



SPRINGWELL COMMUNITY COLLEGE

# Use of Mobile Phones Policy

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## Use of Mobile Phones in College

### RATIONALE

The implementation of our mobile phone policy will not cause any problems for the vast majority of Springwell Community College students who use their mobile phones sensibly.

As with all policies in place at Springwell Community College, the Governors have given due consideration to the spirit of the "Keeping Children Safe in Education" Agenda. In addition, in the application of this policy, the college will strive to reflect the college's aim to ensure the happiness and well-being of all individuals who are members of our community.

This policy, which is in line with Government guidelines to restrict the use of mobile phones in colleges, has become necessary because we, in common with colleges throughout Britain, have occasionally experienced problems caused by the inappropriate use of mobile phones. This usually means that a text or call distracts students' attention from their studies but it can include much more serious issues. After considering evidence from a range of sources (including government publications) and following discussions with senior colleagues and governors, we have decided to take a very firm stand on issues associated with **inappropriate** use of mobile phones in our college. The college is evangelistic about its moral structure and core values and we believe that we have a duty to draw clear boundaries that everyone understands. This role extends to include helping all students to understand the social and moral issues associated with the use of new technologies.

Generally, problems with mobile phones fall into three categories – text, speech and images. "Texting" enables students to 'talk' from any distance, from anywhere and at any time and gives them an outlet for personal and interpersonal interactions that may create or add to a range of "teenage problems". Extreme examples reported in the national press include 'cyber bullying'.

Camera and video phones combined with wireless technology enable students to make still images or videos of themselves or others and 'send' them to other phones or post them on the internet. Sometimes these can be candid images that have been taken without the consent or even knowledge of the person(s) involved. Occasionally, it can be with malicious intent.

Students with 'wireless' or Bluetooth phones also can have unrestricted access to the internet and are able to download material from other similar devices. Many internet sites aim their content (text, music, images and videos) at young people who can download or upload files and then share them by sending them to other mobile phones. On some sites acceptable material, such as songs, cartoons or 'funny' videos, is presented alongside unacceptable material putting vulnerable young people at risk.

At the extreme end there are a number of aspects of law that may apply to the misuse of mobile phones and other digital devices. In the most serious cases there may be a crime involved – for example, an incident being filmed might be an assault or breach of the peace. The misuse of phones might be an offence under the Communications Act 2003, if it involves a message that is grossly offensive or is of an indecent, obscene or menacing character.

These technological developments combined with the ever-changing world that our young people are growing up in present unprecedented challenges for colleges.

Our mobile phone policy aims to deal with these problems in college **by banning the use of mobile phones during the college day without the explicit approval of a member of staff**. If they are brought into college they should be switched off and kept out of sight.

**We are not preventing students from carrying mobile phones.**

## **AIMS**

1. To clarify for staff, students, and parents/carers that the inappropriate use of mobile phones in college or during college supervised activities can be damaging to the aims of our community and the well-being of members of that community.
2. To provide precise information and clarity regarding acceptable use of mobile phones.
3. To provide clear information as to the nature and imposition of appropriate sanctions, with due consideration to our Behaviour for Learning Policy.
4. To foster an environment within which individuals can flourish without fear or menace.

## **POLICY**

- i. On balance, we discourage students from bringing mobile phones to college. However, we accept that some students and parents/carers see possession of mobile phones as an aid to personal security and safety and consequently, **mobile phones are not banned**.
- ii. Where a student does bring a mobile phone to college, the phone must remain switched off during the college day, be kept out of sight and may not be used, for any purpose, on college premises, grounds or during approved off-site activities (such as sports fixtures or educational trips).
- iii. Permission is needed to use a phone as a communication device within the college building and surrounding areas or whilst during approved off-site activities.
- iv. The college **will not** accept liability for the safe keeping of a mobile phone which will remain the responsibility of the student **at all** times. As is normal practice with all valuables, students would want to hand in their mobile phones for safe keeping when in the P.E. Faculty. Only in exceptional circumstances (usually involving other breaches of our code of conduct) would the college investigate the theft or loss of a mobile phone.
- v. As is the case with all examples of unacceptable behaviour, inappropriate use of a mobile phone will lead to the application of proportionate sanctions, including temporary confiscation. All breaches of good conduct are considered on an individual basis taking into account the nature of the offence, its context and the prior behaviour history of the student concerned. The Headteacher or other member of the Senior Leadership Team or Student Progress Leaders will retain discretion in the application of sanctions depending on the nature of the individual situation considered. The procedures section below outlines responses to many common situations of inappropriate use of mobile phones.

## **PROCEDURES**

The overarching procedure for dealing with mobile phones is: "if it is out, it is ours". Students are informed, and reminded, of this regularly. Any mobile phone seen by any member of college staff on the college site should be confiscated. Confiscated mobile phones should be delivered to Main Reception where it will remain until the end of the college day.

Students will be expected to sign for receipt of their mobile phone upon collection at the end of the college day.

\*Students who fail to comply with the sanctions as detailed in levels 1 to 4 will be dealt with at level 5.

Refusal to hand over a mobile phone when requested will result in a 1½ hour After College Detention for their defiance.

Where a student persistently refuses to conform to the policy then parents/carers will be expected to collect the mobile phone after each confiscation.

When the college has exhausted all reasonable attempts to support a student in regard to breaches of the mobile phone policy then the mobile phone will be confiscated and only returned to a parent/carer upon the last day of the term in which it is confiscated.

Common Situations and Questions	Response – including sanctions
<p>1. A student is caught in possession of a phone (that is, it is in view)</p>	<p>The mobile phone will be confiscated until 3pm and the students' name will be logged. On the first occasion the student will receive a 20 minute lunchtime detention. For subsequent confiscations the sanction will be as follows;</p> <p>2 confiscations = 40 minute lunchtime detention            3 confiscations = After College detention            4+ confiscations = Internal Seclusion in the BIC</p>
<p>2. A student uses a phone in college.</p> <p>E.g. a student uses the phone to communicate with a parent/carer or other person in response to a situation at college</p>	<p>Typically, this might involve a call to a parent/carer to complain about an incident in college. This is wholly unacceptable as it circumvents the college's clear procedures for dealing with any behaviour or other incident in college. It would often mean that the parent/carer is contacted by an upset child and provided with a distorted or inappropriate interpretation of what has transpired, sometimes leading to an angry or misinformed response from the parent/carer. Similarly, it is not permitted that students telephone home to inform parents that they are unwell and need to be collected from college.</p> <p>A student caught using, or having used, a mobile phone will receive an automatic After College Detention, regardless of previous confiscations. A member of SLT or the SPL team will discuss the incident with the parent/carer.</p>
<p>3. A student records images of a fight or other altercation between students.</p> <p>A student consistently refuses to comply with policy after sanctions have been applied.</p>	<p>The student will <b>face an exclusion</b> of up to 5 days and parents/carers will be asked to attend college to discuss methods of preventing further misuse and to collect the phone following confiscation. The student will be expected to hand their mobile telephone in daily for a minimum of 4 college weeks.</p>

<p>4. A student records a picture or video clip of another student without permission.</p>	<p>The student will receive a minimum of 2 After College Detentions and possibly an internal seclusion pending investigation. Parents/carers will need to collect the confiscated mobile telephone.</p>
<p>5. A student records an unauthorised picture or video clip of any member of staff or visitor with a negative motive.</p>	<p>The student will face <b>an exclusion</b> of up to 5 days and parents/carers will be asked to attend college to discuss methods of preventing further misuse and to collect the phone following confiscation. The student will be expected to hand their mobile telephone in daily for a minimum of 4 college weeks. Should it be discovered that the student has posted such images/video clips on the internet (for example, via YouTube) or has transferred them electronically, to other digital devices, they would face a longer exclusion and under some circumstances permanent exclusion. Permanent exclusion will be considered if the action was investigated and considered to be repeated or malicious or that such images/clips were damaging to the good reputation or professional standing of the individual teacher and/or Springwell Community College.</p> <p>It should be noted that the member of staff concerned might take further independent action, following consultation with their professional association.</p>
<p>6. Inappropriate text messages are sent during college hours or inappropriate activities (including messages of a threatening or bullying nature)</p>	<p>The context and nature of the messages sent will be crucial in determining the severity of the response. For example, if the messaging is repeated behaviour or part of a wider bullying campaign, the level of sanctions will be much higher than for a “one off” occurrence and are likely to include exclusion (refer to Anti-Bullying and Behaviour for Learning Policy). However, as above, parents/carers will be invited to college to collect the confiscated phone and to discuss ways of preventing similar unacceptable behaviour in the future. As outlined previously, a four week period of handing in the mobile phone daily will be implemented. An internal seclusion will be considered following a thorough investigation and consideration with the Anti-Bullying Co-ordinator.</p>

If a student is believed to have messages/images on their mobile phone that are of a concern to the college then parents/carers will be expected to attend college and support the viewing and removal of such material.

If a student is believed to have messages/images on their mobile phones that are believed to be explicit in their nature advice from the Police will be sought. Upon this advice decisions will be made as to whether to release the mobile telephone or to retain it, in the college safe, for further investigation by the Police under the Malicious Communications Act.

At all times, the college will consider each set of circumstances on a case by case basis before determining a course of action or applying proportionate responses.