

Windermere School Personal Devices (Laptops and Mobile Phones) Policy

Review Date: September 2022

Reviewed by: SMT

Review Period: 12 months

Staff Responsibility: Deputy Head (Academic)

Introduction

This policy applies to the use of personally owned digital devices while on school property, school IT equipment, or the use of the school's internet connection, Wi-Fi or other networks. A device is a laptop, tablet, smartphone or smartwatch (etc).

We will require all students from Year 3 and above to have their own device, preferably a laptop. We recognise that many of our students already have their own laptop/device, and therefore we will not require students to have a school specification device. The important thing is that the laptop used by each student is fully compatible with Microsoft 365.

A mobile phone is not a suitable device for producing work, and students must have a device with a keyboard (so a tablet on its own is no good).

It is not realistic to prohibit mobile phones being brought to school, nor is it logistically possible to collect phones in each morning and return them later in the day. We will not stop a pupil bringing a phone into school but we do not encourage it. Pupils may have a mobile phone with them in school under the conditions outlined in the policy below.

Use of laptops and mobile phones (devices) by pupils

- Devices will only be used in school for educational purposes.
- Pupils are responsible for the safety of their devices and the content on their devices at all times.
- Pupils do not have the right to privacy while using a device at school.
- Pupils will provide their device upon the request of a member of staff so that they can check its content, privacy settings, monitoring software (if installed), and apps.
- For privacy reasons devices must not be used to take or store photos or videos of other pupils without each individual's express permission.
- Loss of or damage to devices must be reported immediately to tutors, parents/carers and Heads of Section. The school accepts no responsibility or liability in respect of lost, stolen or damaged devices whilst at school or on transport to and from school or activities organised or undertaken by the school.
- The school accepts no responsibility for any malfunction of a device due to changes made to the device while on the school network.
- The school is not responsible for the day to day maintenance or upkeep of the user's personal device such as the charging of any device, the installation of software updates or the resolution of hardware issues. Users are responsible for installing appropriate Antivirus protection before any device can be used on the school network to prevent virus/malware and they are responsible for keeping their device up to date through software, security and app updates.

- Pass-codes or PINs should be set on personal devices to aid security and any access to accounts which are attached to bank accounts (e.g. shopping sites) should be locked before coming to school.
- In an emergency school may need to disconnect any device from service without prior notification (e.g. in event of malware attack etc)
- Parents/carers/guardians should arrange appropriate insurance cover for any device brought to school. The school will take no responsibility for the loss of or damage to a pupil's phone or laptop.
- Students will need to bring their laptop, headphones and charger to school every day.
- All internet use while in school is done through the school network and any use of mobile hotspots or VPN's is prohibited.
- Pupils may bring mobile phones to school only to enable them to contact parents/carers or be contacted at the end of the school day.
- Use of a mobile phone in school is a privilege and can be withdrawn by a teacher.

Inappropriate use of mobile phones in school is not acceptable at any time or in any circumstances. Making, storing, sending or receiving inappropriate messages, images or video clips may constitute a criminal offence and will not be tolerated. A first offence could lead to exclusion.

Staff use of mobile phones and personal devices

- Phones should never be used to take photographs or videos of children unless in circumstances agreed by a member of SLT.
- Should staff need to use their mobile phone, best practice is that mobile phones, wherever possible, should not be used in the presence of the pupils.
- Phones should not be used during lesson times either to make or receive calls, unless there is an emergency.
- Staff must not give their mobile phone number to any pupils. This also includes past pupils under the age of 18 years.
- Staff should exercise caution when giving their mobile number to parents as this could be misconstrued.
- PE staff and staff taking off site trips may use their phones to communicate arrangements to parents or colleagues in emergencies.

Inappropriate use of phones in school is not acceptable at any time or in any circumstances. Making, storing, sending or receiving inappropriate messages, images or video clips may constitute a criminal offence and will not be tolerated. A first offence could lead to dismissal.

WhatsApp and similar group chat

WhatsApp state it should not be used for business and doing so is against their terms and conditions. Facebook, the owners, state it not designed for private chat within an organisation. It is not compliant with GDPR, school cannot access the content and there is no audit trail. This means we must not use WhatsApp for any official school business.

Staff who join parental WhatsApp groups do so as individuals and not as school employees. Staff should make this clear to members of the group.

Using WhatsApp will become a workplace problem if staff members communicate with colleagues using their personal WhatsApp accounts and share school-related information which could include categories of personal data, such as photographs or information about others.

Other commercial chat software should be treated with the same caution.

Having read through all of the above, each pupil and member of staff will be asked to sign the Acceptable Use form electronically to say that they have read, understood and accepted these rules.

