

## DOWN HIGH SCHOOL- POLICY ON MOBILE PHONES



Mobile phones are an accepted part of a young person's life and it is recognised that most of our pupils own one. Such devices can be very useful, especially in terms of personal safety, but it is also the case that the increasing sophistication of mobile phone technology presents a number of issues for schools:

- The high monetary value of many phones means that there is a risk of loss, damage or theft
- Accidental or deliberate use of mobile phones during internal or external examinations
- The integration of cameras and availability of internet access present potential Child Protection and Data Protection issues
- The potential to use the phone in inappropriate situations, such as the classroom (e.g. texting, taking photographs or recording without permission).
- Online bullying

It is not realistic to prohibit phones from being brought to school, nor is it logistically possible to arrange for mobile telephones and other devices to be deposited, stored and collected.

It is the school's policy to allow pupils to have a mobile phone with them in school under the conditions outlined below.

1. Pupils may bring mobile phones into school but these **must** be switched off (not on silent mode) while on the school premises. This would also include curricular and extra-curricular trips away from school. This ruling also applies to equivalent electronic devices in all environments with the exception of 6<sup>th</sup> Form supervised private study areas. Mobile phones must be kept out of sight, in an **inside** blazer pocket, and **not in a front pocket of a blazer**. Smartwatches are permitted in school; however, pupils are not allowed to use a smartwatch to view/reply to messages or access applications.
2. Pupils may on occasion, **and only under the strict direction and supervision of a class teacher**, be permitted to use a smartphone to research, document, capture or record learning in a controlled classroom environment or during fieldwork.
3. In private study, 6<sup>th</sup> Form students may select stored music at the start of the period, but phones/ipods must then be placed in the inside blazer pocket for the duration of the session. Inappropriate use will be reported to the Head of Sixth Form.

4. Sixth Form students are permitted to use mobile phones at break and lunch, **but only in their respective Common Rooms**. This privilege is conditional on appropriate use of mobile phones by Sixth Form.
5. If a pupil uses a mobile phone outside these conditions the phone will be confiscated by a member of staff and handed into the Main Office, where the pupil's name and the date of the offence will be recorded. It is the pupil's responsibility to collect the phone at the end of the school day. Pupils who allow their phone to be used inappropriately by others will be held responsible for its misuse.
6. A pupil who deliberately uses a mobile phone in class will have their phone confiscated and will also be sanctioned under the school's Positive Behaviour Policy. The deliberate use of a mobile phone in class is considered a serious breach of school rules.
7. If a mobile phone is confiscated for a **third** time in the same school year, a letter from the Principal will be emailed, informing the parent(s) of the third confiscation and notifying them that, in the event of the mobile telephone being confiscated for a fourth time, the parent(s) will have to come into school to collect it and will meet with the Principal or a designated Vice-Principal. (Any subsequent confiscations in the same school year will involve the same procedure).
8. Mobile phones, smartwatches and any other similar electronic devices (e.g. ipods, MP3/4 players) **must not** be taken into external examinations under any circumstances. Examination Boards reserve the right to take severe action against any candidate who disregards the well-publicised rules governing the integrity of examinations.
9. Students **must not** use mobile phones or other electronic devices during field trips, excursions or other associated school activities except during social/recreational time or as directed by a member of staff. The school accepts no responsibility for the loss or damage of mobile phones or other electronic devices that have been brought on such trips by pupils.
10. Pupils are warned of the dangers of using mobile phones, especially with earphones, travelling to and from school.

### **Emergencies**

If a pupil needs to contact his/her parents/guardians he/she will be allowed to use a telephone in the Main Office. If parents need to contact children urgently they should phone the Main Office (028 44612103) and a message will be relayed promptly. Pupils are **not** permitted to use their mobile phones to contact their parents/guardians while in school, since such action can cause unnecessary anxiety to both pupils and parents. If a pupil is unwell they must report to the School Nurse in the Medical Room.

### **Responsibility for mobile phones**

Down High School accepts no responsibility whatsoever for theft, loss, damage or health effects relating to mobile phones. It is the responsibility of parents and pupils to ensure mobile phones are properly insured. This also applies to other electronic items.

### **Parents**

Parents are asked not to message, call or receive calls from their child while pupils are on the school premises.

