MOBILE PHONE AND SMARTWATCH RESPONSIBLE USE POLICY

RATIONALE
As a Church of England school, Balshaw’s believes that each person is made in the image of God, which implies that we should respect the dignity and uniqueness of the individual. We believe all pupils have the right to learn in an environment in which they feel safe, happy, and supported. This is to ensure that each individual is given maximum opportunity to achieve academic excellence and to be free from harm to use the talents God gave us to the full.

The widespread ownership of mobile phone and growing popularity of Smartwatch technology among young people requires that school, teachers, pupils, parents and carers take steps to ensure that mobile phone/Smartwatches are used responsibly at school. This Responsible Use Policy is designed to ensure that potential issues involving mobile Mobile phone/Smartwatch/ can be clearly identified and addressed. This will ensure the benefits that mobile phone/Smartwatches provide (such as increased safety) can continue to be enjoyed by our pupils whilst at the same time ensuring they do not interfere with learning.

Balshaw’s has established the following Responsible Use Policy for mobile phone/Smartwatches that provides teachers, pupils, parents and carers with guidelines and instructions for the appropriate use of mobile phone/Smartwatches during school hours and when on site.

Pupils, their parents or carers must read and understand the Responsible Use Policy as a condition upon which permission is given to bring mobile phone/Smartwatches to school. This is done by parents signing a letter on joining the school.

The Responsible Use Policy for mobile phone/Smartwatches also applies to pupils during school trips and extra-curricular activities both on the school site and off-site, unless alternative arrangements have been made.

CONTEXT
In order for this policy to be effective it is inextricably linked with other school policies. It should be read in conjunction with the following:

- Learning and Teaching Policy
- Behaviour for Learning Policy
- Child Protection Policy
- Attendance and Punctuality Policy
- Care and Restraint Policy
- Equality Policy
- Home School Agreement
- Anti-Bullying Policy

At Balshaw’s we recognise that personal communication through mobile technologies is an accepted part of everyday life but that such technologies need to be used well.

We understand that mobile phone/Smartwatches are owned by a significant number of pupils and recognise the need for parents to give their children mobile phone/Smartwatches 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 phone/Smartwatch gives parents reassurance that they can contact their child if they need to speak to them urgently.

We do not consider it realistic or desirable to prohibit phones/Smartwatches being brought to school, nor is it logistically possible for school to collect phones/Smartwatches in each morning and return them in the afternoon. It is the responsibility of pupils who bring mobile phones/Smartwatches to school to abide by the guidelines outlined in this document. The decision to provide a mobile phone/Smartwatch to their children should be made by parents or carers. It is incumbent upon parents to understand the capabilities or the phone/Smartwatch and the potential use/mis-use of those capabilities.

Parents/carers should be aware if their child takes a mobile phone/Smartwatch to school it is assumed household insurance will provide the required cover in the event of loss or damage.
It is our policy to allow pupils to have a mobile phone/Smartwatch with them in school under the conditions outlined in this policy. Despite this the use of mobile phone/Smartwatch does present a number of issues for us as a school. For example:

- The high monetary value of many phones/Smartwatches. They are a valuable piece of equipment prone to loss and theft.
- The integration of cameras into phones/Smartwatches leading to potential child protection and data protection issues with regard to pupils filming events, each other, inappropriately taking pictures of events/each other and using or distributing images inappropriately.
- The potential for mobile technology to be used to bully other students.
- The potential to use the phone/Smartwatch eg for texting whilst on silent mode in class.
- As a result of the increasing sophistication of mobile phone/Smartwatch technology most pupils carry a phone/Smartwatch which enables them to access the internet and bypass the school’s safety network.

**RESPONSIBLE USE**
Pupils are required to use phones/Smartwatches responsibly at all times.

1. The school is a workplace, and phone/Smartwatches can interfere with the atmosphere and good order of the workplace, even when in silent mode. Balshaw’s expects that phones/Smartwatches will be switched off and kept in bags/blazer during and between lessons. Phones/Smartwatches should be handed into the valuables box in PE before going into the changing room and before all examinations and in Inclusion.

2. Unless express permission is granted, mobile phones/Smartwatches should 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 between the hours of 8.30am (when the library opens) and 3.30pm or the end of the day if in clubs, activities or classes.

3. Phones/Smartwatches must always be switched off (not on silent mode) and kept out of view. If a member of staff sees a pupil using a phone/Smartwatch during school hours it will be confiscated by the member of staff. Also if a mobile phone is visible in a pupil’s blazer pocket it will be confiscated. If a pupil wants to look at the time he/she should wear a watch.

4. Mobile phones/Smartwatches must not disrupt classroom lessons with ring tones, music or beeping. Mobile phones/Smartwatches should be turned off during lesson time.

5. The Bluetooth function of a mobile phone/Smartwatch must be switched off at all times and not be used to send images or files to other mobile phones. This also applies to Smartwatches.

6. Mobile phones Smartwatches are not to be taken into changing rooms or toilets or used in any situation that may cause embarrassment or discomfort to other pupils, staff or visitors to the school.

7. Should there be more than one disruption to lessons caused by a mobile phone/Smartwatch, the responsible pupil may face disciplinary actions as sanctioned by the Headteacher. This may include a mobile phone/Smartwatch ban in school, detention or time in the Inclusion Unit.

8. Pupils must ensure that files stored on their phone/Smartwatches do not contain violent, degrading or offensive images. The transmission of some images/information can be a criminal offence and will be dealt with as such by the school. A fixed penalty notice can be issued by the Police for misuse of technology.

9. If a pupil breaches any of these rules, the phone/Smartwatch will be confiscated and given to the school office. The pupil will be given a receipt for the phone/Smartwatch. The phone/Smartwatch will be returned at the end of the day when the parent collects it or stored in the school office until this happens.

10. Pupils who bring a mobile phone/Smartwatch to school should leave it locked away in their locker/bag when they arrive. To reduce the risk of theft during school hours, pupils who carry mobile phone/Smartwatch are advised to keep them well concealed and not ‘advertise’ they have them.

11. Mobile phones/Smartwatches that are found in the school and whose owner cannot be located should be handed to the office.

12. The school accepts no responsibility for replacing lost, stolen or damaged mobile phones/Smartwatches.

13. The school accepts no responsibility for students who lose or have their mobile phone/Smartwatches stolen whilst travelling to and from school.
14. It is strongly advised that students use passwords/pin numbers to ensure that unauthorised phone/Smartwatch calls cannot be made on their phone/Smartwatch (e.g. by other pupils, or if stolen). Pupils must keep their password/pin numbers confidential. Mobile phone/Smartwatch and/or passwords may not be shared.

INAPPROPRIATE CONDUCT

1. Mobile phones/Smartwatches are banned from all examinations nationally. Pupils must hand the phone/Smartwatch to invigilators before entering the exam hall. Any pupil found in possession of a mobile phone/Smartwatch during an examination will have that paper disqualified. Such an incident may result in all other exam papers being disqualified.

2. Cyber-bullying is completely unacceptable, and will be followed up by the school as serious misbehaviour in line with our Anti-Bullying policy. Using mobile phone/Smartwatch to bully and threaten other students is totally unacceptable and will not be tolerated. Cyber bullying will not be tolerated. In some cases it can constitute criminal behaviour. If the use of technology humiliates, embarrasses or causes offence it is unacceptable regardless of whether ‘consent’ was given.

3. It is forbidden for students to victimise another pupil and use their mobile phone/Smartwatch to take videos and pictures of acts to denigrate and humiliate that pupil and then send the pictures to other pupils or upload it to a website or social media for public viewing. This also includes using mobile phone/Smartwatch to photograph or film any pupil or member of staff without their consent. In the event that this happens the pupil will be asked and expected to delete those images immediately and given a suitable punishment. It is a criminal offence to use a mobile phone/Smartwatch to menace, harass or offend another person and almost all calls, text messages and emails can be traced by the Police.

4. Any pupil who uses vulgar, derogatory, or obscene language whilst using a mobile phone/Smartwatch will be given an appropriate sanction.

5. Pupils with mobile phone/Smartwatch may not engage in personal attacks, harass another person, or post private information about another person using SMS messages, taking/sending photos or objectionable images, and phone/Smartwatch calls. Pupils using mobile phone/Smartwatch to bully other students face sanctions. (It should be noted that it is a criminal offence to use a mobile phone/Smartwatch to menace, harass or offend another person. As such, the school may consider it appropriate to involve the Police).

6. Pupils must ensure that files stored on their phone/Smartwatch do not contain violent, degrading, racist or pornographic images. The transmission of such images is a criminal offence. Similarly, ‘sexting’ – which is the sending of personal sexual imagery – is also a criminal offence. School will hand all such evidence to the Police.

SANCTIONS

Pupils who infringe the rules set out in this document will face having their phone/Smartwatch confiscated by teachers. If the phone/Smartwatch is being used inappropriately the pupil must give it to a teacher when requested. Failure to do so will incur a punishment.

On the first infringement of this policy the mobile phone/Smartwatch would be confiscated by the teacher and taken to a secure place within the school office. The pupil’s parent/carer will be able to collect the mobile phone/Smartwatch at the end of the school day. The location and form of the secure place will be one deemed appropriate by the Office Manager.

Any further infringements of the mobile phone/Smartwatch code of conduct may result in a ban on bringing a mobile phone/Smartwatch to school or a day in the Inclusion Unit.

At Balshaw’s we are fully aware that some types of harassing or threatening behaviour or communications could be a criminal offence, for example under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997, the Malicious Communications Act 1988, the Communications Act 2003 and the Public Order Act 1986. Under the Malicious Communication Act 1988, it is an offence for a person to send an electronic communication to another person with intent to cause distress or anxiety or to send an electronic communication which conveys a message which is indecent or grossly offensive, a threat, or information which is false and known or believed to be false by the sender. If school feel an offence may have been committed by a pupil in this way the Head teacher will seek guidance from the Police as to the next course of action.

As set out in the previous section, failure to heed the rules set out in this document may result in an alleged incident – of a serious nature – being referred to the Police for investigation. In such cases, the parent or carer would be notified immediately.

EMERGENCIES
If a pupil needs to contact his/her parents/guardians in exceptional circumstances they will be allowed to use a school phone/Smartwatch. If a parent needs to contact children urgently they should phone/Smartwatch the school office and a message will be relayed promptly.

Parents/carers are reminded that in cases of emergency, the school office remains a vital and appropriate point of contact and can ensure your child is reached quickly and assisted in any relevant way. Passing on messages through school reception also reduces the likelihood of disrupting lessons inadvertently.

**RESPONSIBILITY FOR MOBILE PHONE/SMARTWATCH/SMARTWATCHES**

School accepts *no responsibility whatsoever* for theft, loss, damage or health effects (potential or actual) relating to mobile phone/Smartwatch. It is the responsibility of parents and pupils to ensure mobile phone/Smartwatch are properly insured.

NB. The term ‘mobile phone/Smartwatch in this policy refers to any mobile phone/Smartwatch. MP3/4 player, IPods, IPads, Tablets, I-Watch or any other similar portable device or internet capable watch are not allowed.

This policy has been produced using guidance under Section 2 of the 2011 Education Act which sets out new provisions about mobile phone/Smartwatch and other electronic devices.

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