

Mobile phone policy

Valley Gardens Middle School



Approved by:	Governing Body	Date: 4/6/19
Last reviewed on:	3/6/19	
Next review due by:	June 21	

Contents

1. Introduction and aims	2
2. Roles and responsibilities	2
3. Use of mobile phones by staff	2
4. Use of mobile phones by pupils.....	4
5. Use of mobile phones by parents, volunteers and visitors	5
6. Loss, theft or damage	5
7. Monitoring and review.....	6
8. Appendix 1: [Code of conduct/acceptable use agreement] for pupils.....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
9. Appendix 2: Permission form for pupils to use mobile phones during lessons	Error! Bookmark not defined.
10. Appendix 3: Permission form allowing a pupil to bring their phone to school	Error! Bookmark not defined.
11. Appendix 4: Template mobile phone information slip for visitors	Error! Bookmark not defined.

1. Introduction and aims

At Valley Gardens we recognise that mobile phones, including smart phones, are an important part of everyday life for our pupils, parents and staff, as well as the wider school community.

Our policy aims to:

- Promote, and set an example for, safe and responsible phone use
- Set clear guidelines for the use of mobile phones for pupils, staff, parents and volunteers
- Support the school's other policies, especially those related to child protection and behaviour

This policy also aims to address some of the challenges posed by mobile phones 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

2. Roles and responsibilities

2.1 Staff

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 Headteacher is responsible for monitoring the policy every two years, reviewing it, and holding staff and pupils accountable for its implementation.

3. Use of mobile phones by staff

3.1 Personal mobile phones

Staff (including volunteers, contractors and anyone else otherwise engaged by the school) are not permitted to make or receive calls, or send texts, while children are present/during contact time. Use of personal mobile phones must be restricted to non-contact time, and to areas of the school where pupils are not present (such as the staff room).

There may be circumstances in which it's appropriate for a member of staff to have use of their phone during contact time. For instance:

- › For emergency contact by their child, or their child's school
- › In the case of acutely ill dependents or family members

The Headteacher will decide on a case-by-basis whether to allow for special arrangements.

If special arrangements are not deemed necessary, school staff can use the school office number 0191 2008792 as a point of emergency contact.

3.2 Data protection

Staff must not use their personal mobile phones to process personal data, or any other confidential school information.

More detailed guidance on data protection can be found in the school's data protection policy or ICT acceptable use policy.

3.3 Safeguarding

Staff must refrain from giving their personal contact details to parents or pupils, including connecting through social media and messaging apps.

Staff must avoid publicising their contact details on any social media platform or website, to avoid unwanted contact by parents or pupils.

Staff must not use their mobile phones to take photographs or recordings of pupils, their work, or anything else which could identify a pupil. If it's necessary to take photos or recordings as part of a lesson/school trip/activity, this must be done using school equipment.

3.4 Using personal mobiles for work purposes

In some circumstances, it may be appropriate for staff to use personal mobile phones for work. Such circumstances may include, but aren't limited to:

- › Emergency evacuations
- › Supervising off-site trips
- › Supervising residential visits

In these circumstances, staff will:

- › Use their mobile phones in an appropriate and professional manner, in line with our staff code of conduct
- › Not use their phones to take photographs or recordings of pupils, their work, or anything else which could identify a pupil
- › Refrain from using their phones to contact parents. If necessary, contact must be made via the school office

3.5 Work phones

Some members of staff are provided with a mobile phone by the school for work purposes.

Only authorised staff are permitted to use school phones, and access to the phone must not be provided to anyone without authorisation.

Staff must:

- Only use phone functions for work purposes, including making/receiving calls, sending/receiving emails or other communications, or using the internet
- Ensure that communication or conduct linked to the device is appropriate and professional at all times, in line with our staff code of conduct.

3.6 Sanctions

Staff that fail to adhere to this policy may face disciplinary action.

See the school's staff disciplinary policy for more information.

4. Use of mobile phones by pupils

Pupils are **not** permitted to have a mobile phone on their person, in school.

Parents who wish their children to have a mobile phone for safety reasons e.g. for the pupil's journey to and from school, may fill in a parent consent form (attached) and return this to school for consideration.

Pupils who have a parent consent form will be expected to hand their mobile phone in during morning registration and collect it at the end of the day. The phone should be clearly labelled for easy identification. The phone will be stored in a lockable storage container.

The school accepts no responsibility or liability for any loss or damage to phones; parents allowing their children to take a phone to school do so at their own risk.

Where pupils who bring their phone to school, with the appropriate consent forms, are expecting to leave school early, e.g. for a medical appointment, they should consider not bringing their phone in on that day or alternatively leaving it at the school office where it will be more easily retrieved at the appropriate time.

The school reserves the right to revoke permissions for pupils to bring their phones if this privilege is abused at any time.

In the event of an emergency situation where parents need to contact their children during school hours, they can ring the school office on 0191 200 8792.

4.1 Sanctions

The Headteacher, and staff given authority by the Headteacher, may search pupils for prohibited items and confiscate items that are identified as being banned from the school. Further guidance on the school's powers can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/searching-screening-and-confiscation>

Pupils who are caught in possession of a phone will be subject to sanctions in line with the school's behaviour for learning policy.

Typically, sanctions would be:

- For a first offence, the phone will be confiscated and the pupil will be given a 30 minute after school detention along with a demerit. The phone will be returned to the pupil at the end of the day.
- For further offences, the phone will be confiscated, an hour long after school detention will be given along with a demerit, and the phone will only be returned to a parent or guardian.
- Where pupils have used a phone in school to film other staff or pupils, and where such footage is uploaded to the internet, further more serious sanctions will apply. These may include exclusion for the worst offences.

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.

Such conduct includes, but is not limited to:

- › Sexting
- › Threats of violence or assault
- › Abusive calls, emails, social media posts or texts directed at someone on the basis of someone's ethnicity, religious beliefs or sexual orientation

5. Use of mobile phones by parents, volunteers and visitors

Parents, visitors and volunteers (including governors and contractors) must adhere to this policy as it relates to staff if they are on the school site during the school day.

This means:

- › Not taking pictures or recordings of pupils, unless it's a public event (such as a school fair), or of their own child
- › Using any photographs or recordings for personal use only, and not posting on social media without consent
- › Not using phones in lessons, or when working with pupils

Parents, visitors and volunteers will be informed of the rules for mobile phone use when they sign in at reception or attend a public event at school.

Parents or volunteers supervising school trips or residential visits must not:

- › Use their phone to make contact with other parents
- › Take photos or recordings of pupils, their work, or anything else which could identify a pupil

Parents or volunteers supervising trips are also responsible for enforcing the school's policy for pupils using their phones, as set out in section 4 above.

Parents must use the school office as the first point of contact if they need to get in touch with their child during the school day. They must not try to contact their child on his/her personal mobile during the school day.

6. Loss, theft or damage

Pupils bringing phones to school must ensure that they have a signed parental consent form and must ensure that phones are appropriately labelled, and are handed in during registration.

Pupils must secure their phones as much as possible, including using passwords or pin codes to protect access to the phone's functions. Staff must also secure their personal phones, as well as any work phone provided to them. Failure by staff to do so could result in data breaches.

The school accepts no responsibility for mobile phones that are lost, damaged or stolen on school premises or transport, during school visits or trips, or while pupils are travelling to and from school.

This information will display this information in the following ways to remind all stakeholders of their liabilities:

- › Put signs up in the school entryway or office
- › A disclaimer in the permission forms for bringing a phone to school
- › A disclaimer in the home-school agreement
- › We will provide a copy of the policy and disclaimer to new pupils and parents

Confiscated phones will be stored in the school office in a lockable draw.

7. Monitoring and review

The school is committed to ensuring that this policy has a positive impact of pupils' education, behaviour and welfare. When reviewing the policy, the school will take into account:

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

