

HINCHINGBROOKE SCHOOL



Policy Statement
on

USE OF MOBILE PHONES, PERSONAL MUSIC PLAYERS AND GAMES DEVICES IN SCHOOL

Drawn up by:	DHB
Date:	January 2008
Date adopted by Governing Body:	1 September 2006
Revised:	25 April 2007 (Ethos Governors) 28 June 2007 (Strategic Committee) 6 May 2009

SCHOOL POLICY

Hinchingbrooke School recognises that parents may wish their children to have mobile phones for use in cases of emergency. However, mobiles can be used inappropriately and are potentially targets for theft and bullying. The school sees no reason for students to bring other electronic music or games devices to school. The Governing Body has, therefore, adopted the following policy which will be rigorously enforced.

- Mobile phones and other electronic music or games devices should not be used on school premises by students in school hours or during on-site extra curricular activities, and students should keep them switched off and out of sight. The Behaviour for Learning Policy states that: *Students should "know that mobile phones, ipods/MP3 players and similar items are not to be used whilst at school and should be switched off and in bags."*
- In the case of trips, visits, exchanges and other off-site activities, their use is not allowed unless specifically permitted by the teacher in charge.
- In very unusual circumstances, such as a family emergency, students should seek staff permission to use their phone.
- Students who ignore this policy and use a mobile or other unauthorised device on school premises without permission will be required to give their phone/device to a member of staff and parents will be asked to collect it subsequently from the school office. Failure to hand the phone/device over to a member of staff when requested, will lead to serious sanctions such as Isolation. The Behaviour for Learning Policy states that: *"These are handed in to the reception and recorded. Parents are contacted and asked to collect the item."*
- If a member of the staff of the school has any suspicion that a mobile phone has unsuitable material stored on it, students will be required to hand over the phone to a member of staff and parents will be asked to collect it from a senior member of staff. In circumstances where there is a suspicion that the material on the mobile may provide evidence relating to a criminal offence the phone will be handed over to the police for further investigation¹. Parents will need to recover the phone from the police in such circumstances.
- Students are strongly discouraged from bringing camera phones into school because of their higher value.
- Students remain responsible for their own property and will bear the responsibility of any losses.
- Any failure to comply with the above guidelines may result in normal disciplinary action to be taken up to and including the consideration of permanent exclusion of the student concerned.

Sixth Form students are subject to this policy except within the boundaries of Hinchingbrooke House.

1 There has been a recent court case where a person has received a custodial sentence for showing someone a video on a mobile phone, which caused them distress. Parents and students should be aware that such incidents are likely to be treated seriously by the courts.

Parents should be aware that whilst there are obvious benefits to students having a mobile phone in terms of personal safety there are also some associated risks such as potential for theft, bullying and inappropriate contact, including grooming by unsuitable persons. In the case of other electronic devices, the risks far outweigh any leisure benefit. The wearing of headphones in particular is a safety risk.

ADVICE ON SAFE USE OF MOBILES

Using your mobile can be great fun but you need to be careful and keep safe.

- Ask permission before taking a picture of your friends and think before sending it on. Once sent you have lost control of it and it could become public before you know it.
- No filming of school activities is to be posted on social networking sites such as You Tube without permission from a senior member of staff.
- Don't give out your number or friends' numbers to people you don't know, especially in Instant Messenger or Chat Rooms.
- Keep your security code or PIN number private.
- If you get texts, which upset you, don't reply but keep a record and tell an adult. In serious cases you can report it to the police.
- If you receive a rude or embarrassing image or text about someone don't forward it to others.
- Distributing sexual images of other young people is harassment and could be illegal. If you receive something like this tell an adult immediately.

See Kidsmart at www.kidsmart.org.uk for more information on staying safe, leaflets and interactive games.

BENEFITS

- Students can use phones in cases of emergency.
- Students may feel more confident knowing they can make contact with someone if in difficulties.

THE POTENTIAL DISADVANTAGES

- Mobiles are valuable and can be lost or stolen.
- Inappropriate use of mobile phones can result in serious sanctions being taken.
- Students can be bullied by text messaging or silent phone calls.
- Mobiles can be used to communicate inappropriate material.
- Unsuitable people are known to use mobile phones and text messages to make inappropriate contact with young people.

NB: This policy should be read in conjunction with the Behaviour for Learning Policy