



Mobile Devices Policy

November 2024

BELEAST BOYS' MODEL SCHOOL

Mobile Devices Policy

In Belfast Boys' Model School, we acknowledge the significance of mobile phones and similar devices in the daily lives of our pupils, parents, staff, and the wider school community. We aim to create an environment that promotes learning, respect, and positive engagement. To support this, we operate a strict "Never Seen, Never Heard" mobile phone policy. The policy ensures that mobile devices do not interfere with the educational experience or the well-being of our pupils.

Our policy is designed to:

- Provide explicit guidelines regarding the use of mobile phones and similar devices
- Complement our existing policies, including Safeguarding, Addressing Bullying Behaviour, Positive Behaviour and Acceptable Use of ICT.
- Align with the Department of Education's recommendations concerning the personal use of mobile phones and related devices during school hours (Circular 2024/14 - Guidance for Schools on Pupils' Personal Use of Mobile Phones and other Similar Devices During the School Day, September 2024)

Through this policy we aim to address the issues related to mobile phones and similar devices in the educational setting, which include:

- Risks to child protection
- Effects on mental health and well-being.
- Potential for online bullying or harassment
- Over-dependence on mobile technology
- Influence on classroom learning
- Diminished social interactions
- Risks of theft, loss, or damage
- Effects on student attitude and behaviour

The relationships we cultivate with pupils, parents, and staff are fundamental to our vision in Belfast Boys' Model School. This policy is focused on equipping pupils for life beyond school and ensuring they engage in high-quality teaching and learning without distractions.

Responsibility for implementing the policy

All staff including teaching, support and substitute teachers are responsible for implementing the policy during the school day. Staff will lead by example by not using their mobile devices during pupil contact time which includes teaching, covering and break and lunch duty.

Pupils who bring mobile phones to school are expected to adhere to the guidelines specified in this document. Additionally, parents and guardians have a duty to endorse this policy, assisting in ensuring the safety of their children and guiding them in the appropriate use of technology.

Use of mobile phones during the school day

Mobile phones and other similar devices are strictly prohibited from being visible during the school day except for moving between classes, break and lunch times.

All mobile phones and similar devices must be placed on silent/do not disturb mode and placed in the pupil's school bag by 8.50am.

In line with OFQUAL guidelines, mobile phones are not allowed in any internal or external examination or testing environment. If a mobile phone, smart watch or other similar device is brought into the examinations hall, the pupil will be disqualified.

Pupils who require mobile phones for medical reasons (such as diabetes) will receive a 'Medical Use' card from their Head of Year.

Prior approval must be obtained from the teacher before using the phone, which is to be utilised solely for the specified medical purpose. After use, the phone must be returned to the pupil's school bag.

In emergency situations, pupils may request permission from a member of staff to use their phone.

Extra-curricular Activities and School Trips

Organisers of pupil participation in sporting events, school excursions, or educational visits will notify parents and guardians regarding the use of mobile phones or similar devices during these activities.

Sanctions

The following sanctions will be enforced in accordance with the Department of Education's guidelines concerning pupils' personal use of mobile phones and similar devices throughout the school day:

1. Mobile Phones and similar devices in Classrooms:

"Never Seen, Never Heard": Mobile phones and similar devices must be switched off or set to silent and kept out of sight during all classes. This applies to all lessons, assemblies, and any formal school activities.

If a mobile phone or similar device is seen or heard during class time, staff will follow the school's Relational Learning Policy to address the situation. This may include reflection on behaviour, restorative conversations, or payback.

2. Mobile Phones in Corridors, Break, and Lunch Time:

Mobile phones and similar devices are permitted for use in the corridors, and during break and lunch times. However, pupils are reminded to use their phones responsibly and respectfully in these areas to avoid disruption.

3. Consequences:

Repeated or serious breaches of this policy will result in further actions as outlined in the Relational Learning Policy, which may include parental involvement or payback.

By following this policy, we aim to create a respectful and productive environment for all pupils and staff.

Note: The school is not responsible for any loss or damage to mobile phones while on school premises, during transportation or while pupils are engaged in school visits or trips, as well as during their commutes to and from school.

Contact by Parents/Guardians

Parents are asked, where possible, to refrain from contacting their children via mobile phones during school hours. In case of emergencies, parents should contact the school office, and messages will be relayed to the pupil.

Telephone Number: 028 9039 1156

Pupils with immediate concerns or issues during the school day are encouraged to speak with a trusted staff member for assistance rather than using a mobile phone or similar device to contact home.

This policy ensures that Belfast Boys' Model School remains a focused and respectful learning environment. We appreciate the support of both pupils and parents in maintaining a positive school culture.

