referring incidents to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or law enforcement.

Serious Misuse or Criminal Activity

Pupils should be aware that the police will be informed if there is a serious misuse where criminal activity is suspected.

If a pupil commits an act which causes serious harassment, alarm or distress to another pupil or member of staff, the ultimate sanction may be permanent exclusion. School will consider the impact on the victim of the act in deciding the sanction and parents will be involved. The Head of School, or Designated Safeguarding Lead will have the right to view files stored in confiscated equipment and will seek the cooperation of parents in deleting any files which are in clear breach of these guidelines unless these are being preserved as evidence. If required, evidence of the offence will be preserved, preferably by confiscation of the device and keeping it secure or by taking photographs of the screen. The Head of School will consider whether an incident should be reported to the Safeguarding Team. The Head of School will monitor repeat offences to see if there is any pattern in the perpetrator or the victim which needs further investigation.

Support and Closure

Following incidents of misuse, the school will:

- Provide support for victims of harassment or bullying.
- Educate perpetrators about the impact of their actions and how to make better choices.

Staff Training

All staff will receive training on:

- Identifying and responding to device misuse.
- Understanding legal obligations regarding online safety and data protection.
- Supporting pupils in developing responsible device use habits.

Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed annually by the DSL and senior leadership team to ensure compliance with legislation and best practices.