

# HEXHAM MIDDLE SCHOOL AND QUEEN ELIZABETH HIGH SCHOOL HARD FEDERATION

## MOBILE PHONE POLICY

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The following action on the possession and use of mobile phones has been discussed and agreed with Governors. We have also taken advice from the Local Authority (LA) e-safety advisors.

### POSSESSION AND USE OF MOBILE PHONES

Students can have mobile phones in school provided they are switched off and in their bags throughout the day. Teachers, Learning & Guidance Co-ordinators and the Senior Leadership Team can allow the use of mobile phones for specific purposes in a lesson or in exceptional circumstances.

There are dangers with mobile phones regarding the use of the camera and posting of images on the internet. Cameras and Bluetooth technology are not allowed to be used in school. This is due to the safety risks involved, including child protection issues.

It is not acceptable for students to be sending/receiving calls/text messages during the school day, including breaks, lunchtimes, or study periods (for Years 12 and 13). Any emergency situation can be dealt with via our landlines [see contact with students section of the policy].

Parents will be able to view this policy on our website and this guidance will also be in student planners.

### CONFISCATION

If students are found using any kind of mobile phone in school the phone will be confiscated and the student asked to return to the office to collect it at the end of the school day. A letter will be sent home explaining the phone has been used in school time. If this becomes a persistent issue then further sanctions will result e.g. detentions or in the case of QEHS students, days in seclusion in Turning Point. Taking photos in school will also result in seclusion and possibly exclusion depending on the circumstances/nature of the images.

### CONFISCATION OF MOBILE PHONES DUE TO THE DATA BEING A SAFETY RISK

#### Data on confiscated items

Should the school have concerns in line with the table below about any data or files on a confiscated device they may examine it and erase said data or files. Again this will be carried out with the student present and in the presence of another member of staff.

Data or files which could be searched for	Procedure if found
Indecent pictures that may cause harm or offence to others in the school community	Files deleted and device returned to student at end of the school day. If serious e.g. Child Protection issue – may be reported to the police or Children's Services.
Information relating to illegal activity in school e.g. drugs issues	Device handed to police
Photographs of staff members	Files deleted and device returned at end of school day or reported to police if appropriate.

If files are deleted, in all cases it will be done in the presence of the student and two members of staff. Parents will be informed.

Should students not co-operate with staff when it seems there could be a safety risk with data contained on the phone, or if it is deemed in the public interest, then we will not hesitate to call the police and hand over the device.

### **Statutory guidance for dealing with electronic devices**

1) Where the person conducting the search finds **an electronic device** they must report it to a senior leader who may examine any data or files on the device if they think there is a good reason to do so. Following an examination, if the senior leader has decided to return the device to the owner, or to retain or dispose of it, the senior leader may erase any data or files, if they think there is a good reason to do so.

2) The senior leader must have regard to the following guidance issued by the Secretary of State (*550ZC (6G) Education Act 1996*) when determining what is a “good reason” for examining or erasing the contents of **an electronic device**:

- **In determining a ‘good reason’ to examine or erase the data or files the staff member must reasonably suspect that the data or file on the device in question has been, or could be, used to cause harm, to disrupt teaching or break the school rules.**

3) If inappropriate material is found on the device it is up to the senior leader to decide whether they should **delete** that material, **retain** it as evidence (of a criminal offence or a breach of school discipline) or whether the material is of such seriousness that it requires the involvement of the police.

#### **Also note:**

Senior leaders will also take account of any additional guidance and procedures on the retention and disposal of items that have been put in place by the school (see table on page 1).

### **CONTACT WITH STUDENTS**

We fully understand the need for this means of communication out of school hours e.g. following involvement in extra-curricular activities when students need to let parents/carers know where they are/when they need to be collected etc. However at all times during the school day we provide a service to students, using our landlines, in all instances where there is an emergency.

Parents/carers can contact our switchboard and a message will be given to the student. Also, if students feel there is an urgent need to contact home then they can request the use of a school landline telephone.

We are concerned for the welfare of our students and believe they should not be asked to deal with an emergency via a private call/text message to their mobile. They may need the support of a member of staff to deal with the situation facing them. Text messages and calls coming to students in lesson time are also highly disruptive to their learning and to teaching.

## EXTERNAL EXAMINATIONS

Possession of a mobile phone in an examination room may disqualify a student. They are strictly forbidden and must be handed to invigilators before the exam. The Headteacher will write to parents via ParentMail regarding this very important issue and will request they read the policy on the school website.

## ASSOCIATED POLICIES

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following school policies:

Behaviour Management Policy

Screening, Searching & Confiscation Policy & Guidelines

Drugs and Substance Abuse Policy

Anti-Bullying Policy

Use of Reasonable Force Policy

Exclusions Policy

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The Mobile Phone Policy was agreed by the Governing Body Education Committee at their meeting on Monday 19 November 2012

Designation	Signature	Date
Chair of Education Committee: Linsley Charlton		
Federation Headteacher QEHS & HMS: Neil Morrison		
Review Date	November 2014	