

# Mobile phone policy

The Bridge



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## 1. Introduction and aims

At The Bridge we recognise that mobile phones, including smart phones, are an important part of everyday life for our learners, parents/carers and staff, as well as the wider provision community.

Our policy aims to:

- Promote, and set an example for, safe and responsible phone use
- Set clear guidelines for the use of mobile phones for learners, staff, parents/carers and volunteers
- Support the provision's other policies, especially those related to child protection and behaviour

This policy also aims to address some of the challenges posed by mobile phones in provision, such as:

- Risks to child protection
- Data protection issues
- Potential for lesson disruption
- Risk of theft, loss, or damage
- Appropriate use of technology in the classroom

## 2. Roles and responsibilities

### 2.1 Staff

All staff (including teachers, support staff and supply staff) are responsible for enforcing this policy.

Volunteers, or anyone else otherwise engaged by the provision, must alert a member of staff if they witness, or are aware of, a breach of this policy.

The Headteacher is responsible for monitoring the policy every two years, reviewing it, and holding staff and learners accountable for its implementation.

## 3. Use of mobile phones by staff

### 3.1 Personal mobile phones

Staff (including volunteers, contractors and anyone else otherwise engaged by the provision) are not permitted to make or receive calls, or send texts, during contracted working hours. Use of personal mobile

phones must be restricted to non-contact time, and to areas of the provision where learners are not present (such as the staffroom).

There may be circumstances in which it's appropriate for a member of staff to have use of their phone during contact time. For instance:

- For emergency contact by their child, or their child's provision
- In the case of acutely ill dependents or family members

The executive headteacher or centre manager will decide on a case-by-basis whether to allow for special arrangements.

If special arrangements are not deemed necessary, provision staff can use the provision office number 01225 704374 as a point of emergency contact.

### **3.2 Data protection**

Staff must not use their personal mobile phones to process personal data, or any other confidential provision information, including entering such data into generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools such as chatbots (e.g. ChatGPT and Google Bard).

Please see the data protection policy and ICT acceptable use policy.

### **3.3 Safeguarding**

Staff must refrain from giving their personal contact details to parents/carers or learners, including connecting through social media and messaging apps.

Staff must avoid publicising their contact details on any social media platform or website, to avoid unwanted contact by parents/carers or learners.

Staff must not use their mobile phones to communicate with parents or learners.

Staff must not use their mobile phones to take photographs or recordings of learners, their work, or anything else which could identify a learner. If it's necessary to take photos or recordings as part of a lesson/provision trip/activity, this must be done using provision equipment. All staff are either provided with a mobile phone, laptop or tablet.

The Bridge does use Edukey which is part of TES – safeguard my provision and staff can access this on ANY device to report a safeguarding concern.

### **3.4 Using personal mobiles for work purposes**

In some circumstances, it may be appropriate for staff to use personal mobile phones for work. Such circumstances may include, but aren't limited to:

- Emergency evacuations
- Supervising off-site trips
- Supervising residential visits

In these circumstances, staff will:

- Use their mobile phones in an appropriate and professional manner, in line with our staff code of conduct
- Not use their phones to take photographs or recordings of learners, their work, or anything else which could identify a learner
- Refrain from using their phones to contact parents/carers. If necessary, contact must be made via the provision office

### **3.5 Work phones**

Some members of staff are provided with a mobile phone by the provision for work purposes.

Only authorised staff are permitted to use provision phones, and access to the phone must not be provided to anyone without authorisation.

Staff must:

- Only use phone functions for work purposes, including making/receiving calls, sending/receiving emails or other communications, or using the internet
- Ensure that communication or conduct linked to the device is appropriate and professional at all times, in line with our staff code of conduct.
- If photographs are taken for evidence purposes, they are uploaded to the appropriate platforms and then deleted.

### **3.6 Sanctions**

Staff that fail to adhere to this policy may face disciplinary action.

See the provision's staff disciplinary policy for more information.

## **4. Use of mobile phones by learners**

The Bridge is committed to safeguarding and due to the vulnerability of our learners we have a non-negotiable that ALL learner mobiles must be handed in at the start of the provision day and they will have these returned at the end of the provision day.

- Learners are allowed to bring a mobile phone to provision as they often travel long distances.
- Learners can often be collected by other professionals. YOT/Social Care
- Learners feel safe knowing their mobile phone is on site
- Learners will hand their mobile phones into the office in the morning, where they are kept securely
- Post 16 learners are allowed their mobile phones at breaktime but are NOT allowed to take these into the main provision area.

### **4.1 Sanctions**

The Bridge will follow the behaviours stages in order to give learners to hand their mobile phones over in their time. This is a non-negotiable and learners and their parents are aware if this is not handed in then they will not be able to participate in the day ahead.

Staff have the power to search learners' phones, as set out in the [DfE's guidance on searching, screening and confiscation](#). The DfE guidance allows you to search a learner's phone if you have reason to believe the phone contains pornographic images, or if it is being/has been used to commit an offence or cause personal injury.

Certain types of conduct, bullying or harassment can be classified as criminal conduct. The provision takes such conduct extremely seriously and will involve the police or other agencies as appropriate.

Such conduct includes, but is not limited to:

- Sexting (consensual and non-consensual sharing nude or semi-nude images or videos)
- Upskirting
- Threats of violence or assault
- Abusive calls, emails, social media posts or texts directed at someone on the basis of someone's ethnicity, religious beliefs or sexual orientation

## **5. Use of mobile phones by parents/carers, volunteers and visitors**

Parents/carers, visitors and volunteers (including governors and contractors) must adhere to this policy as it relates to staff if they are on the provision site during the provision day.

This means:

- Not taking pictures or recordings of learners, unless it's a public event (such as a provision fair), or of their own child
- Using any photographs or recordings for personal use only, and not posting on social media without consent
- Not using phones in lessons, or when working with learners

Parents/carers, visitors and volunteers will be informed of the rules for mobile phone use when they sign in at reception or attend a public event at provision.

Parents/carers or volunteers supervising provision trips or residential visits must not:

- Use their phone to make contact with other parents/carers
- Take photos or recordings of learners, their work, or anything else which could identify a learner

Parents/carers or volunteers supervising trips are also responsible for enforcing the provision's policy for learners using their phones, as set out in section 4 above.

Parents/carers must use the provision office as the first point of contact if they need to get in touch with their child during the provision day. They must not try to contact their child on his/her personal mobile during the provision day.

## 6. Loss, theft or damage

Learners bringing phones to provision must ensure that phones are appropriately labelled and are stored securely when not in use.

Learners must secure their phones as much as possible, including using passwords or pin codes to protect access to the phone's functions. Staff must also secure their personal phones, as well as any work phone provided to them. Failure by staff to do so could result in data breaches.

The provision accepts no responsibility for mobile phones that are lost, damaged or stolen on provision premises or transport, during provision visits or trips, or while learners are travelling to and from provision.

Lost phones should be returned to the office. The provision will then attempt to contact the owner.

## 7. Monitoring and review

The provision is committed to ensuring that this policy has a positive impact of learners' education, behaviour and welfare. When reviewing the policy, the provision will take into account:

- Feedback from parents/carers and learners
- Feedback from teachers
- Records of behaviour and safeguarding incidents
- Relevant advice from the Department for Education, the local authority or other relevant organisations