

## **GOSFORTH ACADEMY MOBILE PHONE USE POLICY**

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Most students use their mobile phones responsibly and many parents consider them to be an important tool to aid their son/daughters safety when travelling to and from school.

Additionally, mobile technologies are a great way to enhance learning. For example, pupils could use their video-capable mobile phones or cameras to:

- record an experiment and load it onto their computer in school (or home) for revision later;
- record an exercise in PE and Sport and then critically analyse movements;
- share a song that they have written in music with others.

However, as a general rule students are not allowed to use their mobile phones in lessons and while moving around school. We ask that phones are kept switched off while students are in the building and used in lessons only with the express permission of the teacher in charge. Phones must not be brought to external examinations.

For a minority of pupils, however, there are significant concerns over their safety, security and well-being either as victims or perpetrators of mobile phone misuse.

Pupils and their parents need to know:

- the age of criminal responsibility is 10yrs;
- it is a crime to:
  - harass or bully via a text or call;
  - take or show indecent photos of children;
  - set up an assault and then film it (i.e. happy slapping)
- taking a photograph without consent is an invasion of privacy and may be distressing to others;
- **students should not post photographs of others on Facebook without first gaining their permission;**
- once photos are sent to a website, they become impossible to track or delete;
- identifying clues in a photo could lead to risk of contact from strangers; and
- mobile and web-blogging can be dangerous if personal information is uploaded.

Location tracking services e.g. GPS can mean that it is possible for a stranger to pinpoint the exact location of a child's mobile – and therefore the child.

To use mobile phones safely pupils need to:

- respect their own and others' privacy;
- protect their identity and whereabouts;
- use their phones responsibly;
- agree with friends never to share each others personal details without permission;
- always report inappropriate, distressing and scary contact; and
- have an understanding of mobile phone and message misuse.

If staff become aware of any misuse of mobile phones, they need to:

- confiscate the phone and take it to the student office for safe keeping and do not allow students to remove the SIM card;
- not delete any inappropriate texts, messages or images.
- help and support pupils involved; and
- consult with the school's safeguarding officer about dealing with the matter through the school's own anti-bullying procedures.
- If a phone is seen in the building by a Main School student (Year 9, 10 and 11), it will be confiscated and returned at 2.40pm on a Friday.
- If a phone is seen in the building (outside designated areas) by a Sixth Form student, then a warning will be issued followed by confiscation until the end of the day.
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Approved by the Board of Trustees on 19 October 2023