

## Mobile Phones

Recently we conducted a consultation exercise on the use in school of mobile phones, MP3 players and other electronic devices.

We already had clear rules about the use of mobile phones. Some of these were:

- It is an offence to photograph, video or record any other person without their permission.
- It is absolutely forbidden to take a mobile phone (even if switched off with the battery removed) into an examination room. This is an SQA rule.

However, we thought it would be helpful to bring everything together into a policy and procedures document.

A draft policy was discussed by parent volunteers from the Parent Council; Staff; Focus groups of pupils. There was a wide range of views, but the attached policy reflects the majority view, and we ask for your support in implementing the policy.

If you have any comments, please contact the head teacher Mrs Barr.





## King's Park Secondary School

### Mobile Phones and other Electronic Devices Policy and Practice

August 2008

## Policy

### 1 RATIONALE

Mobile phones, camera/video phones, MP3 players/headphones and other electronic devices have become an essential part of everyday life for most children and young people and many adults. Mobile phones are a vital form of communication. It would be unreasonable to ban secondary school pupils from taking them to school. However, schools need clear guidelines to address the issues raised:

- They are valuable items that may be stolen
- Their use can cause pupils and staff to be subject to bullying
- Even when in silent mode, texts can undermine classroom discipline, distracting not only the person with the phone, but also other people around.
- Mobile phones with integrated cameras could lead to child protection and data protection issues, regarding the inappropriate taking and sending of images.

However, a number of features of these devices could be used to support learning and teaching:

- Recording facilities
- Integrated digital cameras and video facilities
- Electronic calendars

School policy must take account of the benefits to be gained by appropriate use in school, under the direction of the teacher.

### 2 AIMS

The aims of this policy are to:

- Ensure personal safety
- Ensure security.
- Acknowledge and support parents' rights to provide their children with a mobile phone and for the child to carry it to and from school.
- Recognise and endorse the right of all staff and pupils to teach and learn in an environment free from disruption.
- Enhance learning and teaching

# Policy into Practice

## 3 IMPLEMENTATION OF POLICY

- 3.1 VALUABLE EQUIPMENT.** It is strongly recommended that valuable items of equipment are not brought to school. The school will not accept responsibility or liability for loss of, or damage to, valuable items which are brought to school.

However, the school recognises that pupils with the approval of their parents may wish to bring a mobile phone, MP3 player/headphones or other electronic device, to school. The following rules apply:

- 3.2 WHEN AND WHERE CAN THEY BE USED?** Mobile phones, MP3 players/headphones and other pupil items of electronic equipment may be used at the following times:

- Before the bell for registration in the playground and pupil social areas, not the corridors, stairs or classrooms.
- During the interval in the playground and pupil social areas, not the corridors, stairs or classrooms.
- During lunch time in the playground and pupil social areas, not the corridors, stairs or classrooms.
- After school in the playground and pupil social areas, not the corridors, stairs or classrooms.
- In class, strictly with the clear permission of the teacher, planned by the teacher as a means of teaching part of the curriculum.
- In school in an emergency, with the clear approval of a member of staff.

At all other times, these items must be out of sight, SWITCHED OFF (not on 'silent').

## 3.3 WHAT ARE THE RULES?

### 1. There must be no illegal photographing, videoing or recording.

- The photographing, videoing or recording of a member of staff, other pupil or other person, without their permission, is unacceptable, illegal and therefore prohibited.
- It is also an offence to distribute the image or recording, to any other person by any means, eg mobile phone, email, media representative, social networking site etc.
- Inappropriate material should not be accessed at any time. Inappropriate material which has been accessed out of school should not be brought into school or shared with others. Any pupil found to have done so will be subject to strong disciplinary action, including exclusion.
- Readmission of pupils will be considered only after a risk assessment has been drawn up. This will include a statement of the consequences of reoffending.

### 2. Emergency contact to and from parents and carers should be made through the school, not by mobile phone.

- Pupils who feel unwell should contact home via the staff in the medical room, and not use their mobile phone. This allows the office staff to monitor the pupil while they wait to be collected. It also avoids pupils leaving school without permission.
- In general, parents should not contact pupils by mobile phone during the school day, but if it is necessary to do so, this should be only during the lunch break or in an emergency. At other times, the pupil's phone should be switched off and a message can be left.

### **3. Discipline procedures will apply**

- Pupils using mobile phones or similar devices at a prohibited time, or in a prohibited place, will be asked to put them away.
- Failure to do so will be dealt with as with any other incident where a pupil refuses to follow a reasonable instruction given to them by a member of staff.
- The general rule is that mobile phones will not be confiscated by staff.
- However, in exceptional circumstances (eg suspicion that inappropriate material has been accessed) it may be necessary for a member of the SMT to confiscate a mobile phone or other item. The item will be held securely until the child's parent comes to the school office to collect it. As part of an investigation, and with the parent's permission, it may be necessary to examine the contents of the phone. Where appropriate, the police will be involved.
- If the offence is repeated, it may be necessary to prohibit the pupil from having the device in school at any time.

### **4. Regulations for SQA Examinations and Prelims must be followed.**

- It is strictly forbidden to take mobile phones or any digital audio device into the examination room.
- If pupils do so, SQA will consider this to be an attempt to cheat and the examination entry for that subject may be cancelled.
- Switching a phone off or taking a battery out will not be enough to avoid this sanction.
- Examination entry for other subjects may also be affected if the phone makes a noise and disrupts an exam.
- Pupils must make their own arrangements to have their phones looked after before they go into the exam room. Pupils must not assume that members of staff will be able to look after their phones for them.
- Parents who wish to contact pupils during exams should contact the school and speak to the SQA Coordinator.

### **5. Bullying by mobile phone or social networking site will be dealt with in accordance with the school's Anti-Bullying policy.**

- The matter may also be reported to the police. The school's Personal and Social Education programme will address the issue of cyber-bullying and internet safety.

### **6. Staff use of mobile phones and other electronic devices.**

- Staff are allowed the appropriate use of mobile phones and other electronic devices. Eg in line with the pupil guidelines in this document and at other appropriate times, but not when teaching a class.

## **4 COMMUNICATION**

The policy and procedures have been formulated in consultation with staff, pupils and parents. It will be published in a school newsletter, the School Handbook, the school website and the Staff Handbook.

## **5 MONITORING, EVALUATION AND REVIEW**

The policy and procedures will be reviewed as required by the working group.