



BELFAST MODEL SCHOOL FOR GIRLS

Principal: Ms P Stuart, B. Ed, PQH NI, M. Ed

19th September 2022

Dear Parent / Guardian

Re: Mobile phones in school

Please find enclosed a copy of our school **updated** Mobile Phone Policy. I would request that you read this policy carefully and make yourself familiar with the details. Please discuss this policy with your child and ensure that she too is aware of the implications. This policy is in place to ensure the safeguarding and wellbeing of our whole school community. 3G and 4G technology has meant that our filters and safeguarding measures no longer block access to unsuitable material or websites that can be readily accessed by mobile phone technology. Issues around cyberbullying, live streaming and imaging have caused much upset in many schools across the province. Constant texting, messaging, snapchatting and browsing are a relentless distraction to young people. We strive to ensure that our school is a safe haven, where our young people have a break from digital discourse. We want our school environment to support our students in focusing their minds, energy and attention to their learning so that we have 'Achievement for All'.

With those aims in mind, mobile phones are not to be used within the school environment at any time. Some students are using mobile phones in school before the school day begins, during the school day and again, as soon as the bell rings, at the end of the day. Please remind your child that mobile phones are to **be switched off at all times during the school day and kept out of sight** – in school bags or inside blazer pocket. Phones must not be kept in any outside blazer pockets. **Staff will follow procedures Re. mobile phones from 8.45am onwards, confiscating any phone which is switched on and / or visible.** Phones which have been confiscated will be left in the school office for safe keeping.

As per our school policy, if a phone has been confiscated, it will be returned to the student at the end of each day from the School Office by a senior member of staff. Students must go to the Office at the end of the school day to collect their phone. If a student refuses to give her mobile phone / digital device to a member of staff as requested, further consequences will be applied and a parent / guardian will be requested to meet with senior school staff. **NO phones will be kept overnight by the school.**

If inappropriate use of a mobile phone / digital device is a regular occurrence, further consequences may be applied and a parent or guardian will be requested to meet with senior staff.

It is the responsibility of all students to ensure that their phone is not visible, not switched on and that they are not using a phone while in school to avoid the phone being confiscated by a member of staff.

I am aware that many parents want their child to have access to a phone going to and from school and I fully understand and recognise the reasons for this. In addition, if a parent, in an emergency, needs to contact a child during the school day they may telephone the school office and staff will be willing to assist. Likewise, if a student needs to contact home in an emergency at any stage during the school day, they may do so via the school office telephone. **Please do not text, call or message your child to their mobile phone during the day.** We respectfully request that you support us in supporting them in their learning.

I thank you for your understanding with this matter and thank you for your ongoing support with such issues.

Yours faithfully

P Stuart,
Principal

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**Belfast Model
School for Girls**
ACHIEVEMENT FOR ALL

Mobile Phone and Digital Communication Device Use Policy

Agreed: June 2022

To be reviewed: October 2022

Rationale

Mobile phones are a distraction to learning. While we fully appreciate a parent's right to allow their daughter to bring a mobile phone to school, we have a policy of NO USE of mobile phones during school hours. **The same rules apply to staff who are expected to not use a mobile phone during contact time with students unless in agreement with the Principal for emergency situations.** This policy complies with the GDPR (General Data Protection Regulations) and the schools' GDPR Policy and Private notice.

Policy for students

Our policy on Mobile Phones for students is:

- 1) Mobile phones should not be used on school premises and must be kept switched off and out of sight at all times. This includes mobile phones not being in the blazer front pocket. Furthermore, students are not permitted to use Smart watches or earphones.
- 2) Should students need to make an emergency phone call, they can do so on a school phone at the Main Reception or via their LoL Pastoral, not using their own mobile phone. Permission to be out of class must be obtained by the class teacher.
- 3) If a parent needs to get an urgent message to a student, they must contact the school office and staff will ensure the message is delivered to the student. We request that parents do not contact your daughter on her mobile phone.
- 4) Should students need to leave class, they must leave their mobile phone on the teacher's desk and collect it when they return.
- 5) The exception to these rules are Year 13/14 students who may use mobile phones in the Post 16 Common Room at break and lunch time only.

Procedures

- 1) If your daughter is seen using a mobile phone in school she will be reminded of the school rule and will be given a choice to either turn it off and put it away or turn it off and leave it on the teacher's desk for the remainder of the lesson.
- 2) If the phone is seen again, the student is asked to turn it off and leave on the teacher's desk. The phone will be returned at the end of the lesson. This will be noted on our school reward system.
- 3) If your daughter does not comply with the consequence of this behaviour choice, this will be followed up by the Pastoral LoL of the year group. Your daughter will be required to give it to the member of staff who will then put it in the School Office safe. It will be returned to your daughter at the end of the day.
- 4) If this is a regular occurrence, further consequences will be applied.
- 5) If your daughter refuses to hand her mobile phone into the Pastoral LoL of the year group, she will be removed from lessons for the remainder of the day and an Emergency Parental Review meeting may need to be arranged.
- 6) Inappropriate use of mobile phones or other digital communication devices to record other students or staff in school is a serious breach of the school's Positive Behaviour for Learning Policy and appropriate consequences will be applied. This will include suspension.

See Appendix A for a flowchart diagram of the above.

Preventative Curriculum

The education of students relating to the appropriate use of mobile technology is conducted as part of our Personal Development and ICT curriculum.

Links with other policies

Bring your Own Device Policy

Safeguarding and Child Protection

School Behaviour Policy

E-safety Policy

GDPR

ICT