



Bexley Grammar School

## Mobile Phone Policy

### Rationale:

The objective of this policy is to limit the amount of time students at Bexley Grammar School spend on their phones and other electronic devices.

There is an expanding body of evidence both scientific and anecdotal, that there is a direct link between increased screen time and a range of negative outcomes including reduced academic performance, increased mental ill-health issues and reduced physical fitness. While there is an educational place for the use of phones in the classroom, the evidence is clear that the leisure time that students have in school should be spent away from screens, socialising face to face and playing non-screen games, preferably those involving physical activity. On a practical level, the use of phones in corridors and between lessons discourages healthy social interaction, slows students down and causes accidents.

Students are taught about a range of issues involving the internet and social media safety in PSHCE, assemblies and in computer science lessons. These important lessons do not require students to have their phones in school.

For the purposes of this policy, 'phones' stand for mobile phones but also any portable electronic device that can be used for gaming, messaging, recording or running social media apps, including smart watches.

### Policy for students in Years 7-11

- Students may bring their phones to school but they must be switched off between 8:30am and 3:05pm including break and lunchtime. Students should turn off their phones and put them away before registration in the morning and only turn them on again after they leave their final lesson at 3:05pm unless a member of staff specifically asks students to turn them on to support a learning activity during a lesson.
- Students should also put earphones and headphones away for the day in the same way.
- It is a student's responsibility to keep her/his phone turned off and out of sight in a bag or blazer pocket. If a student has a phone out or visible for any reason other than being asked to do so by a member of staff, or if the phone rings, the student should expect the phone to be confiscated and to have to collect it at the end of the school day.
- If a student has his/her phone confiscated on more than one occasion, then on the third occasion the parents of that student will be asked to collect the phone between 8:15 and

5:00pm from Reception; the student will not be able to collect it without her/his parent. The same arrangement will apply to any subsequent breach (i.e. the fourth, fifth, and so on) of the policy. This tally will be reset each term.

- If a member of staff requests the use of phones to support a learning activity during a lesson, students must use their phones only for the task set. Any other use of the phone will result in a sanction in addition to confiscation of the phone. At the end of the task, it is the students' responsibility to switch off their phones and put them away again.
- In the normal course of a school day, there should be no need to contact each other or parents by phone other than in an emergency. If a student has a genuine reason to need to make a phone call, s/he should report to Reception where staff will make the necessary arrangements.
- Phones should still be handed in with any other valuables before PE lessons.

### **Policy for Sixth Form students**

- Students may bring their phones to school but they must be out of sight between 8:30am and 3:05pm except for Private Study, break and lunchtime in designated Sixth Form areas.
- It is a student's responsibility to keep her/his phone out of sight in a bag or blazer pocket unless s/he is in a designated Sixth Form study area: L6, L12, K1 or SFC.
- Students should also put earphones and headphones away for the day in the same way, to be used only in the designated areas.
- It is important that Sixth Form students set an example to lower school students by not using their phones anywhere else in the school, including corridors, in the canteen and outside. If a student has a phone out for any reason other than being asked to do so by a member of staff in any area of the school except those designated Sixth Form areas detailed above, the student should expect the phone to be confiscated and to have to collect it at the end of the school day.
- If a student has his/her phone confiscated on more than one occasion, then on the third occasion the parents of that student will be asked to collect the phone between 8:15 and 5:00pm from Reception; the student will not be able to collect it without her/his parent. The same arrangement will apply to any subsequent breach (i.e. the fourth, fifth, and so on) of the policy. This tally will be reset each term.
- If a member of staff requests the use of phones to support a learning activity during a lesson, students must use their phones only for the task set. Any other use of the phone will result in a sanction in addition to confiscation of the phone. At the end of the task, it is the students' responsibility to put them away again.

### **Policy for staff**

As in all aspects of school life, staff provide a powerful role model for students. In parallel to Sixth Form students, staff should only use their phones in designated staff areas, outside lesson time. It is difficult to enforce a 'no see' policy with students if staff are using phones in front of them.

Consistency is the key; as with any other policy, it is effective only when every member of staff is consistent in enforcing it. Staff should confiscate any phone from any student in Years 7-11 on

sight, between 8:30am and 3:05pm. The same applies to any Sixth Form student unless they are in the designated Sixth Form areas (L6, L12, K1 or SFC).

- If a phone is confiscated, it should be placed in an envelope with the student's name, form and the date on it. The phone should be taken at the earliest convenient opportunity to Reception where it will be recorded in the phone log and later logged in SIMS as a phone behaviour event. The student should be informed to collect it after school on the same day.
- If it is the student's third offence the student will be informed that the phone can be collected only by his/her parents. Reception should inform the SAM/DoS of the year group who will phone home with this information. The same arrangement will apply to any subsequent breach (i.e. the fourth, fifth, and so on) of the policy.
- Tutors will periodically check during registration that phones have been turned off.
- Where possible, staff should avoid setting cover work that involves the use of phones.

### **Policy for parents**

The school does not take responsibility for any student valuables brought into school. Students bring expensive phones, headphones, watches and other valuables to school at their own risk and against the recommendation of the school.

There is no expectation for a student to carry a phone, just as there is no need for a student to bring money to school. However, since many do carry smartphones, it is useful to harness them in lessons for short tasks or extended research which always allow for sharing.

As well as the benefits outlined in the 'Rationale' above, this policy improves students' organisation using their planners and their responsibility for their belongings.

- It is expected that parents will support the school in reinforcing the expectation that your son/daughter's phone will be confiscated if seen. Where a student's phone is confiscated for a third time, a parent will be required to collect the phone from the school between 8:15am and 5:00pm on a school day. The same arrangement will apply to any subsequent breach (i.e. the fourth, fifth, and so on) of the policy.
- If a parent needs to contact their child during school hours, they should do so through Reception, by phoning 020 8304 8538. If a child has forgotten his/her PE kit, homework, lunch, etc, these can be dropped off at reception where staff will ensure the item reaches your child. The reverse also applies: a student may contact parents in an emergency by going to Reception.
- The school remains, of course, mindful of its responsibilities to keep your children safe.

To support parents in enforcing their own rules for phone use at home, the school makes it clear that if homework set by the school requires the internet, it can be completed on a computer with internet access - there is no requirement for a phone to be used. (Eg. Google Classroom, where it is used, can be accessed from a computer.) If a home computer is not available and your child uses their phone for such homework, then it should be monitored just as computer time. (Some parents keep a separate 'old' smartphone available at home for 'computer use', one monitored by parents and kept free of social media apps, etc.)

By restricting screen time during school hours, the school is actively supporting parents who are restricting screen time at home. The growing body of evidence about too much screen time means that in working together to reduce it, we improve the academic performance, mental health and physical fitness of your children. This policy supports us in our safeguarding responsibility to your children.

\*Temporary Amendment from June 2020

In light of the current, unprecedented situation with Covid-19 and the subsequent radical changes to schooling, the Mobile Phone Policy in its above form has been suspended. Whilst we insist that all BGS students follow the underlying principles of good levels of social interaction, physical activity and responsible use of technology, students of key workers and those deemed vulnerable, and Year 10 and 12 students who are in school from the 15th June, are allowed to use their mobile phones and other devices to access educational materials and maintain contact with parents before, during and after the school day. This is a temporary measure and may be revoked as and when the Senior Leadership Team deem appropriate. We expect all students to act responsibly in the interim period.