


Mobile Phones Policy

Ellesmere Port Catholic High School



Approved by:	PP Mrs L. Henderson Deputy Headteacher		
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Lead of Review:	Mr M Hughes, Assistant Headteacher		
Last reviewed on:	July 2025		
Next review due by:	July 2026		



Mobile Phone Policy

1. Introduction and aims

At Ellesmere Port Catholic High School we recognise that mobile phones, including smart phones, are an important part of everyday life for our students, parents/carers and staff, as well as the wider school community.

Our policy aims to:

- Promote, and set an example for, safe and responsible mobile phone use.
- Set clear guidelines for the use of mobile phones for students, staff, parents/carers and volunteers.
- Support the school's other policies, especially those related to child protection and behaviour.

This policy also aims to address some of the challenges posed by mobile phones in school, such as:

- Risks to child protection
- Data protection issues
- Potential for lesson disruption
- Risk of theft, loss, or damage
- Appropriate use of technology in the classroom

2. Use of mobile phones by students

2.1 The Normal School Day

We acknowledge that students will use their phones and other connective devices when traveling to and from school at the discretion of their parents and will therefore be in possession of a phone when arriving at school.

On entering the school premises, every student should turn their mobile phone off and secure their phone in their personally assigned secure phone pouch before entering the building each day. The pouch is a simple, secure pouch that stores a phone.

Students will maintain possession of their phones in their pouch and will not use them or attempt to open the pouch during the school day. All pouches must be kept for the length of the school day in a school bag.

The secure pouch is assigned to each child and remains theirs for the duration of their time at the school.

- Loss of pouches should be reported to staff on duty at the school entrance point and a replacement will be organised. A charge towards the cost of a replacement may be made by the school (currently £15).
- Deliberate damage to pouches will result in a charge being made for a replacement pouch – currently £15.

The students can open their pouches at agreed stations on the perimeter of the school building as they leave each day.

In exceptional circumstances, where a student may need access to a phone (such as a diabetic child who uses their phone to check blood sugar levels), a slightly different design of pouch is available to allow phone access. Such circumstances need to be approved by the Headteacher.

Where urgent contact home by a student is necessary, they should contact their Pastoral Lead, either at break or lunchtime, and the Pastoral Lead can then make contact and relay any message back to the student.

If a parent needs to make contact with a student, the administrative team will facilitate this and provide feedback to the parent through reception.

Any student who arrives to school without their secure phone pouch, or a school bag (which secure phone cases must be placed inside), will be required to hand their phone over to the staff member at screening, who will place it in a secure phone case, before issuing the student with a number card. The mobile phones will then be taken to the Headteacher's office for safe keeping.

From 3.30pm, students' devices which have been stored with the Headteacher will be ready for collection from reception. This is to allow reception staff to deal with any visitors from 3.15pm, the end of our school day. Any rudeness to staff here will result in parents/carers being contacted by the students Pastoral Leader, and their device kept until it is collected from a member of SLT.

2.2 Sanctions

Should students be found to be using their mobile phone without consent during the school day their phone will be confiscated and stored safely until the end of the school day. Confiscated phones will be stored securely. These can be collected by children from the reception no earlier than 3.30 pm.

Students will receive negative behaviour points and be placed in isolation. Should students refuse to hand their mobile phone to a member of staff, parents will be contacted. Repeat offence will lead to a more severe sanction and possibly suspension.

2.3 Loss, theft or damage

Students bringing phones to school must ensure that phones and other connected devices are appropriately labelled and are stored securely in their secure pouch, which must then remain in their school bag, throughout the school day.

The school accepts no responsibility for mobile phones that are lost, damaged or stolen on school premises or off the premises, during educational visits or trips, or whilst students are travelling to and from school.

Lost phones / pouches should be returned to Reception. The school will then attempt to contact the owner.

3. School Roles and responsibilities

3.1 Staff

All staff (including teachers, support staff and supply staff) are responsible for enforcing this policy. Volunteers, or anyone else otherwise engaged by the school, must alert a member of staff if they witness, or are aware of, a breach of this policy.

The Senior Leadership Team is responsible for monitoring the policy implementation, reviewing it, and holding staff and students accountable for its implementation.

3.2 Governors

Governors agree the mobile phone policy and oversee its implementation and effectiveness.

4. Use of mobile phones by staff and visitors

4.1 Personal mobile phones

Staff (including volunteers, contractors and anyone else otherwise engaged by the school) are not permitted to make or receive calls, or send texts, while children are present during contact time. Use of personal mobile phones must be restricted to non-contact time, and to be used where students are not present.

There may be circumstances in which it is appropriate for a member of staff to have use of their phone during contact time. For instance:

- For emergency contact by their child, or their child's school
- In the case of acutely ill dependent or family member

The Headteacher will decide on a case-by-basis whether to allow for special arrangements.

If special arrangements are not deemed necessary, school staff can use the school number as a point of emergency contact or a direct dial line.

4.2 Data protection

Staff must not use their personal mobile phones to process personal data, or any other confidential school information, including entering such data into generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools such as chatbots (e.g. ChatGPT and Google Bard).

More detailed guidance on data protection can be found in the Data Protection Policy and Acceptable Use Policy.

4.3 Safeguarding

Staff must refrain from giving their personal contact details to parents/carers or students, including connecting through social media and messaging apps.

Staff must avoid publicising their contact details on any social media platform or website, to avoid unwanted contact by parents/carers or students.

Staff must not use their mobile phones to take photographs or recordings of students, their work, or anything else which could identify a student. If it's necessary to take photos or recordings as part of a lesson/school trip/activity, this must be done using school equipment.

4.4 Using personal mobiles for work purposes

In some circumstances, it may be appropriate for staff to use personal mobile phones for work. Such circumstances may include, but aren't limited to:

- Emergency evacuations
- Supervising off-site trips
- Supervising residential visits
- Liaison with contractors and suppliers

In these circumstances, staff will:

- Use their mobile phones in an appropriate and professional manner, in line with our Staff Code of Conduct
- Not use their phones to take photographs or recordings of students, their work, or anything else which could identify a student
- Refrain from using their phones to contact parents/carers. If necessary, contact must be made via the school office or by using one of the landlines distributed throughout the school.

4.5 Work phones

Some members of staff are provided with a mobile phone by the school for work purposes.

Only authorised staff are permitted to use school phones, and access to the phone must not be provided to anyone without authorisation.

Staff must:

- Only use phone functions for work purposes, including making/receiving calls, sending/receiving emails or other communications, or using the internet
- Ensure that communication or conduct linked to the device is appropriate and professional at all times, inline with our staff code of conduct.

4.6 Sanctions

Staff that fail to adhere to this policy may face disciplinary action.

See the school's staff Disciplinary Policy for more information.

5. Use of mobile phones by parents/carers, volunteers and visitors

Parents/carers, visitors and volunteers (including governors and contractors) must adhere to this policy as it relates to staff if they are on the school site during the school day.

This means:

- Not taking pictures or recordings of students, unless of their own child only
- Using any photographs or recordings for personal use only, and not posting on social media without consent
- Not using phones in lessons, or when working with students

Parents/carers, visitors and volunteers will be informed of the rules for mobile phone use when they sign in at Reception or attend a public event at school.

Parents/carers or volunteers supervising school trips or residential visits must not:

- Use their phone to make contact with other parents/carers
- Take photos or recordings of students, their work, or anything else which could identify a student

Parents/carers or volunteers supervising trips are also responsible for enforcing the school's policy for students using their phones, as set out in section 2 above.

Parents/carers must use the school office as the first point of contact if they need to get in touch with their child during the school day. They must not try to contact their child on his/her personal mobile during the school day.

A procedure is in place for student needing to contact home.

6. Monitoring and review

The school is committed to ensuring that this policy has a positive impact of students' education, behaviour and welfare. When reviewing the policy, the school will take into account:

- Feedback from parents/carers and students
- Feedback from teachers
- Records of behaviour and safeguarding incidents
- Relevant advice from the Department for Education, the local authority or other relevant organisation