



## **WOODFIELD ACADEMY**

### **MOBILE PHONE AND PERSONAL ELECTRONIC DEVICES POLICY**

Ratified on 4<sup>th</sup> November 2020

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### ***Statement of intent***

Woodfield Academy accepts that personal mobile phones are often given to pupils by their parents to ensure their safety and personal security and that personal electronic devices are a prominent feature in pupils' every-day lives.

Mobile phones, digital music players and other personal electronic devices have become more widely available. However, they present a number of risks and hazards to the welfare and safeguarding of pupils and adults at the academy.

As an academy, we must make a sensible and practical response to these risks. Directors understand that parents wish their children to carry a mobile phone for their personal safety whilst journeying to and from the academy, whilst pupils may wish to carry additional devices to school for other reasons.

The Mobile Phone and Personal Electronic Devices Policy is a standalone policy that addresses directly, the issues presented by these modern devices. However, the policy may be read in conjunction with the following other policies and documents:

- Woodfield Academy's **Code of Conduct**
- **Behaviour Policy**
- **The Home-School Agreement**
- **Acceptable Use Policy**
- **E-Safety Policy**

Other documents for reference:

- **Working Together to Safeguard Children** – (DfE 2015)
- **Sexting in Schools and Colleges: Responding to Incidents and Safeguarding Young People**  
(UK Council for Child Internet Safety)

## Key roles and responsibilities

- 1.1. The Board of Directors have overall responsibility for the implementation of the Mobile Phone and Personal Electronic Devices Policy and procedures of Woodfield Academy.
- 1.2. The Board of Directors have overall responsibility for ensuring that the Personal Electronic Devices Policy, as written, does not discriminate on any grounds, including but not limited to ethnicity/national origin, culture, religion, gender, disability or sexual orientation.
- 1.3. The Board of Directors have overall responsibility for reviewing the Personal Electronic Devices Policy **annually**, in light of the rapidity of technological developments and social media applications.
- 1.4. The Headteacher has responsibility for handling complaints regarding this policy as outlined in the school's Complaints Policy.
- 1.5. The Headteacher will be responsible for the day-to-day implementation and management of the personal electronic devices policy and procedures of Woodfield Academy.

## 2. General Property

- 2.1. Pupils are responsible for their own belongings.
- 2.2. Exercise books, planners, text books, electronic equipment, stationary and folders issued by Woodfield Academy remain the property of the school and should be treated as such.
- 2.3. Pupils are responsible for replacing lost or damaged academy property, including electronic devices.

## 3. Mobile Phones and Personal Electronic Devices

- 3.1. Mobile phones and personal electronic devices include, but are not limited to, existing and emerging:
  - Mobile communication systems and smart technologies (mobile phones, iPhones, Smartphones, internet-enabled phones, smart watches, digital cameras, sound recording devices, etc.)
  - Personal Digital Assistants (PDA) (Palm organizers, pocket PCs, etc.)
  - Handheld entertainment systems (video games, CD players, compact DVD players, MP3 players, iPods, earphones, etc.)
  - Portable internet devices (mobile messengers, iPads, etc.)
  - Wireless handheld technologies or portable information technology systems (used for word processing, wireless internet access, image capture/recording, sound recording, and information transmitting/receiving/storing, etc.)
- 3.2. Woodfield Academy acknowledges the increasing use of portable technology as part of the curriculum and provides devices to pupils whenever the use of such technology is required, under supervised conditions.

- 3.3. Parents or carers should be aware if their child takes a mobile phone or personal electronic device to school and **must accept complete responsibility** for the device in question.
- 3.4. Woodfield academy accepts no responsibility for replacing lost, stolen or damaged mobile phones or personal electronic devices either at the academy, or travelling to and from the academy.

#### **4. Acceptable use**

- 4.1. **The use of mobile phones and personal electronic devices** (unless provided by the academy in supervised circumstances, as per point 3.2 above) **is completely forbidden during the school day.**
- 4.2. Mobile phones and personal electronic devices may be carried on the journey to and from the academy before and after school. However, **these items must remain in students bags on arrival at the academy and must not be taken out until students have left the academy grounds.**
- 4.3. Pupils are responsible for protecting their own property and personal information, including their phone number and electronic usernames or passwords.
- 4.4. Pupils may use a portable flash drive to transfer school work, if permission is granted by the relevant member of staff (the ICT Technician). This permission must be sought prior to any usage of such a device.
- 4.5. There may be occasions when pupils do have access to mobile phones or personal electronic devices. For example, they may have sports' fixtures after the end of the school day, or may have permission to take such devices on an academy trip or residential. In such cases, the principles of this policy will still apply, therefore pupils must ensure that they use technology responsibly.

#### **5. Unacceptable use**

There are **no** acceptable uses of mobile phones and personal electronic devices. However this policy states, for clarification:

- 5.1. As stated in 4.1, the use of mobile phones and personal electronic devices are forbidden during the school day. Therefore, such devices must not be used to make calls, send SMS messages, iMessages or emails, take photos or use any other application during school lessons and other educational and pastoral activities, or during break-times and lunchtimes.
- 5.2. Files or images must not be sent between mobile devices, to 'cloud' storage facilities or via social media under any circumstances.
- 5.3. The use of social media during the school day is completely forbidden.
- 5.4. Under no circumstances should pupils' mobile devices be present around the academy during the school day.

- 5.5. Under no circumstances should mobile devices be used in changing rooms or toilets.
- 5.6. Under no circumstances should mobile devices be used in classrooms or corridors.
- 5.7. Under no circumstances should mobile devices be used in social areas around the academy site, such as the dining hall, school yard or field.
- 5.8. Under no circumstances should mobile phones be taken into examination or testing situations.

## **6. Communication with Home**

- 6.1 If a pupil falls ill, or experiences a problem during school hours, they must not use a mobile device to contact parents or carers; they should use the standard procedure of reporting to a member of staff. **All contact home will be undertaken by the academy.**
- 6.2 If a parent wishes to contact a pupil during school hours, they must not expect to be able to do so via the pupil's mobile phone. Parents should use the standard procedure of ringing the academy's main number (01527 527081) and requesting to speak to their child. This request should be made only if the matter is urgent. It is perfectly acceptable to request that a message be passed on to a child, in more routine or mundane circumstances. **All contact from home should be undertaken via the academy main number.**
- 6.3 Communication regarding the academy's stance on mobile phones and personal electronic devices will be made via a letter to parents from the Headteacher, to be sent at the beginning of the academic year. (Appendix A)
- 6.4 In any instance of cyberbullying and/or any activity that threatens pupils' welfare or safeguarding, communication will be made with all the relevant parents as soon as possible, to inform them of the issue and ensure dialogue regarding the way forward and future action. This contact will not be made in cases where the contact may cause harm to a child.

## **7. Cyberbullying**

- 7.1. At Woodfield Academy, cyberbullying is taken very seriously.
- 7.2. It is recognised that cyberbullying, which often takes place via social media, occurs outside of school hours. However, any such activity, which threatens the social or emotional well-being of a pupil, impacts on their attendance or their academic progress at the academy, will be deemed as being in the interest of the academy and will be dealt with accordingly.
- 7.3. Incidents of cyberbullying will be dealt with and reported as per the Anti-Bullying Policy.
- 7.4. Incidents of cyberbullying that compromise the safeguarding of individual pupils, or groups of pupils will be investigated and dealt with as per the investigation checklist in **Appendix 2.**

- 7.5. As part of our on-going commitment to the prevention of cyber bullying, regular education and discussion about e-safety will take place as part of computing, PSHE and the academy's assembly programme.

## 8. Threats to Safeguarding

- 8.1. At Woodfield Academy, the safeguarding and welfare of the children in our care is of paramount importance.
- 8.2. Using the personal data, information or images of any pupil or member of staff for non-academy related activity is strictly prohibited.
- 8.3. Incidents involving the misuse of mobile phones or personal electronic devices, which compromise the safeguarding, emotional wellbeing or privacy of an individual pupil, or group of pupils, will be dealt with as a priority. This will include a full and robust investigation into the incident by a member of the Safeguarding Team and the Headteacher will be notified immediately.
- 8.4. In any such instance, following any disclosure or discovery of such activity, the DSO or Headteacher will ensure that the ensuing investigation follows the protocol stipulated in **Appendix 2**. This is to ensure that communication to all relevant parties is fluid and that there no barriers or distractions that hamper the sequence of investigation and actions of the academy in any way.
- 8.5. All pupils involved in the issue, regardless of whether they are the perpetrator or victim, will be interviewed and signed statements taken from each.
- 8.6. Parents of all parties will be informed of the matter as soon as possible and will be kept up-to-date with developments as the investigation continues (this is unless contact with parents places a child at risk of harm).
- 8.7. If at any point it is deemed that a child has been harmed, is at risk of harm or their welfare or privacy has been compromised, *whether this has been intentional or unintentional*, then Worcestershire Children First and the Police will be notified.
- 8.8. The wellbeing of any victim whose safeguarding, wellbeing or privacy has been compromised will be a prime consideration going forward and an agreed named adult will be on hand to provide emotional support going forward.
- 8.9. In instances where it is determined by the DSO or Headteacher that sanctions should be applied, these will be done so fairly and will be proportionate to the matter at hand. All cases will be assessed on their own merits.
- 8.10. As part of our on-going commitment to the prevention of safeguarding being compromised, regular education and discussion about e-safety will take place as part of computing, PSHE and the academy's assembly programme.

## 9. Spot checks

- 9.1. Spot checks for mobile phones and personal electronic devices will take place at the request of the Headteacher or as part of a targeted pastoral focus as planned by the Heads of Key Stage.
- 9.2. In any other circumstances, **any** teacher or staff member may ask any pupil to hand in or hand over their mobile phone or personal electronic device, if it is discovered on their person, or if its misuse is suspected.
- 9.3. If it is discovered that a pupil has a mobile phone or personal electronic device about their person or on the academy site, they will be requested to hand it in to reception immediately. Pupils are required to comply with this request immediately.
- 9.4. Refusal to comply with this request will lead to confiscation of the device. Further refusal to comply will result in the pupil being referred to a member of SLT. A final opportunity to hand the device over will be provided to the pupil.
- 9.5. Refusal to comply with the SLT request will result in a serious academy sanction being issued.
- 9.6. Should a pupil deny possession of a mobile phone or portable electronic device, a referral to a member of SLT will be made and the SLT member, in the presence of a colleague, may invoke the 'right to search' and will confiscate the device.
- 9.7. Confiscated devices will be stored securely by reception. In cases where threats to safeguarding are suspected, devices will be handed over to the Police.
- 9.8. When electronic content (such as images or social media content) is the focus of an investigation, such content may be volunteered to staff by pupils. This content, or awareness of such content, will be communicated directly to the DSO or Headteacher. Staff will not download, transfer or receive such content independently, in order to safeguard themselves from potential allegations.

## 10. Accessing Data

- 10.1. Downloading and accessing inappropriate websites and data on school/academy personal electronic devices is strictly prohibited.
- 10.2. Using the personal data of any pupil or member of staff for non-academy related activity is strictly prohibited.
- 10.3. More information about accessing data can be found in our Data Protection Policy.

## 11. Sanctions

- 11.1. Carrying or using a mobile device on the academy site is forbidden. Any pupil found in possession of such a device will immediately incur a Head of Key Stage restorative conversation.
- 11.2. Any pupil caught breaking the Mobile Phone and Personal Electronic Devices Policy will have their mobile device confiscated until at least the end of the day (but may be kept longer if the device cannot be collected as per 11.4).
- 11.3. Confiscated mobile devices will be stored securely in reception.
- 11.4. Confiscated mobile devices must be collected by the pupil's parent or carer.
- 11.5. Bullying via mobile device or social media will be disciplined in line with Woodfield Academy's Anti-Bullying and Behaviour policies.
- 11.6. Any pupil refusing to comply with the series of opportunities to store their phone in reception, or hand it over for confiscation will face a fixed-term exclusion from the academy.
- 11.7. Pupils who have caused distress or anxiety to others, or have jeopardised the wellbeing, privacy, or safeguarding of their peers or academy staff, will be issued with a serious sanction and may be subject to exclusion from the academy. The nature of the issue and the ensuing investigation will inform the Headteacher's (or Deputy Headteacher in his absence) decision as to whether such an exclusion is fixed-term or, in extreme circumstances, permanent. In all such cases, the police and Worcester Children's First will be informed and the case may be taken further beyond the sanctions imposed by the academy.

## 12. Policy review

This policy is monitored for effectiveness by the Headteacher and Senior Leadership Team and will be reviewed every **two years**, unless an urgent amendment or addition is needed.

## **Appendix 1: Notice to Parents (to be issued at the start of every academic year)**

Dear Parents and Carers,

### **Notification of Woodfield Academy's stance on the use of Mobile Phones and Personal Electronic Devices**

I am writing to you to make clear the academy's ruling on the use of mobile and electronic devices during the school day.

We understand completely that mobile phones, in particular, are a feature of personal security and you may wish your child to carry one on the way to and from school. These and any other personal electronic devices must be handed in to the academy reception office for safekeeping at the beginning of the school day, then collected at the end of the day.

Whilst we would all like to trust our children with mobile technology, the simple fact is that the temptation to use social media, take photographs and record audio and visual material in school time is too great. It is important to understand that some pupils simply cannot be photographed and their images shared for a whole host of reasons; threats and name-calling on social media platforms lead to huge distractions during the school day; in other circumstances, hi-jinks gone wrong can lead to misunderstandings, embarrassment or can compromise the welfare and safeguarding of our children – things we are not prepared to tolerate.

You need to be aware that the carrying, storage and certainly the use of such devices on the academy site are completely forbidden. Pupils found to be doing so will be asked to hand them in; refusal to do so will result in a consequence and confiscation of the item (to be collected by you in person). Misuse of mobile devices will be investigated thoroughly, could involve the police and may result in exclusion from the academy.

Furthermore, it is important to understand that Woodfield Academy will take no responsibility for any mobile phones or personal electronic devices that are lost or damaged on our site. These are expensive items that are brought into school entirely at pupils' own risk.

I would therefore urge you, as much as possible, to ensure that these items are left at home. Otherwise, I would ask you to instil in your child that they must follow the procedures stated above and hand devices in at the beginning of the school day.

Yours sincerely

Mrs S Powar  
Headteacher

**Appendix 2: Investigation Procedure to be implemented in cases whereby the safeguarding of a pupil has been compromised through the misuse of mobile phones or electronic personal devices:**

The following procedure will be followed in instances where the safeguarding, privacy or emotional wellbeing has been compromised due to the misuse of mobile phones or electronic personal devices.

The procedure represents a guidance checklist of actions that, when considered and implemented correctly, ensure that Woodfield Academy carries out its duty to safeguard children, performs its duty of pastoral care and maintains fluid communication with all stakeholders.

| Date Complete | Time Complete | Name (initial) | Considerations & Action Points  |
|---------------|---------------|----------------|---|
|               |               |                | Disclosure made, suggesting the welfare, privacy or safeguarding of a pupil has been jeopardised through the misuse of a mobile phone or electronic personal device. Disclosure must be recorded in writing.  |
|               |               |                | Alert the Designated Safeguarding Officer (Deputy Headteacher), or Headteacher immediately.   |
|               |               |                | The DSO, or Headteacher will consult with appropriate staff to allocate roles to the ensuing investigation and actions.   |
|               |               |                | If a member of staff was alerted to the disclosure, they will be interviewed and a statement taken.   |
|               |               |                | Interviews with all pupils' party to the incident will be interviewed and signed statements taken. These will include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The victim</li> <li>• The perpetrator</li> <li>• Any witnesses to the event, or recipients of electronic information or images</li> </ul> |
|               |               |                | The victim (and, if appropriate, the perpetrator) of the incident will be provided with a named member of staff through which they can receive on-going support, or can rely on as a point of contact throughout the investigation.   |
|               |               |                | Electronic hardware, such as the mobile phone or electronic personal device that was used during the offence will be confiscated until it is deemed safe to be returned (or it may be passed to the police).  |
|               |               |                | Parents of victims and perpetrators to be contacted <b>AS SOON AS POSSIBLE</b> to open dialogue regarding the incident and how the academy is working the way forward. Regular updates to be maintained.  |
|               |               |                | Risk assessment to be completed, taking into account the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vulnerability of the children involved</li> <li>• Coercion</li> <li>• Malicious intent</li> </ul>  |

|  |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|
|  |  |  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The type of information or images that have been shared (and whether these are deemed 'sexual' in nature)</li> <li>• How information or images have been shared and where</li> <li>• Why information or images have been shared</li> <li>• Whether there has been any consent to the information or imagery being shared</li> <li>• Impact on children involved</li> <li>• Age of the children involved</li> <li>• Additional vulnerabilities of all children involved</li> <li>• Has the perpetrator of the issue taken part in this kind of activity before?</li> <li>• Impact of the matter on the wider academy and its community.</li> </ul> |
|  |  |  | <p>Further to the immediate risk assessment, considerations to take into account prior to a referral to the police and/or Children's Services include:</p> <p>Adult involvement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coercion or blackmail</li> <li>• Extreme or violent behaviour</li> <li>• Are the children involved under 13?</li> <li>• Is there an immediate risk of further harm?</li> </ul>  |
|  |  |  | <p>If it has been determined that the welfare, privacy or safeguarding of a pupil has been jeopardised through the misuse of a mobile phone or electronic personal device (whether through malicious activity or otherwise), then the police should be informed via 101.</p>   |
|  |  |  | <p>If it has been determined that the welfare, privacy or safeguarding of a pupil has been jeopardised through the misuse of a mobile phone or electronic personal device (whether through malicious activity or otherwise), then Children's Services should be informed, as per the academy's Safeguarding Policy.</p>  |
|  |  |  | <p>Consequences or Sanctions applied by Headteacher</p>  |
|  |  |  | <p>Although contact will have been maintained with parents throughout the academy's response to the issue, the Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher will contact all parents to update them on final decisions regarding the academy's response to the matter.</p>  |
|  |  |  | <p>Issue reviewed by Headteacher, in collaboration with the Governing Body</p>   |

NB: This checklist does not represent an exhaustive list of considerations and actions, as each individual case will be dealt with accordingly on its own merits. In addition, the academy will continue to support individual pupils and supply the relevant information to agencies beyond the application of a final consequence or sanction.