

Gulf English School

Policy on the use of mobile phones and electronic devices

2017-2018

Use of Mobile Telephones and Electronic Devices

The spirit of this policy is that pupils should not bring mobile phones to school or to school related off site activities.

Pupils who ignore the spirit of this policy and bring a mobile to school, whether they use it or not, will be required to hand over their phone to a member of staff and parents will be asked to collect it from the school office.

This policy outlines the appropriate use of mobile phones and electronic devices in our school.

Rationale

The possession and use of mobile phones by school pupils is now extensive, even in the primary school sector. Our core business of teaching and learning needs to be conducted in an environment free from unnecessary distractions or disruptions.

Within the cultural context of the ME, mobile phone use and camera use on mobile phones can pose serious problems.

Therefore the bringing of mobile phones to school by students is against the school code of conduct and rules.

The school is prepared to allow mobile phones on the premises but only within the parameters of the policy as stated below. The use of mobile phones (particularly with the advent of increasingly sophisticated equipment and camera phones) presents a number of problems, including:

- Mobile phones can be valuable items and might render a pupil vulnerable to theft
- Mobile phones (and their cost and level of sophistication - or otherwise) can make pupils objects of envy or disparagement and could have implications with regard to discipline and potential bullying
- Even when apparently silent, the use of mobiles phones for texting purposes could be potentially undermining of classroom discipline
- Use of the newer phones with integrated cameras could lead to child protection and data protection issues with regard to inappropriate capture, use or distribution of images.
- Misuse of internet, text message, Whatsapp etc are on the increase.
- Many of the above issues also pertain to I-Pods, Game Boys, PSPs, etc. They can be very intrusive, distracting and antisocial in a school environment.

Aims

- To inform all members of our school community about the appropriate use of mobile phones at our school.
- To outline the procedures and processes of this policy.

However, it is the SLT's policy to prohibit mobile phones in school but provision is made by safekeeping of mobile phones in the day in extenuating circumstances.

If during the school day, a student needs to phone home, this is allowed with a staff member's permission and a written note. Children can then use the telephones in secretarial areas under supervision.

Guidelines for Children

- The SLT discourages (and asks all parents to discourage) pupils from bringing mobile phones to schools on the grounds that they are valuable and may be lost or stolen.
- Parents are reminded that in cases of emergency, the school office remains the first point of contact and can ensure your child is reached quickly, and helped in any appropriate way.
- Where a parent feels that their child having a phone in school is essential the following will apply:
 - Parents must send the Head a letter requesting that their child be permitted to bring his/her mobile phone to school.
 - All phones brought to school must have a sticky label on the back with the child's name and class.
 - The phones must be turned off and handed in to the Head Teacher's Office at the start of the school day
 - The Head Teacher will keep the phones locked in a drawer until the end of school day.
 - The school or Head Teacher will not be liable for the replacement of lost, stolen or damaged devices.
 - Any child found to intentionally have a phone in school without a parental letter or without having handed it to Head Teacher in the morning will have the phone confiscated.
 - The phone will not be returned until a parent collects it.

Similarly, the use of electronic games, personal stereos, etc is not permitted during the school day (including arrival, class time, breaks and dismissal.)

- Where a pupil is found by a member of staff to be using a mobile phone or other electronic device, as above, for any purpose, the phone will be confiscated from the pupil and returned only to the parent, guardian or carer.
- The school will not be liable for the replacement of lost, stolen or damaged devices.
- The school incorporates this policy into the Code of Behaviour and will treat breaches as they would treat any other breach of the Code.
- If a pupil is found taking photographs or video footage with a mobile phone of either other pupils or teachers or sharing inappropriate messages via Bluetooth this will be regarded as a serious offence and disciplinary action will be taken according to the school's Discipline Policy.
- If images of other pupils or teachers have been taken, the phone will not be returned to the pupil until the images have been removed by the pupil in the presence of their parent.

School Trips and Outings.

- Children are not permitted to bring mobile phones with them on school trips and tours. A contact number will be provided for parents which may be used by them to contact the teacher on the trip.
- On overseas trips, students may take phones but these are only used at set times to call family.

Guidelines for Staff

- During teaching time, while on playground duty and during meetings, mobile phones will be switched off or put on 'silent' or 'discreet' mode.
- Phones will not be used in sight of children except in the case of emergency. Calls for school business e.g. checking a booking for school tour, making arrangements for sporting events etc. should be done on the school phone.
- Teachers are reminded to be careful when using their personal mobile phones to contact parents. There have been occasions where teachers who have used their phones in good faith have subsequently received crank calls
- In external examinations, staff phones must be switched off and placed on the desk or stage, phones may be used to contact a member of the SLT **in emergencies only.**

EXAMS

Mobile phones cannot be in the possession of anyone in an examination room. The JCQ public examinations board states that candidates found to be in possession of a mobile phone in an examination, whether or not it is switched on, could be disqualified. Any candidate whose phone rings while in his/her possession in an examination will be disqualified from that subject.