



## Guidance on the use of mobile phones and other mobile devices

### Introduction and context

The School seeks to embrace all the benefits that modern technology provides for the education of its pupils, including the sense of security pupils and parents derive from the mobile phone as a means of staying in contact. At the same time, we fully recognise the potential that exists for electronic equipment to be abused and/or misused coupled with increasing concerns about the impact that excessive use of mobile phones and other technologies is having on the mental health, wellbeing and social development of young people. As a result it is essential that all members of the School Community adopt a consistent approach to addressing the concerns being raised in an increasingly digital age.

Following recent school surveys and discussions with pupils, teachers, parents & guardians, external input from Dr Aric Sigman and focused work in conjunction with the Mill Hill School Parents' Association we have developed an information and guidance sheet for pupils, parents and staff relating to the use of mobile phones at Mill Hill.

### Mobile phones in the classroom

The school recognises the value of technologies offered by mobile phones for teaching and learning. These technologies include camera function for documenting scientific apparatus, internet access for research, dictionary apps in Modern Languages and use of classroom voting systems. We also appreciate the benefits of mobile phone calendars and reminders for personal organisation. As such, teachers may permit pupils to use their personal mobile phones in a lesson for these functions.

However, the use of personal mobile phones for specific purposes does not mean blanket usage is then acceptable. Pupils should keep their mobile phones in their blazers or bags during lessons unless specifically asked by a teacher to use them. In addition, pupils should not use their mobile phones to listen to music when working in the Library, a Private Study period or other academic time such as a covered lesson.

At the same time, we are researching our approach to the introduction of larger devices in School that will allow pupils to work more formally on larger screens.

In January we rolled out our new learning platform, *Firefly*, to sit alongside existing online learning resources such as *Kerboodle* and *ActiveLearn*. *Firefly* will allow pupils to access prep tasks and learning resources, as well as view announcements relating to co-curricular activities, such as rehearsals and team practices. Many pupils have already downloaded the *Firefly* app to their mobile phones. This app is an organisational tool for quickly viewing prep deadlines, announcements and timetables; however all of this information can be more fully accessed via the desktop or tablet *Firefly* website. As such, we might expect pupils may quickly check when a particular prep is due via their mobile phone, but we would not expect pupils to attempt to complete home learning on their mobile phones. For any prep tasks requiring internet access we would recommend use of a desktop or tablet.

## **Policy relating to the use of mobile phones**

All pupils are expected to read the ICT Expectations and Guidance, Internet Code of Conduct and Pupil guidance for the Use of E-mail annually and sign the Pupil declaration confirming that this has been completed. Pupils are expected to adhere to the expectations set out below and all staff are expected to enforce the expectations consistently.

### **Key expectations:**

1. Mobile phones must be set to 'silent' and must not be used during lesson and activity time, including cover lessons, Tutor Periods and Private Study (PS) lessons, without explicit permission from a member of staff;
2. Phones may be brought out between lessons for reasons related to their school commitments e.g. checking their timetable/school e mail account but under no circumstances must they be used for recreational purposes. Pupils are allowed to use their phones, in moderation, in House and in the Sixth Form Centre;
3. Pupils are not allowed to use their phones around the school e.g. on corridors, in lunch queues or in dining venues (Dining Hall, the Refectory and Café 6);
4. Calls must not be made or taken around the School, alerts/ringtones should not be audible and having headphones/earphones on or inserted is not acceptable. Pupils who have a real emergency can call from House, the Sixth Form Centre or from one of the School telephones;
5. Music may be listened to in House areas and in the Sixth Form Common Room;
6. Headphones/earphones are not to be used when moving around the school site. Pupils are also strongly encouraged not to listen to music during journeys to and from School because of the risks to personal safety that this can generate;
7. Camera/video functions should not be used without explicit permission from staff, including concerts, plays and other School events;
8. Communications must not be sent/posted if they might be considered to be hurtful/offensive; the same guidelines apply as would apply to face-to-face communication;
9. Using photographic or filmed material of any kind to bully others will not be tolerated and will constitute a serious breach of discipline;
10. Posting any material (e.g. written comments, images, cartoons) which in the reasonable opinion of the Head is considered to be offensive and/or is intended to bully, harass or intimidate others on websites such as YouTube, Facebook, Twitter, Tumblr, Instagram, Snapchat, etc is a serious breach of discipline and will be subject to disciplinary procedures whatever the source of the material. This is the position whether the device used is a School device or one operated elsewhere, including the pupil's home.

Inappropriate use of a phone will lead in the first instance to confiscation with the phone/device/headphones/earphones being passed onto the Principal Deputy Head until the end of the School day, where it can be collected from the School office. Subsequent offences of a similar nature may lead to an additional sanction.

### **Boarding pupils**

The School understands the importance of access to mobile technology for boarding pupils and the protocols in boarding houses reflect this. However, it is important that boarders observe the safeguards in place and there are additional sanctions for those who do not e.g. confiscation of mobile devices overnight.

### **Mobile phones and other devices at home**

The guidance below, focusing on the principles of wellbeing, safety and responsibility, has been developed for Parents by the MHSPA and representatives from the School to recognise and tackle together the challenges faced by increasing use of mobile electronic devices.



**Mill Hill School Parents Association/School Guidance on the use of Mobile Phones at Home**

The most important factor is the need for parents and guardians to be good role models with their own use of mobile devices. We are not saying that teenagers should avoid using their devices in their leisure time, but we recommend that families negotiate a shared sense of judicious and controlled use. The factors below may be helpful to consider.

<b>1. Wellbeing : Combining the benefits of technology and wellness:</b>		
a)	Good Practice.....	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Screen-free meals</li> <li>○ Reduce screen time before bed</li> <li>○ Switch phone on airplane mode or place in another room whilst studying and sleeping</li> <li>○ Minimise double screening (phone, TV, laptop)</li> <li>○ Regular physical activity</li> <li>○ Consider hobbies in and outside of school</li> </ul>
b)	Resulting in better physical and mental health.....	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Better sleep</li> <li>○ More energy</li> <li>○ Fewer headaches</li> <li>○ Prevent likelihood of eye damage</li> <li>○ Reduce anxiety &amp; stress</li> <li>○ Improve control of impulsivity</li> <li>○ Less isolation</li> </ul>
c)	Supporting better conversations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Behaviours and life achievements. Bond over shared interests and enjoy face-to-face conversations</li> </ul>
<b>2. Staying safe: Encouraging young people to be “digital ambassadors.” Support young people to master the safe and secure use of the technology that is available to them</b>		
a)	Establish a trusting relationship and cover the rules	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Discuss the best ways of protecting their phone. Highlight to them that the phone contains significant information about them, you, your friends and family</li> </ul>
b)	Safety issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Ensure young people understand how to handle emergencies, safe surfing, downloads &amp; inappropriate content and driving.</li> </ul>
c)	Curb over-sharing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Over-sharing of information on social sites and other websites can lead to embarrassment, identity theft, privacy problems and bullying.</li> </ul>
d)	Looking after phone	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Designate a special pocket for the phone</li> <li>○ Keep phones locked using safe passwords</li> </ul>

**Some questions you may find helpful to consider discussing with a young person and other family members:**

- What do you plan to use the phone for?
- Is there anything you want to do that you don't know how to do?
- How do you download an app? Where do you go if you want to do that?
- What do you do if you get a text message or photo from someone you don't know?
- Do you know what is okay and not okay to post on social networking sites?
- Any time you click on a link, how do you check to make sure the website is safe?
- What do you need to do to make sure an app is safe?
- What do you consider good phone manners?
- When are you supposed to put your phone on silent, or turn it off? Why?
- Do you have any questions for me about your phone?