

International School of Creative Arts

Mobile Phone Policy

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Introduction

Mobile phones and, in particular, the new generation of smart phones, such as the iPhone, now include many additional functions such as an integrated camera, video recording capability, instant messaging, mobile office applications and mobile access to the internet. These allow immediate access to email, searching for information on the Internet and other functions such as access to social networking sites e.g. Facebook, twitter and blogging sites.

For many young people today the ownership of a mobile phone is considered a necessary and vital part of their social life. When used responsibly the smart phone has great potential to support a student's learning experiences.

Premise

In February 2024, the [UK government issued guidance to schools](#) advised that pupils should not have access to mobile phones during the school day.

The guidance is based on research which shows that:

- up to 40% of secondary school pupils reported mobile phones being used without permission in most of their lessons. This distracts the pupil using the phone, disrupts the lesson for a whole class, and diverts teachers' efforts away from learning.
- Three in ten pupils in the UK say that making friends and their mental health are a cause of worry and anxiety.
- Time on the phone can displace activities that have positive influences on pupils ability to socialise, exercise and get good sleep.

While this guidance is not mandatory, at ISCA we agree that by removing mobile phones from the classroom, young people can better learn to interact face-to-face with each other, actively participate in lessons and focus on their learning.

Rules for the acceptable use of a mobile phone in school by students

Students are allowed to bring mobile phones to school. If they choose to do so, it is on the understanding that they agree with the following limitations on its use, namely:

- **Students are required to leave their mobile phone in their rooms during 'school hours'.**
- Day students are required to leave their phones in the School office.
- 'School hours' means any time students have a lesson, activity, tutorial or self-directed study.
- Students may use their phones in their free time:
 - During morning and afternoon breaks
 - In the evenings, after school
 - At the weekends
- No student may take a mobile phone into a room or other area where examinations are being held, unless they have been given permission to do so by the Exams Officer.
- The security of phones remains the student's responsibility.
- If asked to do so, content on the phone (e.g. messages, emails, pictures, videos, sound files etc.) will be shown to the Head of School or designated member of staff. This will only be done if there is good reason to suspect unacceptable use of the phone.

Unacceptable use

The school will consider any of the following to be unacceptable use of the mobile phone and a serious breach of the school's behaviour policy resulting in sanctions being taken.

- Photographing, filming or making audio recordings of staff or other students without their knowledge or permission.
- Photographing, filming or making audio recordings of staff or other students in toilets, changing rooms and similar areas, unless for an approved art project.
- Bullying, harassing or intimidating staff or students by the use of text, email or multimedia messaging, sending inappropriate messages or posts to social networking or blogging sites.
- Refusing to switch a phone off or to hand over the phone at the request of a member of staff.
- Using the mobile phone outside school hours to intimidate or upset staff and/or students.
- Using a mobile phone outside school hours in such a way that it undermines the stability of the school and compromises its values and ethos.

Sanctions

Appropriate action will be taken by the School against those who are in breach of the acceptable use guidelines, in line with the Student Behaviour policy.

In addition:

- Staff may confiscate a student's phone where the guidelines have been breached. If a phone is confiscated, the member of staff will make it clear for how long this will be and the procedure to be followed for its return.
- Students should be aware that the police will be informed if there is a serious misuse of the mobile phone and criminal activity is suspected.
- If a student commits an act which causes serious harassment, alarm or distress to another student or member of staff the ultimate sanction may be permanent exclusion. The School will consider the impact on the victim of the act in deciding the sanction.

Confiscation procedure

If a mobile phone is confiscated:

- the member of staff will make it clear when and how the phone will be returned, normally before the end of the school day.
- the member of staff will ensure that confiscated equipment is stored safely and in such a way that it is returned to the correct person.
- in the case of repeated or serious misuse, the phone will be given to the Head of School who may decide to return the phone to the parent or guardian (not the student).
- If the parents or guardian cannot come to the school to collect the phone, the Head of School, may decide to extend the confiscation period beyond one day and keep the phone in his office.

- where a student persistently breaches the rules, following a clear warning, the Head of School may impose an outright ban from having a mobile phone at school. This may be a fixed-period or permanent ban.

Where the phone has been used for an unacceptable purpose

- Only the Head of School or a designated staff member will have the right to view files stored in confiscated equipment and if necessary seek the cooperation of parents in deleting any files which are in clear breach of school guidelines, unless they need to be preserved as evidence.
- The action will be properly recorded in case it later becomes evidence of criminal activity. The record will include the time, who was present and what is found.
- If required, evidence of the offence or suspected offence will be preserved, preferably by confiscation of the device and keeping it secure or by taking photographs of the screen
- The Designated Safeguarding Lead will monitor repeat offences to see if there is any pattern in the perpetrator or the victim which needs further investigation.
- The Head of School will decide whether an incident should be reported to police.

Appendix 1 - Guidance on confiscation

DfE guide on screening and searching (Section 12)- What the law allows (n.b. this guidance is currently under review)

“Schools’ 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 pupil’s property as a disciplinary penalty, where reasonable to do so.”

See below for full document

<http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/pupilsupport/behaviour/f0076897/screening>

DfE Behaviour and discipline guidance for school staff

<http://media.education.gov.uk/assets/files/pdf/b/behaviour%20and%20discipline%20in%20schools%20%20%20guidance%20for%20teachers%20and%20school%20staff.pdf>

Appendix 2 - Legal context

Common Offences Related to the Misuse of Mobile Telephones

The key to both offences below is that the message/picture/audio/video is actually SENT. (If it is only stored on a device the offence is not complete.)

1. Malicious Communications Act 1988

It is an offence to send an indecent, grossly offensive or threatening letter, electronic communication or other article to another person with the intention that it should cause them distress or anxiety

2. Communications Act 2003

Section 127 covers all forms of public communications

127(1) a person is guilty of an offence if they-

- a) send by means of a public electronic communications network a message or other matter that is grossly offensive or of an indecent, obscene or menacing character; or
- b) causes any such message or matter to be so sent.

127(2) A person is guilty of an offence if, for the purpose of causing annoyance, inconvenience or needless anxiety to another, they –

- a) send by means of a **public** electronic communications network, a message that they know to be false,
- b) causes such a message to be sent; or
- c) persistently makes use of a public electronic communications network

Mobile Phone Acceptable Use Contract for Students

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Agreement and Understanding

By signing this document, the school assumes you have read, understood and agree to all of the above.

Student name & signature:

Date: