



REACH
SOUTH
ACADEMY TRUST

MOBILE PHONE POLICY

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| Policy Owner | Director of Operations |
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Introduction

This mobile phone policy applies to all schools in our Multi-Academy Trust, including primary, secondary, all through schools and further education settings. This policy reflects the guidance published by the Department for Education with regards to prohibiting Mobile phones in school and covers all age ranges from 4 to 18.

Responsibilities

The IT and Inclusion teams within the Trust have worked together to create this policy around mobile phones within school, recognising current government guidance, the nature of mobile use around school and the options available to our schools.

Senior leaders within each school are responsible for identifying and defining how the policy is implemented in their schools.

All staff members have a responsibility to promote adherence to the policy. Pupils also have a responsibility to follow the mobile phone policy and report any concerns they may have.

Background

As part of the DfE guidance on making schools a mobile phone free zone and building on experience throughout our schools across the Trust, this policy sets out options for schools implementing a mobile phone free environment. It takes into account pupil age groups, legitimate reasons why pupils bring phones to school, and drives to set out a series of coherent policy options for our headteachers, along with appropriate exemption processes and why they may be required.

As part of their guidance, the DfE lay out a number of options for implementing a mobile free environment: -

- 1) No mobile phones on the school premises – a school may decide that no mobile phones should be brought to school by its pupils, and they must be left at home or with parents. This policy provides a very simple boundary which is straightforward to enforce as any mobile phone found at school would be in breach of the policy.
- 2) Mobile phone handed in on arrival – a school may decide that its pupils may require access to their mobile phones before and after school, but they do not want pupils to have access to their mobile phones throughout the school day. On entry to the school each pupil hands in their device to school staff and these are then collected at the end of the school day. Schools should be mindful that even if a pupil has handed in one mobile phone, they may have another mobile phone in their possession.
- 3) Mobile phones kept in secure location, which the pupil does not access throughout the school day – some schools may have established bag-free days where personal possessions are kept in lockers, or similar secure storage. If mobile phones are brought to the school, at the start of the school day they should be put straight into lockers or similar secure storage and not be accessed by the pupil until the end of the day.
- 4) Never used, seen or heard – some schools may choose to adopt a policy where pupils keep possession of their mobile phones only on the strict condition that they

are never used, seen or heard – with consequences for breaching this that are sufficient to act as an effective deterrent. It is important that schools enforce this policy vigorously, consistently and visibly, to the effect that mobile phone use is prohibited throughout the school day. To support this, it may be appropriate for a school to ensure that parents and pupils clearly understand the sanctions that may be applied, to establish a strong no-phone culture. Schools will often stipulate that the mobile phone is switched off at the bottom of the school bag; confiscation may be an immediate consequence otherwise. As this policy becomes established through consistent application, the culture of the school will change, with pupils less likely to attempt to use their phones.

- 5) Taking into account feedback from a variety of settings, this policy will not be recommending the use of option 4 within Reach South Schools. This option is often difficult to enforce as it can be easily abused and hard to police and has not proven successful when previously used within Reach South Schools.

Primary Settings

For the majority of pupils in the primary setting, there is no reason to bring a phone to school, as they travel with parents/guardians to and from the school. The default position on mobile phones within primary settings is that they should not be brought into the premises and should be left at home or with parents (option 1 outlined above).

During the upper years of KS2, and in line with the school's policy on when pupils can travel to and from school on their own, it would be appropriate to consider implementing option 2 for pupils who regularly travel to and from school unaccompanied by parents or guardians.

Secondary Settings

Within secondary settings, it would be expected that the majority of pupils would have a mobile phone. With the rise in the use of apps for season tickets such as bus and train, the safety benefits of communication when travelling, and social use, it is not realistic to expect or demand pupils leave their devices at home.

It is therefore recommended that secondary settings use option 2 (phones handed in on arrival), unless they have specific arrangements that would allow them to use option 3 successfully (phones kept in a secure location that students only access at start and end of day).

Managing Non-Compliance

Non-compliance with the policy should be managed as per the Trust behaviour policy.

Searches

Searching of pupils should be undertaken as per the Trust behaviour policy.

Confiscation

Confiscation of mobile devices should be completed in line with the Trust's behaviour policy.

Exceptions

We recognise that there are scenarios where a pupil needs to have access to their mobile device. These should be dealt with on a case-by-case basis and appropriately documented.

Some examples of appropriate exemptions would be:

- Pupil is diabetic and has a real time glucose monitoring system linked to their phone
- Pupil is a carer and needs to be contactable by dependent
- Pupil uses their device to communicate where verbal communication is limited

This list is not exhaustive. Exceptions should be narrow and specific, allowing the device to be retained only for the exempted purpose.

Policy History

| Date | Summary of change | Contact | Policy Implementation Date | Review Date |
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| 30/09/2024 | Policy creation | IT | Pending Committee Approval October 2024 | October 2025 |