



Torquay Girls' Grammar School – Mobile Communications Policy

Introduction

The need for our school community to prepare for 21st century learning is very much recognised and indeed this item was top of the agenda at the 2011 BETT conference. As a school we need to embrace mobile technologies, games, podcasts and social networking, according to research from leading educationalists. The gap between those schools embracing technology and those that are not is growing all the time. It is important therefore that we should be looking at and engaging with our students in developing their responsible use of these new technologies.

We need to recognise that with the widespread ownership of 'mobile phones and devices' (referred to as mobile devices) among our students, it becomes incumbent on us that all members of our school community (Governors, SLT, teachers, students, and parents) take steps to ensure that mobile devices are used responsibly at school and when we are on school business. This Acceptable Use Policy is designed to ensure that potential issues involving mobile devices can be clearly identified and addressed, ensuring the benefits that mobile devices provide (such as increased safety) can continue to be enjoyed by our students.

For the purpose of this document, mobile devices may include: iPods, gaming devices (e.g. PSP, Nintendo), mp3 and mp4 players, PDAs, BlackBerrys, iPhones, (although note that this list is not exhaustive).

Rationale

At Torquay Girls' Grammar School we accept that parents give their children mobile devices to protect them from everyday risks involving personal security and safety. There is also increasing concern about children travelling alone on public transport or commuting long distances to school. It is acknowledged that providing a child with a mobile device gives parents reassurance that they can contact their child if they need to speak to them urgently, however, parents are reminded that in cases of emergency, the school office/main reception remains a vital and appropriate point of contact and can ensure your child is reached quickly and assisted in any appropriate way and we ask that parents support the school by not contacting students via the mobile devices during the school day.

This Acceptable Use Policy for mobile devices provides teachers, students and parents with guidelines and instructions for the appropriate use of mobile devices during school hours. This Acceptable Use Policy also applies to students during school excursions, camps and extra-curricular activities. Where applicable, exceptions may be permitted.

It is important that students, their parents or guardians have read and understand the Acceptable Use Policy before students are given permission to bring mobile devices to school.

Responsibility

It is the responsibility of students who bring mobile devices to school to abide by the guidelines outlined in this document.

- The decision to provide a mobile device to their children should be made by parents or guardians.
- Parents should be aware if their child takes a mobile device to school.
- Permission to have a mobile device at school while under the school's supervision is contingent on parent/guardian permission in the form of a signed copy of this policy.
- Parents/guardians may revoke approval at any time.

Acceptable Uses

It is school policy that mobile devices should be switched off and kept out of sight during classroom lessons.

- Parents are reminded that in cases of emergency, the school office/ main reception remains a vital and appropriate point of contact and can ensure your child is reached quickly and assisted in any appropriate way.
- Students should only use their mobile devices before or after school or during morning break and lunch breaks in their form rooms only. While on school premises, students should use soundless features such as text messaging, answering services, call diversion and vibration alert to receive important calls.
- Mobile devices should not be used in any manner or place that is disruptive to the normal routine of the school.
- Students should protect their phone numbers by only giving them to friends and keeping a note of who they have given them to. This can help protect the student's number from falling into the wrong hands and guard against the receipt of insulting, threatening or unpleasant voice, text and picture messages.
- Portable Music Players (e.g. iPods, MP3 / MP4 Players) and portable games consoles are not permitted.

Teaching and Learning Accepted Uses

- Teachers may direct students to use their mobile devices for teaching and learning purposes in certain circumstances only.

Unacceptable Uses

- Mobile devices **must not** be used to make calls, send SMS messages, surf the internet, take photos or use any other application during school lessons and other educational activities, such as assemblies.
- Mobile devices must not disrupt classroom lessons with ringtones or beeping.
- Using mobile devices to bully and threaten other students is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. In some cases it can constitute criminal behaviour.
- It is forbidden for students to "gang up" on another student and use their mobile devices to take videos and pictures of acts to denigrate and humiliate that student and then send the pictures to other students or upload it to a website for public viewing.
- This also includes using mobile devices to photograph or film any member of the school community without their consent.
- It is a criminal offence to use mobile devices to menace, harass or offend another person and almost all calls, text messages and emails can be traced.
- Mobile devices are not to be used in changing rooms or toilets or used in any situation that may cause embarrassment or discomfort to their fellow students, staff or visitors to the school.
- Mobile devices are **not to be used** in examinations or controlled assessments (see below).
- Should there be repeated disruptions to lessons caused by a mobile device; the responsible student may face disciplinary actions as sanctioned by School's Behaviour Policy.

Protecting from theft or damage

- Students should mark their mobile device clearly with their names.
- To reduce the risk of theft during school hours, students who carry mobile devices are advised to keep them well concealed and not 'advertise' they have them.
- Mobile devices that are found in the school and whose owner cannot be located should be handed to the Main Reception office.
- The school accepts no responsibility for lost, stolen or damaged mobile devices.
- The school accepts no responsibility for students who lose or have their mobile device stolen while travelling to and from school.
- It is strongly advised that students use passwords/pin numbers to ensure that unauthorised phone calls cannot be made on their phones (e.g. by other students, or if stolen). Students must keep their password/pin numbers confidential. Mobile devices and/or passwords may not be shared.

Inappropriate Conduct

- Any student/s caught using a mobile device to cheat in exams or assessments will face disciplinary action as sanctioned by the Leadership Team and by the regulating exam boards/QCA
- Any student who uses vulgar, derogatory, or obscene language while using a mobile device will face disciplinary action as sanctioned by the Leadership Team
- Students with mobile devices listed may not engage in personal attacks, harass another person, or post private information about another person using SMS messages, email, taking/sending photos or objectionable images, and phone calls.
- Students using mobile devices to bully other students will face disciplinary action as sanctioned by the Anti-Bullying Policy.

Sanctions

In the first instance students will be asked to switch-off their mobile device and to put it in their bag.

Upon a second offence a mobile device will be confiscated. The device will be placed in the school safe as soon as the teacher confiscating the phone can do so. The device can be collected by the student from the School Office at the end of the school day.

For students who offend a third time the device will be kept in the school safe until it is collected by the student together with the parent or guardian or with a signed letter from their parent/guardian. Parents will be notified of this in writing.

As set out in the previous section, failure to heed the rules set out in this document may result in an alleged incident being referred to the Leadership Team for investigation. In such cases, the parent or guardian would be notified immediately and a more serious sanction may be applied.

The school reserves the right to ban individual students or groups of students from bringing mobile devices on site.

(In exceptional circumstances the device may be returned with parental permission from a telephone call through a member of the Leadership team – this is done to ensure that the student is safe).

Additional Useful information for students and parents

There are a number of resources available to support parents and pupils to promote the safe use of mobile phones, digital devices and other technologies both in school and at home. Below are a list of resources currently available and a short description of what each one contains. These resources have been drawn from a variety of sources, including Government information, voluntary organisations and Mobile Network Organisations.

The resources below are grouped by their audience for ease of reference. This does not mean that they are suitable for that audience only. Links to Mobile Network Provider information, including resources, are contained at the end of the document.

For Pupils

<http://www.thinkuknow.co.uk>

The ThinkuKnow website aims to get pupils to share what they do know about the use of mobile phones and the internet, and to find out if there's information that they don't already know.

<http://www.kidsmart.org.uk/> - advice about using the internet and mobile devices safely

www.phonebrain.org.uk - A website with loads of good information about mobiles!

www.chatdanger.com - A website about staying safe when chatting on the internet

www.thinkuknow.co.uk - Information about staying safe from strangers online

For Parents

"Bullying on mobile phones and digital devices" offers practical advice on how to deal with bullying, who to contact and an explanation of the law. Mobile phones and digital devices: What parents need to know provides help and advice about modern mobile phones and digital devices for families and carers.

http://www1.orange.co.uk/documents/regulatory_affairs/guide_for_parents.pdf

What your child's mobile can do aims to give parents and guardians an understanding of the breadth and benefits of mobile services, how they can help make life easier, safer and more fun. It also explores issues of how mobile services can be exploited disreputably and in harmful ways by some people, as well as what to look out for.

http://www.o2.com/media_files/What_your_mobile_can_do.pdf

Sensible use of camera phones sets out a few tips to get you started and to help sensible and careful use. It is available from

http://www.o2.com/media_files/o2_camera_use.pdf

Safe use of mobile chatrooms explains the risks associated with children accessing chat facilities (chatrooms) where they might meet and talk with 'friends' that they do not know in the real world. In particular, it sets out advice on what to do when children make contacts who may behave negatively towards them.

http://www.o2.com/media_files/safeuse1.pdf

Helping children deal with nuisance calls provides safety tips for children on how to deal with calls or text messages that annoy, offend or threaten, either from people they know or from complete strangers.

http://www.o2.com/media_files/nuisancecalls.pdf

Protecting your child against crime provides advice about being alert to dangers and more careful about what they do, children can help prevent themselves and their phones being targeted.

http://www.o2.com/media_files/Againstcrime.pdf

Mobile Network

Mobile Network Operators have information on mobile phone safety and bullying available from their websites for parents, schools and young people, some of the network's resources may be highlighted above. Below are links to the information provided by each of the networks.

O2

<http://protectourchildren.o2.co.uk/PreventBullying.jsp>

Virgin Mobile

http://about.virginmobile.com/aboutus/corp_resp/consumers/

Vodafone

http://online.vodafone.co.uk/dispatch/Portal/appmanager/vodafone/wrp?_nfpb=true&_pageLabel=template12&pageID=PAV_0080

Ofcom is the independent regulator and competition authority for the UK communications industries, with responsibilities across television, radio, telecommunications and wireless communications services. Its website contains research on media literacy in all the Nations of the UK:

www.ofcom.org.uk

Student Acceptable Use Agreement Form (Mobile Devices)

This form relates to the student / pupil Acceptable Use Policy (AUP), to which it is attached. Please complete the sections below to show that you have read, understood and agree to the rules included in the Acceptable Use Agreement.

I have read and understand the above and agree to follow these guidelines when:

- I accept that the school cannot take responsibility for loss/theft of the mobile device whilst it is on the school premises.
- I use my own equipment in school (when allowed).
- I use my own equipment out of school in a way that is related to me being a member of this school e.g. communicating with other members of the school, accessing school email, VLE, website etc.

Name of Parent/Carer

Name of Student / Pupil

Group / Class

Parental Signature

Student Signature

Date