

TIBSHELF COMMUNITY SCHOOL MOBILE PHONE POLICY

Ratified: July 2025
(Tibshelf Policy)





1. Introduction and aims.

2. Aims

At Tibshelf Community School we recognise that mobile phones, including smart phones, are an important part of everyday life for our children, parents, and staff, as well as the wider school 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 children, staff, parents, and volunteers.
- Support the school's other policies, Safeguarding, Behaviour and Anti bullying.
- This policy also aims to address some of the challenges posed by mobile phones in school, such as:
 - Risks to child protection
 - Data protection issues
 - Potential for lesson disruption
 - Risk of theft, loss, or damage

3. Rationale

Aside from the safeguarding issue, the rationale for this policy is that it has been shown that the effect of banning mobile phones from school premises adds up to the equivalent of an extra week's schooling over a child's academic year. This is according to research by Louis Philippe Beland and Richard Murphy, published by the Centre for Economic Performance at the London School of Economics.

"Communication: The Impact of Mobile Phones on Student Performance" found that after schools banned mobile phones, the test scores of students aged 16 improved by 6.4%. The economists cite that this is the "equivalent of adding five days to the school year." According to Beland and Murphy, a phone ban produced improvements in test scores among students, with the lowest-achieving students gaining twice as much as average students. The ban had a greater positive impact on students with special education needs and those eligible for free school meals, while having no discernible effect on high achievers. "We found that not only did student achievement improve, but also that low-achieving and low-income students gained the most. We found the impact of banning phones for these students was equivalent to an additional hour a week in school, or to increasing the school year by five days."

4. 2.2 Continuous Education around Appropriate Use

We believe that owning and using a mobile phone respectfully and safely requires a level of maturity and training.

Our approach to online safety is based on addressing the following categories of risk:

- Content – being exposed to illegal, inappropriate, or harmful content, such as pornography, fake news, racism, misogyny, self-harm, suicide, anti-Semitism, radicalisation, and extremism.
 - Contact – being subjected to harmful online interaction with other users, such as peer-to-peer pressure, commercial advertising and adults posing as children or young adults with the intention to groom or exploit them for sexual, criminal, financial or other purposes.
 - Conduct – personal online behaviour that increases the likelihood of, or causes, harm, such as making, sending, and receiving explicit images (e.g., Consensual, and non-
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consensual sharing of nudes and semi-nudes and/or pornography), sharing other explicit images and online bullying.

- Commerce – risks such as online gambling, inappropriate advertising, phishing and/or financial scams

To address the risks above we:

Educate pupils about online safety as part of our curriculum. For example:

- The safe use of social media, the internet and technology
- Keeping personal information private
- How to recognise unacceptable behaviour online
- How to report any incidents of cyber-bullying, ensuring pupils are encouraged to do so, including where they are a witness rather than a victim.

5. 3. Roles and responsibilities

6. 3.1 Staff

All staff (including teachers, support staff, and supply staff) are responsible for enforcing this policy. Volunteers, or anyone else otherwise engaged by the school, must alert a member of staff if they witness, or are aware of, a breach of this policy.

The Senior Leadership Team (SLT) are responsible for monitoring the policy every year, reviewing it, and holding staff and children accountable for its implementation.

7. 4. Use of mobile phones by children

8. 4.1 Childrens Use

The school recognises that parents/carers in the community feel the need for their children to have access to a mobile phone for communication home. This helps with safeguarding and child protection especially in the long dark winter months. Tibshelf Community School supports this approach wholeheartedly.

To that end, the school has adopted the following mobile phone best use policy:

- Children are allowed to bring mobile phones to and from school to ensure their personal safety at all times.
- Children must not use a mobile device, smart watch or electronic device including headphones anywhere in school during the school day.

For the purposes of this policy, the school day begins the moment the children enter the school grounds and ends once the children leave the school grounds.

Mobile phones will not be permitted to be used at any after school enrichment clubs, for example.

- If a child brings their phone to the school, then on arrival it should be switched off and kept out of sight, for example in a bag. It should not be seen or heard (including vibrate) throughout the school day.
 - The phone can be switched back on upon leaving the school site. Not before and not during any period of social time (break or lunch)
 - Any child found using or known to have used their phone during the school day will have the phone confiscated and returned at 3:00p.m. via the focus room. Parents will be informed. Children will be asked to sign for their phone.
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- If the child is a repeat offender, the school will request a parent/carer to either come in and collect the phone from the school or have a phone conversation with the Head of Year before the phone is returned to the child.
- Any refusal to hand a phone over to members of staff will result in a follow up sanction in line with the school's Behaviour Policy. This would constitute the refusal of a reasonable request by a member of staff.

9. 4.2 Acceptable usage

The Headteacher reserves the right to allow phones for students given individual circumstances i.e., medical usage.

Staff will be made aware of these students.

10. 4.3 Contacting Children and Parents/Carers

In non-urgent situations, parents wishing to contact their child during the school day should ring the school. We have a well-established and efficient system for getting messages to children and pastoral support if it is needed. Children who need to contact parents during the course of the school day should speak to Student Services or their Head of Year, who will support.

11. 4.4 Sanctions

If a phone is seen or heard by a member of staff, it will be confiscated. Schools are permitted to confiscate phones from children under sections 91 and 94 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006.

Once confiscated, this will be placed securely in the focus room where the child will be allowed to sign for and collect it at 3:00pm. On a second occasion, a parent will be contacted for a conversation before the phone is returned to the child. This will happen on the same day.

If a child has their mobile phone repeatedly confiscated, we will request a parent or carer collects it and a meeting takes place with the Head of Year. The behaviour system will be followed and escalated.

If we 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, staff have the power to search children's phones, as set out in the DfE's guidance on searching, screening, and confiscation. This will always be done by the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). Certain types of conduct, bullying or harassment can be classified as criminal conduct. The school takes such conduct extremely seriously and will involve the police or other agencies as appropriate. Such conduct includes, but is not limited to sexting, 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.

12. 5. Loss, theft, or damage

Children bringing phones to school must ensure that phones are stored securely and out of sight when not in use. Children must secure their phones as much as possible, including using passwords or pin codes to protect access to the phone's functions.

Where a mobile phone is brought into school, it is entirely at the child's and parents' own risk. The school accepts no responsibility for the loss, theft or damage of any phone or electronic device brought into school. (Ref: Section 94, Education, and Inspections Act 2006 states that "where a teacher disciplines a pupil by confiscating an item, neither the teacher nor the school will be liable for any loss or damage to that item"). Equally, there is no statutory liability on schools for items that go missing in other ways. Confiscated phones



will be stored in the focus room in a secure location and must be signed out by the child or parent/carer upon return.

