



Electronic Devices Policy

Ernest Bevin Academy

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Part of United Learning

Responsibility: Deputy Principal	Date Approved: Summer 2024
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Monitored by: Principal	Links to other policies: Behaviour for Learning

Introduction

We understand and accept that the majority of students own and carry a mobile phone or other personal device, however the general rule is that students should not bring phones to school.

All of these have the potential to support learning, but there is also the risk of misuse, disruption and issues caused by responsibility for theft and damage.

In the text below – we refer to all electronic devices using the term phone.

Please note that when using the term ‘mobile phones’ we mean any communication device that has an equivalent capability e.g. smart watch. In addition, we include the use of headphones.

Below are some recent statements with regards to the impact of a ‘screen-based life’:

“Giving a child a smartphone can give parents peace of mind and it offers fantastic opportunities to learn, communicate and explore. But if children aren’t prepared, they can face digital challenges including managing friendship groups, pressures to have social media or even pressure to play certain games” **Carolyn Bunting, chief executive of Internet Matters, on a poll showing that nearly two-thirds of parents would like to see smartphones banned in school.**

“Mental health peaks at an hour a day of device use, with issues becoming more frequent among those using devices two, and especially three or more hours a day.” **Jean Twenge is the author of iGen and a professor of psychology at San Diego State University.**

“There is, as yet no scientific consensus on the impact of screen-based lifestyles on the mental health of young people. More research is needed on the positive and negative influences of social media on young people’s mental health. In particular, further understanding is required before it would be possible to provide evidence of a causal link between social networking and mental health problems.” **Social media and children’s mental health: a review of the evidence. Education Policy Institute, 2017**

Protocols

- If students in years 7 to 11 bring mobile phones to school they may not take them out, use them as calculators or access learning in classrooms. They must not use their mobile phone to contact family, for example, to say that they are unwell or that they have a problem at school. In these situations, students should seek a member of staff to support them, and that member of staff will contact home if necessary. If students do use their phone and contact home in these situations, we will consider confiscating the phone and applying a further sanction. The parent will need to collect it **after the school day has ended**.
- Staff are expected to confiscate mobile phones seen anywhere on site – in classrooms, corridors, playgrounds or common spaces.
- Confiscated mobile phones should be turned off and placed in the school safe in a labelled envelope (student name, date, staff initials and return arrangements).
- Mobile phones freely handed over and where there are no complicating factors can be returned to a student from 3.15pm from the office.
- A refusal to hand over the mobile phone must be escalated, and the phone will be retained in the safe for collection by an adult family member.
- Further sanctions may include isolation, internal exclusion and fixed term exclusion for the defiance.
- In PE lessons or extracurricular activities, valuables should continue to be handed in to the teacher. The same procedure applies for public examinations.

Sixth form

- We are immensely proud of our sixth form students, and they give back to the school in a multitude of ways. Indeed, they are great ambassadors for our younger students to aspire to.
- Students in years 12 and 13 may bring devices to school but these may only be used inside the Sixth Form Centre.
- Laptops may be used in class under the direction of the teacher.
- Bring your own device (BYOD) wireless network is available for all Sixth Form students to use. This is regulated by our Acceptable Use Policy (AUP).
- Sixth form students should not be using any devices, including headphones, around the school site (particular hotspots are in the playground, front foyer and as they walk between lessons)

The school will not accept responsibility for phones that are lost, damaged or stolen on the premises or on a school journey. The school will not enter into dialogue about the condition of a mobile phone on receipt or return.

In a situation where there is a suspicion that the mobile phone has been misused then the school has a right and duty to inspect the contents on the mobile phone. This will be conducted in the presence of the student and carried out in line with the school's privacy policy and GDPR.

There may be some variance to this protocol on school journeys. This must be made clear in any communication and use must be in the spirit of this protocol.