

Netherthorpe School

Mobile Phone Policy

Last Reviewed: September 2023

Next Review: November 2025

Acceptable Use Policy - Students

1. Purpose

1.1. The widespread ownership of mobile phones among young people requires that school administrators, teachers, students, parents and carers take steps to ensure that mobile phones are used responsibly at school. This Acceptable Use Policy is designed to ensure that potential issues involving mobile phones can be clearly identified and addressed, ensuring the benefits that mobile phones provide (such as increased safety) can continue to be enjoyed by our students.

1.2. Netherthorpe School has established the following Acceptable Use Policy for mobile phones that provides teachers, students, parents and carers guidelines and instructions for the appropriate use of mobile phones during school hours.

1.3. Students, their parents or carers must read and understand the Acceptable Use Policy as a condition upon which permission is given to bring mobile phones to school.

1.4. The Acceptable Use Policy for mobile phones also applies to students during school excursions, camps and extra-curricular activities both on the school site and off-site.

2. Rationale

2.1. Netherthorpe School recognises that personal communication through mobile technologies is an accepted part of everyday life but that such technologies need to be used well.

2.2. Personal Safety and Security

Our School accepts that parents/carers give their children mobile phones to protect them from everyday risks involving personal security and safety. It is acknowledged that providing a child with a mobile phone gives parents reassurance that they can contact their child if they need to speak to them urgently.

3. Responsibility

3.1. It is the responsibility of students who bring mobile phones to school to abide by the guidelines outlined in this document.

3.2. The decision to provide a mobile phone to their children should be made by parents or carers. It is the responsibility of parents/carers to understand the capabilities of the phone and the potential use/mis-use of those capabilities.

3.3. Parents/carers should be aware if their child takes a mobile phone to school. It is assumed household insurance will provide the required cover in the event of loss or damage. The school **cannot** accept responsibility for any loss, damage or costs incurred due to its use.

3.4. Parents/carers are reminded that in cases of emergency, the school office remains a vital and appropriate point of contact and can ensure your child is reached quickly and assisted in any relevant way. Passing on messages through school reception also reduces the likelihood of disrupting lessons inadvertently.

4. Uses

4.1. Mobile phones should be switched off and kept out of sight for all students in Years 7-11 during school opening hours (normally between 8.45am and 3.10pm).

Students in years 12 and 13 are allowed to use their mobile phones during the school day in the sixth form areas only.

4.2. Students should protect their phone numbers by only giving them to close friends and keeping a note of who they have given them to. This can help protect the student's number from falling into the wrong hands and guard against the receipt of insulting, threatening or unpleasant voice, text and picture messages.

5. Unacceptable Uses

5.1. Mobile phones should not be used to make calls, send SMS messages, surf the internet, take photos or use any other application during the school day (between 8.45am and 3.10pm).

5.2. The Bluetooth function of a mobile phone must be switched off at all times and not be used to send images or files to other mobile phones.

5.3. Mobile phones must not disrupt classroom lessons with ring tones, music or beeping. They must be turned off when not in use.

5.4. Using mobile phones to bully or threaten other students is unacceptable. Cyber bullying will not be tolerated. In some cases it can constitute criminal behaviour. If the use of technology humiliates, embarrasses or causes offence it is unacceptable regardless of whether 'consent' was given.

5.5. It is forbidden for students to "gang up" on another student and use their mobile phones to take videos and pictures of acts to denigrate and humiliate that student and then send the pictures

to other students or upload it to a website for public viewing. This also includes using mobile phones to photograph or film any student or member of staff 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.

5.6. Students should have their phones secure inside bags prior to entering the changing rooms. Under no circumstances should mobile phones be out of bags in the changing rooms. Mobile phones are not to be used in changing rooms. Mobile phones are not to be taken out of bags or used in any situation that may cause embarrassment or discomfort to fellow students, staff or visitors to the school. PE staff will confiscate any mobile phones found out of school bags and in use in these areas immediately.

5.7. Should there be disruption to lessons caused by a mobile phone, the mobile phone will be confiscated in accordance with the confiscation protocol noted in the Sanctions section of this policy.

5.8. It is unacceptable to take a picture, video or recording of any member of the school without their permission. In the event that this happens the student will be asked and expected to delete those images or recordings.

6. Theft or damage

6.1. Mobile phones that are found in the school and whose owner cannot be located should be handed to the school office reception.

6.2. The school accepts no responsibility for replacing lost, stolen or damaged mobile phones, including journeys to and from school or whilst on school visits.

7. Inappropriate conduct

7.1. Mobile phones and smart watches are banned from all examinations. Students are expected to hand phones and smart watches to invigilators before entering the exam hall. Any student found in possession of a mobile phone or smart watch during an examination will have that paper disqualified. Such an incident may result in all other exam papers being disqualified.

7.2. Students with mobile phones 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. Students using mobile phones to bully other students will face disciplinary action. **It is a criminal offence to use a mobile phone to menace, harass or offend another person. As such, the school may consider it appropriate to involve the police.**

7.3. Students must ensure that files stored on their phones do not contain violent, degrading, racist or pornographic images. The transmission of such images is a criminal offence. Similarly, 'sexting' – which is the sending of youth produced sexual imagery - is also a criminal offence. **As such, the school may consider it appropriate to involve the police.**

8. Sanctions

8.1. Students who infringe the rules set out in this document will have their phones or smart watches confiscated by teachers. If the phone or smart watch is being used inappropriately the student must give it to a teacher if requested. Students will be issued with a confiscated property slip and the confiscated phone or smart watch should be taken to the school office by the member of staff. Confiscated phones or smart watches may be collected from the school office by the student at the end of the school day if it is their first offence in a half term. For the second offence in a half term the phone will be confiscated until the end of the day and an SLT detention issued. For the third confiscation in a half term the phone will be kept overnight. However, devices confiscated on a Friday or on the last day before a holiday, may be collected from the school office after the end of the last lesson on that day, allowing reasonable time for staff members to take it to the office at 3.10pm. For a fourth confiscation in a half term the phone will be kept overnight and only returned to the student's parent.

8.2 Students who refuse to hand over their mobile phone when requested by a member of staff will be sent to the Reset Room and seen by a Senior member of staff and serious sanctions applied if refusal persists.

8.3. As set out in the previous section, failure to heed the rules set out in this document may result in an alleged incident – of a serious nature - being referred to the police for investigation. In such cases, the parent or carer would be notified immediately.

9. Staff use of Mobile Phones

9.1 Staff use of mobile phones is restricted to staff – only areas i.e. offices and workrooms, unless an emergency situation demands otherwise. Where a member of staff is facing a serious situation out of school, which may require contact during school hours, the Headteacher should be notified and permission to use their mobile phone sought.