Mobile Phone Policy

Prepared by: The Central Team

Localised by: Burlington House School

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1. INTRODUCTION

Burlington House School is owned and operated by Cavendish Education.

In all Burlington House School policies, the words "Burlington House School" refer to both Burlington House Bishops Avenue Campus and Burlington House Sixth Form Campus unless stated otherwise.

This policy is one of a series of school policies that, taken together, are designed to form a comprehensive statement of the school's aspiration to provide an outstanding education for each of its students and of the mechanisms and procedures in place to achieve this. Accordingly, this policy should be read alongside these policies. In particular, it should be read in conjunction with the policies covering equality and diversity, Health and Safety, safeguarding and child protection.

All of these policies have been written, not simply to meet statutory and other requirements, but to enable and evidence the work that the whole school is undertaking to ensure the implementation of its core values: that all children can achieve.

While this current policy document may be referred to elsewhere in Burlington House School documentation, including particulars of employment, it is non-contractual.

In the school's policies, unless the specific context requires otherwise, the word "parent" is used in terms of Section 576 of the Education Act 1996, which states that a 'parent', in relation to a child or young person, includes any person who is not a biological parent but who has parental responsibility, or who has care of the child. Department for Education guidance Understanding and dealing with issues relating to parental responsibility updated August 2023, considers a 'parent' to include:

- all biological parents, whether they are married or not
- any person who, although not a biological parent, has parental responsibility for a child or young person - this could be an adoptive parent, a step-parent, guardian or other relative
- any person who, although not a biological parent and does not have parental responsibility, has care of a child or young person

A person typically has care of a child or young person if they are the person with whom the child lives, either full or part-time, and who looks after the child, irrespective of what their biological or legal relationship is with the child.

The school contracts the services of third-party organisations to ensure regulatory compliance and implement best practices for:

- HR and Employment Law
- Health & Safety Guidance
- DBS Check processing
- Mandatory Safeguarding, Health & Safety, and other relevant training
- Data protection and GDPR guidance
- Specialist insurance cover

Where this policy refers to 'employees', the term refers to any individual who is classified as an employee or a worker, working with and on behalf of the school (including volunteers and contractors).

The school is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff, volunteers, pupils and visitors to share this commitment.

All outcomes generated by this document must take account of and seek to contribute to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people at Burlington House School.

The policy documents of Burlington House School are revised and published periodically in good faith. They are inevitably subject to revision. On occasions, a significant revision, although promulgated in school separately, may have to take effect between the republication of a set of policy documents. Care should therefore be taken to ensure, by consultation with the Senior Leadership Team, that the details of any policy document are still effectively current at a particular moment.

2. AIMS

At Burlington House School our policy aims to:

- Ensure our environment is mobile phone-free by default
- Ensure the safe, responsible and lawful use of mobile phones, where applicable
- Provide clear guidelines for the use of mobile phones for pupils, staff, parents/carers, visitors and volunteers
- Support the school'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 school, such as:

- Risks to child protection
- Data protection issues
- Risk of theft, loss or damage
- Appropriate use of technology for learning purposes

Note: throughout this policy, 'mobile phones' refers to mobile phones and similar devices.

3. RELEVANT GUIDANCE

This policy meets the requirements of section 36 of the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act 2026, and the Department for Education (DfE)'s mobile phone guidance and behaviour guidance. Further guidance to be considered alongside this policy includes Keeping Children Safe in Education, which sets out the expectation that all schools should be mobile phone-free by default.

4. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

All staff (including teachers, support staff and supply staff) are required to actively enforce this policy and challenge any breach of mobile phone restrictions immediately and consistently.

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

The Designated Safeguarding Lead is responsible for monitoring the policy and reviewing it every year, and holding staff and pupils accountable for its implementation.

Staff will address any questions or concerns from parents/carers quickly, and clearly communicate the reasons for prohibiting the use of mobile phones.

5. USE OF MOBILE PHONES BY STAFF

The DfE's mobile phone guidance says that staff should not use their own mobile phone for personal reasons in front of pupils throughout the school day. All schools should be mobile phone-free environments by default: anything other than this should be by exception only.

Personal mobile phones

Staff (including volunteers, contractors and anyone else otherwise engaged by the school) are not permitted to use their personal mobile phone during the school day, while pupils are present or during contact time. Use of personal mobile phones must be restricted to non-contact time, and to areas of the school where pupils 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 personal reasons. For instance (this list is non-exhaustive):

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

The headteacher will decide on a case-by-basis whether to allow for special arrangements.
If special arrangements are not deemed necessary, school staff can use the school office number: Bishops Avenue Campus 020 7610 9018 or Sixth Form Campus 020 7610 9098 as a point of emergency contact.

Data protection

Staff must not use their personal mobile phones to process personal data, or any other confidential school information, including entering such data into generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools such as chatbots (e.g. ChatGPT and Google Gemini). More details can be found in our Artificial Intelligence policy.

Safeguarding

Staff must not give their personal contact details to parents/carers or pupils, including by 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 pupils.

More details can be found in our Use of Social Media Policy.

Staff must not use their personal mobile phones to take photographs or recordings of pupils, their work, or anything else that could identify a pupil. If it's necessary to take photos or recordings as part of a lesson/school trip/activity, this must be done using school equipment, for example a Trips phone.

Using personal mobiles for work purposes

In some circumstances, it may be appropriate for staff to use personal mobile phones or a similar device during the school day in front of pupils for work. Such circumstances may include, but are not limited to:

- Issuing homework, rewards or sanctions
- Use of multi-factor authentication
- Emergency evacuations

- Supervising off-site trips
- Supervising residential visits

For educational visits Staff may use personal phones to liaise with other staff. For contact with Parents/Guardians a Trips phone must be used.

In these circumstances, staff will:
- Use their mobile phones appropriately and professionally, in line with our staff code of conduct
- Not use their phones to take photographs or recordings of pupils, their work, or anything else that could identify a pupil
- Refrain from using their phones to contact parents/carers. If necessary, contact must be made via the school office

Work phones

Some members of staff are provided with a mobile phone by the school for work purposes.
Only authorised staff are permitted to use school phones, and access to the phone must not be provided to anyone without authorisation.

Staff must:
- Only use school phone functions for work purposes, including making/receiving calls, sending/receiving emails or other communications, or using the internet
- Make sure that all communication and conduct linked to the device is appropriate and professional at all times, in line with our staff code of conduct

Sanctions
Staff who fail to adhere to this policy may face disciplinary action.

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

6. USE OF MOBILE PHONES BY PUPILS

Pupils must not use their mobile phones during the school day, including during lessons, in the time between lessons, at breaktimes and at lunchtimes, unless explicitly authorised by a member of staff (for example, for a specific medical reason).

- At the Bishops Avenue Campus, phones are collected by staff and placed in a phone safe during form times (8:20-8:40am). If a pupil arrives before this time they are permitted to keep the phone on them in person but cannot use it.
- At the Sixth Form Campus, students may keep their phones on them but they are not to be used in lessons unless explicit consent has been given by the Teacher. Students may use their phones in common areas during undirected time.

There may be exceptions made to these rules for students with relevant medical or health needs.

Pupils will be taught the risks that are associated with the use of mobile phones, both in school and more broadly, to make sure they understand the decision to prohibit the use of mobile phones throughout the school day. These risks can include a loss of focus in lessons, classroom disruption and an increase in bullying. Pupils will be encouraged to see a mobile-phone-free environment as desirable and valuable.

Use of smartwatches by pupils

The DfE's statutory mobile phones guidance includes in the term 'mobile phones' all devices with communications and smart technology that the school chooses to include in its policy.

Smartwatches are wristwatches with smart technology in them. They can be used to tell the time, send and receive text and voice messages, make calls and listen to music. Some smartwatches have wellness and health-related features.

- At the Bishops Avenue Campus, smart watches are collected by staff and placed in a phone safe (same as above).
- At the Sixth Form Campus, students may keep their smartwatches on them but they are not to be used in lessons unless explicit consent has been given by the Teacher. Students may use their smart watches in common areas during undirected time.

Exceptions for special circumstances and for sixth-form pupils

Some pupils will be permitted to possess, or use, a mobile phone/smart device in school. For instance:

- Young carers who need to be contactable
- Pupils with diabetes who use their phones to monitor their blood glucose levels
- Sixth-form pupils

The school may permit pupils to use a mobile phone in school, due to exceptional circumstances or if they are in the school's sixth form.

In the case of permission due to exceptional circumstances, permission will only be granted where there is a documented safeguarding or medical necessity. To request such permission, pupils or parents/carers should contact the relevant Head of School.

Any pupils who are given permission must then adhere to the school's Acceptable use of IT policy for mobile phone use (see appendix 1).

Sixth-form pupils are allowed access to their mobile phones during the school day, to reflect their increased independence and responsibility, but must not compromise our policy on the use of mobile phones for other pupils.

Therefore, they are only permitted to use their mobile phones or smart devices out of sight of younger pupils, and during undirected time in common areas. Misuse of mobile phones or other devices by pupils in the sixth form will lead to sanctions according to our behaviour policy.

Sanctions

- Schools are permitted to confiscate phones from pupils under sections 91 and 94 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006)
- If they are confiscated within the Sixth Form, the phone is given to reception. Students may collect them after their last lesson of the day. Headteachers can confiscate mobile phones and similar devices for the length of time they deem proportionate, according to the DfE's guidance on mobile phones in schools

Staff have the power to search pupils' phones in specific circumstances, as set out in the DfE's guidance on searching, screening and confiscation. The DfE guidance allows you to search a pupil's phone if there is a good reason to do so (such as having reason to believe the phone contains pornographic images, or if it is being/has been used to commit an offence or cause harm to another person).
Be as detailed as possible so that staff, pupils and parents/carers all understand what steps should and will be taken if inappropriate content is found on a phone, or if inappropriate behaviour is suspected.

In each case, the sanction given must be reasonable and proportionate. The school will also consider whether:

- There are any relevant special circumstances (for example, age, religious requirements, special educational needs (SEN), disability)
- The pupil's behaviour may indicate they may be suffering, or at risk of, harm. If this is suspected, staff will follow the appropriate procedure set out in Keeping Children Safe in Education. This will include speaking with the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) or deputy, who will consider whether pastoral support, an early intervention, or a referral to children's social care is appropriate
- 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:

- Making or sharing nudes and semi-nudes, including images that are digitally altered or wholly generated using AI (such as 'deepfakes' or 'deep nudes')
- 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

7. USE OF MOBILE PHONES BY PARENTS/CARERS, VOLUNTEERS AND VISITORS

Parents and carers are encouraged to reinforce and discuss this policy at home as appropriate, including the risks associated with mobile phone use and the benefits of a mobile phone-free environment.
Parents/carers, visitors and volunteers (including governors and contractors) must adhere to this policy as it relates to staff if they are on the school site during the school day.

This means:

- Not taking pictures or recordings of pupils, unless it's at a public event (such as a school 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, when working with pupils or while children are present

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 school.

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

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

Parents/carers or volunteers supervising trips are also responsible for enforcing the school's policy for pupils using their phones, but must refer any proposed sanctions to a member of staff, as they do not have the power to search or confiscate devices.

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

8. LOSS, THEFT OR DAMAGE

Pupils bringing mobile phones to school must make sure that their phones are appropriately labelled, ready to be stored away securely, within lockers at the Bishops Avenue Campus, when not in use during the school day.

Pupils must secure their mobile 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 school accepts no responsibility for mobile phones that are lost, damaged or stolen on school premises or transport, during school visits or trips, or while pupils are travelling to or from school.

We provide a copy of your policy and disclaimer to new pupils and parents/carers and also link it on our school website.

Confiscated phones will be stored in the reception area in a secure location.
Schools that confiscate phones from pupils become responsible for the phone and can be held responsible for loss, theft or damage.

Lost phones should be returned to reception. The school will then attempt to contact the owner.

9. LINKS TO OTHER POLICIES

This policy is linked to our:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Behaviour Policy
- Data Protection Policy

10. CONTACT INFORMATION

For any questions or concerns regarding this policy, please contact the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

11. APPROVAL & POLICY REVIEW	
This Policy has been reviewed and approved by:	
Policy Approver(s)	Cavendish Education Board of Directors/Senior Leadership Team of the school
Storage Location	Online, hard copy in the school
Effective Date	September 2026
Next Review Date	September 2027

12. REVISION HISTORY

Version	Change	Author	Date of Change
1	First published	Cavendish Central Team	September 2026
1.1	Adopted by BHS	Burlington House School	September 2026

APPENDIX 1: TEMPLATE MOBILE PHONE INFORMATION SLIP FOR VISITORS

Use of mobile phones and similar devices in our school
Our school is a mobile phone-free environment.

- Please keep your mobile phone on silent/vibrate while on the school grounds
- Please do not use phones where pupils are present. If you must use your phone, you may go to the Staff room
- Do not take photos or recordings of pupils (unless it is your own child), or staff
- Do not use your phone in lessons, when working with pupils or while children are present

The school accepts no responsibility for phones that are lost, damaged or stolen while you are on the school grounds.

A full copy of our mobile phone policy is available from the school office.

APPENDIX 2: ACCEPTABLE USE AGREEMENT (STAFF) - SCHOOLPRO APRIL 2026