

Beaufort Co-Operative Academy



A policy on: Acceptable use of mobile phone

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Mobile Phones – Acceptable use policy

Introduction

Mobile phones and, in particular, the new generation of smart phones, such as the iPhone, now include many additional functions such as an integrated camera, video recording capability, instant messaging, mobile office applications and mobile access to the internet. These allow immediate access to email, searching for information on the internet and other functions such as access to social networking sites eg Facebook, twitter and blogging sites.

For many young people today the ownership of a mobile phone is considered a necessary and vital part of their social life. When used creatively and responsibly the smart phone has great potential to support a student's learning experiences.

Bullying, intimidation and harassment are not new in society; however bullying using a mobile phone represents a new challenge for schools to manage. Examples of misuse include:

- the deliberate engineering of situations where people's reactions are filmed or photographed in order to humiliate, embarrass and intimidate by publishing to a wider audience such as on Facebook or YouTube
- bullying by text, image and email messaging
- the use of a mobile phone for 'sexting' (the deliberate taking and sending of provocative images or text messages)
- students posting material on social network sites with no thought to the risks to their personal reputation and sometimes with the deliberate intention of causing harm to others
- making disrespectful comments, misrepresenting events or making defamatory remarks about teachers or other students
- general disruption to learning caused by students accessing phones in lessons
- pupils phoning parents immediately following an incident so that the ability of staff to deal with an incident is compromised
- publishing photographs of vulnerable students, who may be on a child protection plan, where this may put them at additional risk.

These guidelines make explicit the expectations of the Academy on student use of mobile phones and the restrictions which are placed on their use in the Academy and on Academy grounds. The Guidelines sit alongside the acceptable use policy for internet use which all students sign and is shared with parents and carers. They also give clear guidance to staff, students and parents about the consequences for breaches of the Guidelines.

Dealing with breaches of the Guidelines

Beaufort Academy will identify several designated members of staff including the Child Protection Officer to deal with serious incidents of misuse, particularly where there has been a victim of Cyberbullying.

Students should be aware that serious misuse may lead to the confiscation of their mobile phone, communication with parents and the imposition of other sanctions up to and including exclusion from Beaufort Academy. If the offence is serious it will be reported to the Police.

Beaufort Academy will ensure all staff know the correct procedure to follow where a mobile phone has been confiscated and is not returned to the student at the end of a lesson. This will ensure that the confiscation is correctly recorded and that the phone is kept in an envelope in either the behaviour support centre or the main school office.

Where it is deemed necessary to examine the contents of a mobile phone this will be done by a designated member of staff. The action will be properly recorded in case it later becomes evidence of criminal activity. The record will include the time, who was present and what is found.

Rules for Acceptable Use of a mobile phone in the Academy by students

Students are allowed to carry their personal mobile phones in the Academy and to use them responsibly in accordance with the following principles:

- use of the mobile phone during lesson time will only be allowed with the agreement of the teacher and for the explicit purpose of supporting learning. Misuse of this privilege (using the phone for a non curriculum purpose or any unacceptable use) will result in the withdrawal of the privilege and may also result in the confiscation of the phone.
- at all other times the mobile phone will be switched off and it will be kept out of sight during lesson time. It is not acceptable for phones merely to be put on silent or pager mode.
- students are permitted to use their mobile phone outside of the school building
- no student may take a mobile phone into a room or other area where examinations are being held.
- the security of phone will remain the student's responsibility in all lessons including PE / sports lessons and also when attending activities during social time or after school hours.
- if asked to do so, content on the phone (eg messages, emails, pictures, videos, sound files) will be shown to a teacher.

Unacceptable Use

The Academy will consider any of the following to be unacceptable use of the mobile phone and a serious breach of the school's behaviour policy resulting in sanctions being taken.

- photographing or filming staff or other students without their knowledge or permission
- photographing or filming in toilets, swimming pools and changing rooms and similar areas

- bullying, harassing or intimidating staff or students by the use of text, email or multimedia messaging, sending inappropriate messages or posts to social networking or blogging sites
- refusing to switch a phone off or handing over the phone at the request of a member of staff
- using the mobile phone outside school hours to intimidate or upset staff and students will be considered a breach of these guidelines in the same way as unacceptable use which takes place in school time.

Sanctions

Students and parents are notified that appropriate action will be taken against those who are in breach of the acceptable use guidelines following the school's behaviour policy. In addition

- students and their parents should be very clear that the Academy is within its right to confiscate the phone where the guidelines have been breached.
- if a phone is confiscated, Beaufort Academy will make it clear for how long this will be and the procedure to be followed for its return
- students should be aware that the police will be informed if there is a serious misuse of the mobile phone where criminal activity is suspected.
- If a student commits an act which causes serious harassment, alarm or distress to another student or member of staff the ultimate sanction may be permanent exclusion. Beaufort Academy will consider the impact on the victim of the act in deciding the sanction and parents will be involved.

Confiscation Procedure

If a mobile phone is confiscated then:

- At the discretion of the teacher the mobile phone will be returned at the end of the lesson
- Or the student will be informed that the phone can be collected at the end of school day *from the Behaviour support centre office or the main school office.*
- The confiscation will be recorded in the school behaviour log on SIMs for monitoring purposes
- Beaufort Academy will ensure that confiscated equipment is stored in such a way that it is returned to the correct person
- In the case of repeated misuse the phone will only be returned to a parent/carer who will be required to visit the Academy by appointment to collect the phone. This may be at the end of a week.
- Where a student persistently breaches the Guidelines, following a clear warning, the Principal may impose an outright ban from bringing a mobile phone to the Academy. This may be a fixed period or permanent ban

Where the phone has been used for an unacceptable purpose

- The Principal or a designated staff member 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
- Advice can be sought from the Local Authority (via INTECH helpdesk on 860 46888) and/or the police (general response number 0845 606 0606 or use the local Police Community Constable)
- The Academy will consider whether an incident should be reported to the school safeguarding officer
- The designated staff member should monitor repeat offences to see if there is any pattern in the perpetrator or the victim which needs further investigation

This statement of Guidelines will be subject to regular review and updating in order to ensure that the personal safety of students and Academy staff is protected and that the learning environment is not disturbed by current or emerging technology.

Review Date: August 2016

Responsible Person: James King
Assistant Principal