

Smartphone Policy

Purpose

This policy aims to address the challenges posed by smartphone usage both inside and outside of school. This policy recognises that while banning phones during school hours is a crucial first step in educating our pupils and parents on the on the potential harm smartphones can have to wellbeing and learning, the influence of these devices extends far beyond the school gates. This smartphone policy should be read in conjunction with the school's behaviour policy, which outlines expectations for student conduct and the associated consequences for violations, including those related to mobile phone use. It should also be read alongside the school's safeguarding policy. This policy has been written in conjunction with parent representatives.

Scope

This policy applies to all pupils, staff and parents/carers at Wolfson Hillel Primary School.

Rationale

- The impact of smartphones on pupil attainment can be significant, influenced by what pupils see and do outside school hours.
- Smartphone usage can also have an impact on pupils' wellbeing.
- The school recognises that the responsibility for managing smartphone use does not lie solely with educators but must involve the wider community.

Smartphone guidelines

- Pupils are not permitted to have phones with them on school premises. Pupils may only bring a phone to school for the following reasons:
 1. Pupils with separated parents who are being brought to school by one parent and collected by the other.
 2. Medical reasons. In compliance with the Children and Families Act 2014, the school recognises that some pupils may require a smartphone on their person during the school day for medical reasons. For instance, pupils managing conditions like diabetes with continuous glucose monitoring should be allowed to use their devices as needed. School requires parents to request approval from the headteacher for any new medical conditions.
 3. When a pupil is traveling home alone without an adult – in this case the phone be returned to the pupil at the end of the school day but parents/carers must inform the school at least 24 hours in advance.
 - If a pupil brings a phone to school for one of the above reasons, it must be handed in to the main office at the start of the school day and will be returned only to the pupil's parent or carer unless the pupil is travelling home alone.
 - Older siblings/former pupils collecting pupils or visiting the school need to adhere to the guidelines and refrain from having their phone on display whilst on school premises.

Smartwatches

- Pupils are not permitted to have smartwatches in school under any circumstances. Any brought in will be confiscated and returned only to a parent or carer.

Trips and residential

- No phones will be allowed on school trips or residential outings to ensure a focused and engaging experience for all pupils. The only exception to this is pupils with a medical condition as detailed above.

Social Media and Online Behaviour

- Interactions between pupils on social media and messaging platforms, such as imessage, Whatsapp, Snapchat & TikTok, Instagram, are viewed as an extension of in-school conduct. Any inappropriate comments, messages, or posts shared outside of school that impact the well-being of other pupils or disrupt the school environment will be addressed as if they occurred during school hours. Pupils are reminded to act responsibly and respectfully online at all times.

Staff responsibilities

- All staff must consistently enforce the smartphone policy. Staff should refrain from using personal mobile phones in front of pupils during school hours to model appropriate behaviour.
- Teachers may use mobile devices for specific educational purposes or for tasks such as multi-factor authentication as needed. This should not be conducted in front of pupils wherever possible.

Curriculum links

- The school will educate pupils about the risks associated with smartphone use, both in school and more broadly, through the PSHE curriculum and external parent workshops, helping them understand how to use smartphones safely.
- SLT and relevant subject leaders will commit to organising external educational speakers on this topic to come into school for both pupils and parents wherever possible.

Sanctions for policy breach

- The school will adhere to the Department for Education (DfE) guidance regarding sanctions for policy breaches, including:
 - o Confiscation of mobile devices
 - o Appropriate consequences as outlined in the school's behaviour policy
 - o Parents will be informed of any breaches involving their child

It is the responsibility of all members of staff to monitor and enforce this policy.

Insurance and Liability

- While the school will make every effort to keep stored phones safe, it cannot be held responsible for accidental damage, loss or theft. Parents/carers are advised to check their household insurance policies for coverage of personal devices.

Advice for parents/carers

Carefully consider the age in which your child is given a smartphone. Consider the advice given by the Smartphone Free Childhood campaign which includes information based on the latest scientific research to help make an informed choice.

Encourage healthy habits:

- o Limit smartphone use in bedrooms to promote better sleep.
- o Set a routine where all screens, including smartphones, are switched off before bedtime to promote better sleep to encourage better learning for the school day.
- o Prioritise family time without screens.
- o Encourage outdoor activities and social interactions.
- o Be aware of the age rating of games your child/children are playing.

Filtering and Monitoring:

- o Utilise parental controls to ensure safe usage.
- o Set timers to manage usage.
- o Install monitoring and filtering apps such as Qustodio, Family Link by Google, Apple ScreenTime to track usage, block inappropriate content and receive alerts about concerning behaviour.

Be mindful of signs that smartphone use may be affecting your child's emotional well-being, such as mood swings, anxiety or withdrawal. Keep communication open to address any issues. CommonSense Media is a useful website to refer to.

Communication:

- o Create an open, non-judgmental environment where your child feels comfortable discussing their smartphone use. For example, asking questions such as "what do you enjoy looking at on the phone?" or "Do you know what to do if you saw something you didn't like on your phone?"
- o Maintain a regular open dialogue with your child about their smartphone use and online experiences including harmful content, online bullying and social media pressure.
- o Consider a family digital agreement: Draft an agreement with your child about when and how smartphones can be used. Include rules for screen-free times, such as during meals or before bed, to help establish clear boundaries.

Building a community

- o Benefit from getting involved in discussions with other parents in the school community about smartphone use. Share strategies and experiences and feel supported.
- o Consider joining the Smart Phone Free North London Whatsapp community group which encourages community members to talk about anything smartphone related including tips and latest research. Please contact parent Carly Kurlender for more information about the group set up for Wolfson Hillel parents.

Signposting/helpful links for further information/learning/support

<https://www.childnet.com/>

www.internetmatters.org

Webinar by Jonathan Haidt

www.common sense media.co.uk

<https://www.ceopeducation.co.uk/parents/>

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