



Policy for the Acceptable Use of Mobile Phones (including Smart Watches) in School (Sept 2022)

1. Purpose

- a. The widespread ownership of mobile phones and smart watches (from herein referred to as mobile devices) among young people requires that school administrators, teachers, pupils and parents take steps to ensure that these devices are used responsibly in schools. This acceptable use policy is designed to ensure that potential issues involving mobile devices can be clearly identified and addressed, ensuring the benefits that mobile devices provide (such as increased safety) can continue to be enjoyed by our pupils.
- b. Synergy Schools Federation has established the following policy for mobile devices that provides teachers, pupils and parents guidelines and instructions for the appropriate use of mobile devices during school hours.
- c. Pupils and their parents/carers must read and understand the policy before pupils are given permission to bring mobile devices to school.
- d. This policy also applies to pupils during school educational visits, residential visits and extra-curricular activities.

2. Rationale

- a. Synergy Schools Federation accepts that parents/carers give their children mobile devices to protect them from everyday risks involving personal security and safety. There is also increasing concern about children walking to school alone or travelling alone on public transport. It is acknowledged that providing a child with a mobile device gives parents reassurance that they can contact their child if they need to speak to them urgently.

3. Responsibility

- a. It is the responsibility of pupils who bring mobile devices to school to abide by the guidelines outlined in this document.
- b. The decision to provide a mobile device to their children should be made by parents/carers.



- c. Parents should be aware if their child takes a mobile device to school.
- d. Permission to have a mobile device at school while under the school's supervision is dependent on parent/carer's permission in the form of a signed copy of this policy. Parents/carers may revoke approval at any time.
- e. Our schools reserve the right to view the content of any child's mobile device at any time in respect to issues regarding the safeguarding of children or staff.
- f. Mobile phones should be switched off and kept by the class teacher during the school day. Smart Watches should be switched to 'airplane mode' and silent. If this isn't possible, then teachers will confiscate the watch and keep it safely until the end of the school day when it will be returned to the child.
- g. Parents are reminded that in cases of emergency during the school day, the school office remains the appropriate point of contact and can ensure your child is reached quickly and assisted in any appropriate way.
- h. Pupils should protect their phone numbers by only giving them to friends and keeping a note of who they have given them to. This can help protect the pupil's number from falling into the wrong hands and guard against the receipt of insulting, threatening or unpleasant voice, text and picture messages.
- i. Pupils are advised not to use their mobile devices as they walk to school, unless there is an emergency, as there have been traffic incidents involving pupils who are texting or talking on the phone and not paying full attention to their road use.

5. Unacceptable Uses

- a. Unless express permission is granted, mobile devices should not be used to make calls, send SMS messages, surf the Internet, take photos or use any other application during school time.
- b. School time is defined as the time between pupils arriving on site to the time that they leave.
- c. Using mobile devices to bully and threaten other pupils is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. In some cases it can constitute criminal behaviour.
- d. It is forbidden for students to "gang up" on another pupil and use their mobile devices to take videos and pictures of acts to denigrate and humiliate that pupil and then send the pictures to other pupils or upload it to a website for public viewing. This also includes using mobile devices to photograph or film any pupil without their consent. It is a criminal offence to use a mobile phone to menace, harass or offend another person and almost all calls, text messages and emails can be traced.
- e. Mobile devices are not to be used or taken into toilets or used in any situation that may cause embarrassment or discomfort to their fellow pupils, staff or visitors to the school.

6. Theft or damage

- a. Pupils should mark their mobile device clearly with their name.

- b. Pupils who bring a mobile device to school should NEVER leave it in their coat/bag when they arrive. To reduce the risk of theft during school hours, mobile phones will be kept by the class teacher.
- c. Mobile devices that are found in the school and whose owner cannot be located should be handed to the office.
- d. The school accepts no responsibility for replacing lost, stolen or damaged mobile devices.
- e. The school accepts no responsibility for pupils who lose or have their mobile devices stolen while travelling to and from school.

7. Inappropriate conduct

- a. Any pupil who uses vulgar, derogatory, or obscene language while using a mobile device will be subject to the individual school’s Behaviour Policy.
- b. Pupils with mobile devices may not engage in personal attacks, harass another person, or post private information about another person using SMS messages, taking/sending photos or objectionable images, and phone calls. If this occurs during the school day the pupil will be subject to the individual school’s Behaviour Policy.

Signed by the pupil: _____ Date: _____

Signed by the parent/carer: _____ Date: _____

This policy was agreed by Synergy Schools Federation in September 2022 and will be reviewed in September 2024



