



Mobile Phone and Portable Electronic Devices Policy and Agreement

Due to convergence in the functions of mobile phones, portable media players and digital cameras, this policy differentiates between functions and not devices. The word "Portable" refers to hand-held devices up to and including tablets such as the iPad in size, but not laptop or netbook computers.

Parents and pupils should note that the School **does not encourage the presence of mobile phones or other portable electronic devices on its premises during term time unless specifically related to academic work**, and that the School is not liable for any loss or damage to these devices on the School site, at any time. All valuables, including mobile phones, are brought onto the site at the owner's discretion.

Using a mobile phone

While mobile phones do not present any known health risk to children and young people, the UK Chief Medical Officers' (CMOs) advice is that where they do use mobile phones, they should be encouraged to:

- use the phones for **essential** purposes only
- keep all calls short – talking for long periods prolongs exposure and should be discouraged.

The UK CMO recommends that if parents wish to avoid their children being subject to any possible risk that might be identified in the future, the way to do so is to exercise their choice not to let their children use mobile phones.

Current crime statistics show that a mobile phone is stolen in about half of all street robberies, with children under 15 the most likely victims and some robberies involving violence. At Ballard, we have become increasingly aware of the incorrect use of mobile phones, by pupils, after school hours. Cases of bullying via text messaging are common in all schools today and hoax calls can cause much concern to young people.

It is Ballard School policy that:

- pupils have a privilege to keep a mobile phone in their possession, or safely secured in their lockers, during the school day
- mobile phones may only be switched on after school hours: 8.00am to 5.00pm (or 4.00pm if you are leaving to go home at that time, when they would normally only be used on the car park area)
- all phone calls during the school day are made through the Reception Office on site

- the School is not responsible for inappropriate use of mobile phones by pupils after school hours, but will report known cases to parents
- mobile phones are not to be used for communications during the school day by a pupil on site, for any reason. This includes using the device to access the internet and online applications or using as a Wi-Fi hotspot using 3G or 4G the content of any internet access available to the child via the phone remains the sole responsibility of the parent, who should ensure that appropriate safeguarding and content filtering is in place

Using a digital camera

Digital cameras should not be used in school time for taking images or videos without specific permission from a member of staff. Use of a digital camera in changing or toilet areas is strictly forbidden and will result in severe disciplinary action. **Any images or videos taken in school must be directly related to school activities and may not be distributed outside the school or posted to any publicly accessible or social networking website without specific permission from the headmaster.**

The filming of or recording the voices of School staff during lessons is strictly forbidden and the photographing or filming of any member of the school community or recording of their voices is also forbidden, unless it is with their express permission.

Using a music player

Students are only allowed to use music players in school when expressly permitted by a member of staff.

Music players must not be plugged into any amplification system in school, unless expressly permitted by a member of staff. If a student breaches these rules, then they will not be allowed to bring a music player into school, even if it is also their mobile phone, in addition to being disciplined according to the school's policy.

Games

Many portable electronic devices have the facility for games to be played. Playing these games is not allowed at school and will only be allowed when out on long excursions and when expressly permitted by the member of staff in charge. Dedicated games devices such as the Nintendo DS/DSi or the Sony PSP are not allowed in school. The Apple iPod Touch may be allowed, providing that it is only used as a music player or camera and subject to the above rules.

Sanctions

If a teacher gives permission for a device to be used for one purpose, then the pupil may not assume permission for other uses: e.g. a phone which is being used to take pictures may not then be used as a music player unless the teacher specifically gives their permission.

Any pupil in breach of any part of this policy will have their device confiscated and the privilege to bring these devices into school may be withdrawn. In addition, they may be disciplined according to the school's policy.

Confiscated devices are locked in a safe in the Reception office and may be collected at or after the end of the week by the pupil; or may be collected sooner by the parent, by prior arrangement with the Deputy Head (senior), the Senior Mistress or the Senior Teacher.

Staff member: David Horton

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