



FORT HILL INTEGRATED **COLLEGE**



MOBILE PHONES **and HAND-HELD DEVICES** **POLICY AND PROCEDURES**

Reviewed
To be reviewed

June 2022
June 2025



Fort Hill Integrated College

Policy on hand held electronic devices including mobile phones

Rationale: Communications technology is developing very rapidly and most young people now have their own mobile phone. At Fort Hill Integrated College, we recognise this and work with pupils to use the technology to the advantage of all, in a responsible and appropriate way. Mobiles are, however, potential targets for theft and can be misused for example to bully, humiliate, harass, film violent incidents. In some cases, it has also been known for them to be used for inappropriate contact, including grooming by unsuitable persons. Although we strongly discourage pupils from bringing mobile phones into school, we recognise that many parents/guardians would be concerned for health and safety reasons if their child was not allowed to carry a phone and may therefore not be able to contact them in respect of any situation that might arise. Where they are brought into school, the following policy will be rigorously enforced.

In this policy, the use of the term mobile phones will relate to all technology that allows connection to mobile or wifi networks. School devices are excluded.

Objectives:

- To continue to allow pupils to use mobile phones to and from school.
- To allow teaching and learning in the classroom to take place undisturbed by mobile phones.
- To make it clear to pupils that the presence of mobile phones is not permitted in public examinations.
- To allow pupils to be safe from the effects of mobile phone use, cyber bullying and to protect **all** members of the school from the negative use of hand held electronic devices.
- To ensure that 'Bluetooth' technology is not used to compromise the safety, security or privacy of others.
- To make pupils and parents/guardians aware of the school's position on hand held electronic devices and the consequences of their use /misuse.

Examples of hand held devices covered by this policy

Mobile phones/Smart phones/Smart watches

Whilst these are mainly used for texting and voice calls, phones enable the user to take photographs and video, listen to music, to play games, to communicate via Bluetooth, access the web and the wide variety of apps including social media.

Games consoles/laptops/tablets:

Solely for playing games/using apps but some now have photographic capability and internet access.



Guidelines:

- Mobile phones must be switched **off (not on silent mode)** and kept out of view, (in the inside pocket of the blazer) when on the school campus i.e. on entering the school grounds and building, and must not be switched on again until the pupils leave the campus. Even when apparently silent, using mobile phones for any purpose could be potentially undermining classroom discipline and/or interfere with electronic equipment, so is not permitted. Special care should be taken to double check that phones are not switched on in examination rooms during external or internal exams.
- Mobile phones should also remain switched off during off site school activities i.e. field trips, sporting activities etc. The only exception to this would be in an emergency and/or with the approval of a member of the school staff.
- Hand held electronic devices with integrated cameras could lead to child protection and data protection issues with regard to the inappropriate taking, use or distribution of images. These should not be used to take pictures or videos of anyone in school or on school trips unless with the agreement of staff and the pupils concerned.
- Mobile phones **must not** be used to make emergency contact to and from parents/guardians. If a pupil needs to contact a parent/guardian, they will be able to use a school phone. If a parent/guardian urgently needs to contact a pupil, they should phone the school office and the message will be forwarded to the pupil.
- Pupils who feel unwell **must not** use mobile phones to contact home. Instead they should visit the school nurse or their Pastoral Leader/Senior member of staff (outside nurse's hours). They can assess the situation, contact home if necessary and monitor the sick pupil while they wait to be collected. This arrangement also avoids confusion caused by a parent arriving unannounced or a pupil leaving school without a record being made.
- Pupils must not use mobile phones to bully or harass others i.e. threatening/unwanted text messages or phone calls.
- The school cannot accept any responsibility whatsoever for any hand held electronic devices that are damaged, lost or stolen. It is the responsibility of the parents and pupils to ensure that phones are properly insured.

Sanctions:

1. Mobiles phones in view or mobile phones switched on/in use, will be confiscated by members of staff. Pupils will be able to collect these phones from Reception at the end of the school day i.e. after 3.00pm. **Pupils who constantly break the rules (3 or more times) will have phones confiscated and held in school until parents are contacted and arrange to collect them.**
2. Pupils sending threatening or unwanted texts/calls to others may have their phone confiscated. Parents/guardians may be informed of the matter and it may be reported to the PSNI. Where threats are made to those not attending Fort Hill Integrated College, then the parents/guardians will be advised to contact the PSNI.
3. Pupils found to have their mobile phone switched on in an exam room will automatically be disqualified from the examination (by the Examinations Council in the case of an external exam).



4. Pupils using any hand held electronic device to take pictures/video images or forward pictures/video images to others, including the internet, will have their hand held electronic device confiscated. Parents/guardians may be informed of the matter and it may be reported to the PSNI. Where these are of pupils not attending Fort Hill Integrated College, then the parents/guardians will be advised to contact the PSNI.
5. If a pupil persistently uses a hand held electronic device in such a way that contravenes this policy, then their privilege to have the device in school will be withdrawn indefinitely.
6. Disciplinary action, up to and including the possible suspension or expulsion of the pupil concerned, will be considered for more serious issues.

Advice on safe and responsible use of mobile phones

- **Do not** give out your number or friends' numbers to people you don't know.
- Keep your PIN number or security code private.
- If you get a text/image or social media message/image which upsets you, do not reply but keep a record and tell a responsible adult. In serious cases it can be reported to the PSNI.
- If you receive a rude or embarrassing text/image or social media message/image about someone, don't forward it to others but do tell a responsible adult.
- Distributing sexual images of other young people is harassment and is illegal. If you receive something like this, tell a responsible adult immediately.
- Out of school, ask permission before taking an image/video of your friends and think carefully before sending it on via phone or web. Once sent, you have lost control of it, it could become public before you know it and may be used in an inappropriate way.
- Use wall messaging responsibly and do not post things on your status for everyone to see that you may later regret.
- See www.kidsmart.org.uk for more information on staying safe.

Acknowledgements

This policy acknowledges and complies with the Circular - Effective Educational uses of Mobile Digital Devices 2016/26 and Guidance for Schools on Pupils' Personal Use of Mobile Phones and other Similar Devices During the School Day 2024/14.

See Positive Behaviour Policy Appendix 4 - **Confiscation of a student's Mobile Phone**

