

Use of Mobile Phones and Handheld Technologies

New Charter Academy

Introduction

The purpose of this policy is to set clear guidelines for the use of mobile phones and other handheld technologies by students at New Charter Academy. These Guidelines make explicit the expectations of the Academy on student use of mobile phones and the restrictions which are placed on their use within the premises of the Academy. The guidance is supplementary to the Academy's eSafety policy documents.

Mobile phones and, in particular smart phones, such as the iPhone, 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 e.g. Facebook, twitter and blogging sites.

For many young people, 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. However a rise in the number of incidents of misuse of mobile phones in schools has created a situation where we, in conjunction with the Governing Body, are implementing a specific set of policy guidelines covering mobile phone and handheld technology use in the Academy.

Definitions

Handheld technologies include any device which can be used for communication, access to the Internet, access to electronic gaming, etc. Examples of hand-held technologies include:

Mobile Phones

Smart Phones (a mobile phone that is able to perform many of the functions of a computer)

Tablet Devices, e.g. iPad

Gaming devices – e.g. PSP, Nintendo DS, etc.

For the purpose of this document any reference made to a mobile phone also refers to any handheld technology as defined above.

Policy

Students are allowed to bring mobile phones into the Academy. If they choose to do so it is on the understanding that they agree with the following limitations on its use, namely:

- 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. (See 'Guidance for teachers on managing mobile phone use in the classroom') 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.
- If the use of a mobile phone has not been specified by the teacher then the phone must be kept out of sight during lessons and switched to silence or off. / *Mobile phones must be switched off in all classes, corridors and other areas during teaching time. It is not acceptable for phones merely to be put on silent or pager mode.*
- The phone must not be used and kept out of sight during lesson change.
- No student may take a mobile phone into a room or other area where examinations are being held.
- The security of the phone will remain the student's responsibility in all lessons including PE/sports lessons.
- The Academy will not be held responsible for any damage incurred to a student's mobile phone.
- The Academy is not responsible for any costs incurred by students whilst using a mobile phone.
- Students will not have access to the Academy's wireless network and should not make any attempts to access it.
- Students are not permitted to use the Academy's facilities to charge their mobile phone. Charging of mobile phones remains the responsibility of students.
- Mobile phones will not be used during a controlled assessment or any external examination unless the examination board has clearly permitted their use.
- If asked to do so, content on the phone (e.g. messages, emails, pictures, videos, sound files) will be shown to a teacher.
- The Academy's 'ICT and Internet acceptable use' policy is applicable on the use of personal mobile phones by students.
- The Academy's Internet filtering is not applicable on students' mobile phones. Therefore, any Internet use, on Academy premises, through mobile phones is the responsibility of students and is subject to the Academy's Internet use policy.

- In accordance with the Academy's safeguarding policy, students must not use their mobile phones to make contact with any individual or group outside the Academy.

Unacceptable use

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

- Making contact with anyone outside the Academy whilst on Academy premises.
- Photographing or filming staff or other students without their knowledge or permission.
- Photographing or filming in toilets, changing rooms and similar areas.
- Accessing materials deemed offensive or inappropriate.
- 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.
- Contacting parents immediately following or during an incident so that the ability of staff to deal with an incident is compromised.
- Using the mobile phone outside Academy 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 Academy 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 Academy's behaviour policy. In addition:

- Students and their parents should be very clear that the Academy is within its rights to confiscate the phone where the guidelines have been breached.
- If a phone is confiscated the 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
- The Academy will consider the offence and impact on any victim when deciding the sanction taken and any parental involvement.
- 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.

