



Mobile Phone, Mobile Devices and Smartwatch Responsible Use Policy

Policy adopted by the Senior
Leadership Team: September 2023

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Rationale

The widespread ownership of mobile phones, mobile devices and smart watches amongst young people requires that the college, teachers, pupils, parents and carers take steps to ensure that they are used responsibly at the college. This policy is designed to ensure that potential issues involving mobile phones, mobile devices and smart watches can be clearly identified and addressed. This will ensure the benefits that mobile phones provide (such as increased safety) can continue to be enjoyed by our pupils, whilst at the same time ensuring they do not interfere with learning.

Sidmouth College has established the following Responsible Use Policy for mobile phones, mobile devices and smart watches that provides teachers, students, parents and carers with guidelines and instructions for the appropriate use of these devices during school hours and when on site. This policy sets out Sidmouth College's framework for determining what is 'acceptable' and 'unacceptable' use of mobile technology by students while attending the college.

The purpose of this policy is to prevent unacceptable use of mobile phones, smart watches, camera-phones and mp3 players by students, and thereby to protect the college's staff and students from undesirable materials, filming, intimidation or harassment.

Note: For the purposes of this policy, all references to 'mobile phones' should be taken to include mobile devices, smart watches, camera phones, earphones and mp3 players, even those which do not incorporate communications technology

Context

In order for this policy to be effective it is inextricably linked with other college policies. It should be read in conjunction with the following:

Behaviour for Learning Policy
Online Safety Policy
Student Acceptable Use Policy
Safeguarding Policy
Single Equalities
Scheme
Home School Agreement
Anti-Bullying Policy

At Sidmouth College, we recognise that personal communication through mobile technologies is an accepted part of everyday life but that such technologies need to be used well.

We understand that mobile phones are owned by a significant number of students and recognise the need for parents to give their children mobile phones to protect them from everyday risks involving personal security and safety. There is also increasing concern about children travelling alone on public transport or commuting long distances to college. 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.

We do not consider it realistic or desirable to prohibit mobile phones being brought to college, nor is it logistically possible for the college to collect phones in each morning and return them in the afternoon. It is the responsibility of students who bring mobile phones into college to abide by the

guidelines outlined in this document. The decision to provide a mobile phone to their children should be made by parents or carers. It is incumbent upon parents to understand the capabilities of the phone and the potential use/misuse of those capabilities.

Parents/carers should be aware if their child takes a mobile phone to college it is assumed that household insurance will provide the required cover in the event of loss or damage.

It is our policy to allow students to have a mobile phone with them in college under the conditions outlined in this policy. Despite this, the use of mobile phones does present a number of issues for us as a college. For example:

- The high monetary value of many mobile phones. They are a valuable piece of equipment prone to loss and theft.
- The integration of cameras into mobile phones leading to potential child protection and data protection issues with regard to students filming events, each other, inappropriately taking pictures of events/each other and using or distributing images inappropriately.
- The potential for mobile technology to be used to bully other students.
- The potential to use the mobile phone e.g. for texting whilst on silent mode in class.
- As a result of the increasing sophistication of mobile phone technology, most students carry a phone which enables them to access the internet and bypass the college's safety network.

It is recognised that these documents must be reviewed and revised regularly in response to developments on technology.

Responsible Use

1. The college is a workplace, and mobile phones can interfere with the atmosphere and good order of the workplace, even when in silent mode. Sidmouth College expects that mobile phones will be switched off and kept in bags/blazer throughout the college day.
2. Mobile phones must always be switched off (not on silent mode) and kept out of view. If a member of staff sees a student using a mobile phone during college hours it will be confiscated by the member of staff. If a student wants to look at the time he/she should wear a watch. Earphones may not be used at any time and must be removed at the front gate.
3. Mobile phones must not disrupt classroom lessons with ring tones, music or beeping. If this happens they will be confiscated.
4. Occasions may arise where there may be a legitimate reason for making use of mobile phone technology within a lesson. In this instance, mobile phones can only be used if a teacher specifically requests that students use them within their lesson.
5. It is strictly against college rules to record photographic images (still or video) or sound recordings of staff or students at any time without their explicit permission.
6. Any student caught filming another person (and/or uploading images or video onto the Internet) will have their phone confiscated. It will be treated as a disciplinary matter and their parents may be informed. If the action is repeated, offensive or of a serious nature, the matter will be treated as a serious disciplinary issue. In such circumstances, the child's parents will be informed and the Governing Body may be notified.
7. In accordance with Sidmouth College's Computer and Mobile Device Policy, the college reserves the right to search the content of a confiscated device where there is a reasonable suspicion that it may contain undesirable material, including those which promote pornography, violence or bullying.

8. As young adults, Sixth Form are permitted to use mobile phones within study areas and the Sixth Form common room.
9. Once students have left to go to their activity, the PE changing rooms remain unlocked. Students are given the opportunity for valuable items, including mobile phones to be handed in. Once handed in they will be placed in a secure area. Students and parents should be aware that mobile devices are particularly vulnerable to being stolen in changing rooms, hence the PE Department's policy of handing valuables in. Any mobile phone taken from the changing rooms, having not been handed in, cannot be the responsibility of the College.
10. This policy has been devised to ensure that efficient, effective and safe environments for learning can be maintained at all times. We rely on the cooperation of parents and carers in supporting this policy. If you do not wish the College to confiscate a phone then please ensure that your child follows this policy.
11. Mobile phones and smartwatches are banned from all examinations nationally. These must be left in school bags and locked in the changing rooms.

Sanctions that apply if the policy is not followed

- If a student is observed using a mobile phone/earphones by a member of staff, that member of staff will be required to confiscate it immediately. The member of staff will take it to College Reception for safe storage, where it will be stored in a locked, safe space, clearly communicating to the Reception staff the name of the student the phone has been taken from and the circumstances which led to the confiscation. The same sanction will be applied if it is deemed that a smartwatch is being used for communicative purposes.
- When a mobile phone is confiscated, the matter will be recorded on the child's Bromcom behaviour log by the member of staff who confiscated the phone. This is done so that the consequence given by the subject or pastoral staff is fair and consistent.
- On the first occasion on which a student's phone is confiscated within a term, they will be able to collect it from the Reception at the end of the day.
- On the second occasion within a term on which their phone is confiscated, their parent/guardian will be contacted and asked to collect the phone in person at the end of the day.
- On the third occasion within a term the phone will be held by the College until 3.15pm on the Friday of the week in which the phone was confiscated and the parents informed of this by the College.
- Any student who refuses to hand over a mobile phone when requested to do so will be removed from their lesson by a member of the Senior Leadership Team and the refusal will be treated as a disciplinary matter.

Smart watches

Sidmouth College has taken the decision to prohibit smart watches being worn within the College. Many smart watches have the same capabilities as mobile phones and allow students to communicate via text and also through social media. We believe that if misused, smart watches have the potential to disrupt the learning environment and also could cause safeguarding issues.

Smart watches have already been banned from all examinations nationally.

- When a smart watch is confiscated, the matter will be recorded on the child's Bromcom behaviour log by the member of staff who confiscated the smart watch. This is done so that the consequence given by the subject or pastoral staff is fair and consistent.

- On the first occasion on which a student's smart watch is confiscated within a term, they will be able to collect it from the Reception at the end of the day.
- On the second occasion within a term on which their smart watch is confiscated, their parent/guardian will be contacted and asked to collect the watch in person at the end of the day.
- On the third occasion within a term the smart watch will be held by the college until 3.20pm on the Friday of the week in which the watch was confiscated and the parents informed of this by the college.
- Any student who refuses to hand over a smart watch when requested to do so, will be removed from their lesson by a member of the Senior Leadership Team and the refusal will be treated as a disciplinary matter.

If you do not wish the college to confiscate a smart watch then please ensure that your child does not wear one to college.

Emergencies

If a student needs to contact his/her parents/carers in exceptional circumstances they could either speak to a member of staff who will supervise them making a telephone call or they should go to the main College Reception.

If a parent needs to contact children urgently they should phone the College Reception and a message will be relayed promptly.

Parents/carers are reminded that in cases of emergency, the College Reception 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 the College Reception also reduces the likelihood of disrupting lessons inadvertently.

Notes

Confiscating items—What the law says:

*A school's general power to discipline, as set out in **Section 91 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006**, enables a member of staff to confiscate, retain or dispose of a student's property as a disciplinary penalty, where reasonable to do so. "Members of staff can use their discretion to confiscate, retain and/or destroy any item found as a result of a 'with consent' search so long as it is reasonable in the circumstances. Where any article is thought to be a weapon it must be passed to the police."*

*Within the **Public Order Act (1994) Part 4a Harassment, Alarm and Distress**, the Act makes it an offence to misuse a website by posting text and/or images that causes distress and harassment to an individual. This may include:*

- *Images of another student (or member of staff) that have been uploaded against their wishes.*
- *Comments made on a website about another student (or a member of staff).*