



POLICY DOCUMENT FRONTPAGE

Mobile Phone/Electronic Devices Policy

CURRENT POLICY

APPROVED AS A CHAIR'S ACTION

**THIS POLICY IS REVIEWED REGULARLY FOLLOWING
RECOMMENDED GUIDELINES.**



MOBILE PHONE/ELECTRONIC DEVICES POLICY

1. Introduction and aims

Alec Hunter Academy is a place of learning. We are committed to removing barriers to progress and distractions which may undermine our objective of providing the best quality education for every student. It is our firm belief that the vast majority of mobile phone use in school distracts students, whilst some even creates difficulties between them, so we are seeking to eliminate this and retain our focus on the things that really matter. Moreover, a huge amount of staff time has been wasted in dealing with issues linked to phone use in the past, ranging from cyberbullying, to taking unauthorised photos, to students texting parents over minor issues rather than going through the proper routes. We are therefore seeking to simplify our expectations and limit the possibility of such issues arising.

2. Roles and responsibilities

- All staff (including teachers, support staff and supply staff) are responsible for enforcing this policy.
- Parents, volunteers, and visitors (including governors and contractors) must adhere to this policy as it relates to staff if they are on the school site during the school day. The rules for mobile phone use will be provided when visitors sign in (Appendix 1).
- Volunteers, visitors, or anyone else engaged by the school, must alert a member of staff if they witness, or are aware of, a breach of this policy.
- Parents must use the school office as the first point of contact if they need to get in touch with their child(ren) during the school day. They must not try to contact their child on their personal mobile phone during the school day.

3. Use of mobile phones by staff and visitors

- It is absolutely essential that adults model the behaviour that is expected of students. Therefore, all staff and visitors to the school should limit the use of their own mobile phones to private offices and areas of the school where they are out of sight of students, behind closed doors. It is expected that both staff and visitors to the school will refrain from using their mobile phones in classrooms, playgrounds, communal areas and in any situation where they are visible to the students.
- Staff and visitors are not permitted to make or receive calls, or send texts, while students are present unless there is an emergency or where the phone is being used in lieu of a walkie-talkie to coordinate contact with the main office e.g. while 'On Call', on duty or in dealing with an incident. Use of personal mobile phones must be restricted to non-contact time, and to areas of the school where students are not present (such as the staffroom or offices).
- Staff must refrain from giving their personal contact details to parents or students, including connecting through social media and messaging apps.
- Staff must avoid publicising their contact details on any social media platform or website, to avoid unwanted contact by parents or students.
- In general, staff should not plan for students to use mobile phones as part of a lesson. In rare circumstances this may be permitted, however staff will need to seek permission from a member of the Leadership Group by completing the form (Appendix 2).
- If staff must use their mobile phone for work purposes, such as during an emergency evacuation or off-site trip, they should use it in an appropriate and professional manner and refrain from using their

phones to contact parents where possible. If necessary, staff should ensure their number remains private by using '141' to withhold their number.

- Some members of staff are provided with a mobile phone for work purposes and only authorised staff are permitted to use them. Access to the phone must not be provided to anyone without authorisation. Staff must only use the phone functions for work purposes and ensure that communication or conduct linked to the device is always appropriate and professional.
- Staff that fail to adhere to this policy may face disciplinary action.

4. Use of mobile phones by students

- Students are permitted to bring phones into school with them, for use on the way to and from school, in case they need to make contact with parents/carers.
- Students are not permitted to use phones anywhere on the school site (with one exception detailed below). On arrival at school, the phone should be switched off and placed in the bottom of a bag or in a concealed pocket so that it is not visible and can therefore offer no distraction. Phones may not be used, even prior to the start of the school day, once students have entered the school site.
- If students wish to know the time, they should refer to the many clocks around the school, or purchase a watch – it is not acceptable to use a phone for this purpose.
- At lunch time and break time, there will be a supervised room available, in which phone use will be permitted. Hence, students expecting a text regarding a sick relative, wishing to phone a parent because they have left their lunch at home, etc. can do so in this room. This is the only area of the school site where phones can be used. However, the school office is still available, as it always has been, for students to request the opportunity to make contact with home for the kind of issues outlined above.
- When using the phone room, the following should be adhered to:
 - Students using the phone room will have a maximum of five minutes
 - The phone room is only for sending and receiving audio phone calls and text messages of an urgent nature; video calls are not allowed.
 - All students need to sit on a chair; students are not allowed to sit on tables
 - Students should leave the phone room immediately when they are asked to do so by a member of staff
 - Students are not allowed to access Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat or any other social networking sites.
 - Students are not allowed to eat or drink in the phone room
- If a student has their phone out (they do not have to be using it to make a call, it should simply not be in sight at all), or if noise from a phone disturbs a lesson, the phone will be confiscated. Any refusal to cooperate will result in a senior member of staff being called. If the student hands the phone over to a senior member of staff, the teacher will set an Extended Wednesday detention and the student will be able to collect their phone at the end of the day. If the student refuses to cooperate with the senior member of staff, this will result in the student being instructed to hand their phone in each morning to their form tutor until the next half-term.
- The first two times a phone is confiscated from a student, it will be returned at the end of the school day. After the third incident, parents will be contacted to explain that the student will now need to hand the phone in to their form tutor each morning until the next half-term. Every student is granted a fresh start at the beginning of each half-term. However, the school reserves the right to adapt this policy according to circumstances, for example, where a student has their phone confiscated for the third time towards the very end of a half-term, the requirement to hand the phone to the form tutor may be extended into the next half-term.
- If a student has their phone confiscated several times, additional sanctions will be applied.
- Please note that Smart Watches, many of which have identical functionality to mobile phones, are not permitted in school. If they are brought into school, they will be confiscated, and the same rules will apply regarding their return as outlined above for mobile phones.

- Students are not permitted to wear headphones (i.e., Air Pods, ear buds) on the school site. If headphones are required for teaching and learning, these will be provided by the school in a hygienic manner. If a student has their headphones out, they will be confiscated, and the same rules as for mobile phones will be applied (see above).
- At the end of the school day, students are expected to wait until they are outside the buildings before starting to use their phones. There may be occasions where students on site are granted permission, after hours, to use their phones to contact parents, but this will only be with the express approval of a member of staff
- Certain types of conduct, bullying or harassment can be classified as criminal conduct and the use of mobile phones contributes to this type of behaviour. The school takes such conduct extremely seriously and will communicate with parents/carers about possible involvement from the police or other agencies as appropriate. Such conduct includes, but is not limited to:
 - Consensual and non-consensual sharing of nude or semi-nude images or videos
 - Upskirting
 - Threats of violence or assault
 - Abusive calls, emails, social media posts or texts directed at someone based on their ethnicity, religious beliefs or sexual orientation
- If students are placed in Internal Exclusion for the day, their phone and any other electronic devices must be handed to staff at the beginning of the day. They will be stored securely in the Internal Exclusion room and returned to students at the end of the day. Any refusal to comply will be dealt with following the school's Behaviour for Learning policy. Staff reserve the right to search a student if they believe they have a mobile phone, or other electronic devices, on them as these are banned in this context.
- Staff supervising detentions may ask students to leave their phones with them if they allow students to go to the toilet.
- Students will regularly be reminded of the code of conduct relating to the use of mobile phones in the school (Appendix 3)
- Where staff have reasonable grounds that a student may have stolen electronic devices or that their phone has been, or is likely to be, used to commit an offence the student can be searched without consent. This also applies if it is suspected that the phone contains pornographic images, which includes nude and semi-nude images of anyone under 18 years. (DfE 'Searching, Screening and Confiscation', 2018)

5. Loss, theft or damage

Students bringing mobile phones into school must ensure that they are stored securely when not in use. Students must also secure their phones using passwords or pin codes to protect access to the phone's functions. Staff must also secure their personal phones, as well as any work phone provided to them. Failure to do so could result in data breaches.

Security is the responsibility of the person owning the device. The school accepts no responsibility for mobile phones/electronic devices that are lost, damaged or stolen on school premises or transport, during school visits or trips, or while students are travelling to and from school. All mobile phones/electronic devices are brought onto the school site at the owner's risk. Parents/carers should ensure that mobile phones/electronic devices are properly insured. They should not be left where they could be stolen or used by others without permission and should be kept safe by their owners at all times. This disclaimer is displayed around the school site, on the information slip given to visitors and students will also receive reminders through our tutorial programme and assemblies.

Confiscated phones will be stored in the school office in the safe. **STAFF WHO CONFISCATE MOBILE PHONES OR OTHER ELECTRONIC DEVICES BECOME RESPONSIBLE FOR THOSE ITEMS AND CAN BE HELD LIABLE FOR THEIR LOSS, THEFT OR DAMAGE. IT IS ESSENTIAL THAT THEY ARE HANDED IN TO THE MAIN OFFICE TO BE STORED SECURELY AT THE FIRST OPPORTUNITY.** Lost phones should be returned to the school office and every reasonable effort will be made to contact the owner.

Appendix 1

Mobile phone information which will be included with the safeguarding information slip given to visitors.

Use of mobile phones in our school

- Please keep your mobile phone switched off or on silent/vibrate while on the school grounds
- Please do not use phones where students are present. If you must use your phone, you may go to the staffroom or an office space away from students
- Do not take photos or recordings of staff or students (unless it is your own child ONLY)
- Do not use your phone in lessons, or when working with students

The school accepts no responsibility for phones that are lost, damaged or stolen while you are on the school grounds. A full copy of our mobile phone policy is available from the school office.

Appendix 2 – Permission form for students to use their mobile phones during lessons

LESSON DETAILS	
Staff name:	
Date:	
Class/lesson details:	

PURPOSE
Teachers should fill out this box explaining how the phones will be used during the lesson and why they are essential to the learning.

Staff signature: _____

Leadership Group signature: _____

Appendix 3 – Code of conduct for students

You must obey the following rules if you bring your mobile phone to school:

1. You may not use your mobile phone during lessons unless the teacher specifically allows you to.
2. Phones must be switched off (not just put on 'silent').
3. You may not use your mobile phone in the toilets or changing rooms. This is to protect the privacy and welfare of other students. If you are allowed to go to the toilet in a lesson or during a detention, the member of staff may request that you leave your phone with them.
4. You may not take photos or recordings (either video or audio) of school staff or other students (on the school site).
5. Avoid sharing your contact details with people you don't know, and don't share other people's contact details without their consent.
6. Do not share your phone's passwords or access codes with anyone else.
7. Do not use your mobile phone to bully, intimidate or harass anyone. This includes bullying, harassing or intimidating students or staff via:
 - a. Email
 - b. Text/messaging app
 - c. Social media
8. Do not use your phone to send or receive anything that may be criminal, such as nude or semi-nude images. The school has the right to search, without consent, if they suspect that a phone is being used for such purposes.
9. Using your mobile phone for bullying, harassment, and intimidation is not acceptable even when you are not in school. Do not use vulgar, obscene or derogatory language while on the phone or when using social media. The school will communicate any reported incidents to parents/carers including the possible involvement of the police and other agencies if appropriate.
10. Do not use your phone to view or share pornography or other harmful content.
11. You must comply with a request by a member of staff to switch off, or hand over a phone. Refusal to comply is a breach of the school's behaviour policy and will be dealt with accordingly.
12. Mobile phones and smart watches are not permitted in any internal or external exam or test environment. If you have a mobile phone or smart watch, you will be asked to store these appropriately, or hand over to an exam invigilator, before entering the test room. Bringing a phone into the test room can result in your exam being declared invalid.