



UTC PLYMOUTH

Mobile Phone Policy

1. Purpose

- 1.1. The widespread ownership of mobile phones among young people requires that the College administrators, teachers, students, parents and carers take steps to ensure that mobile phones are used responsibly at the College. This policy is designed to ensure that potential issues involving mobile phones can be clearly identified and addressed, ensuring the benefits that mobile phones provide (such as increased safety) can continue to be enjoyed by our students.
- 1.2. UTC Plymouth has established the following policy that provides teachers, students, parents and carers guidelines and instructions for the appropriate use of mobile phones during College hours.
- 1.3. Students, their parents or carers must read and understand the mobile phone policy as a condition upon which permission is given to bring mobile phones to the College.
- 1.4. The policy also applies to students during College trips, camps and extra-curricular activities both on the College campus and off-site.

2. Rationale

- 2.1. The College recognises that personal communication through mobile technologies is an accepted part of everyday life but that such technologies need to be used well.
- 2.2. Personal safety and security. Our College accepts that parents/carers give their children mobile phones 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 the College. It is acknowledged that providing a child with a mobile phone gives parents/carers reassurance that they can contact their child if they need to speak to them urgently.

3. Responsibility

- 3.1. It is the responsibility of students who bring mobile phones to the College to abide by the guidelines outlined in this document.
- 3.2. The decision to provide a mobile phone to their children should be made by parents or carers. It is incumbent upon parents to understand the capabilities of the phone and the potential use/misuse of those capabilities.
- 3.3. Parents/carers should be aware if their child takes a mobile phone to the College it is assumed household insurance will provide the required cover in the event of loss or damage. The College cannot accept responsibility for any loss, damage or costs incurred due to its use.

- 3.4. Parents/carers are reminded that in cases of emergency, the College 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 College reception also reduces the likelihood of disrupting lessons inadvertently.

4. Acceptable Uses

- 4.1. Mobile phones should be switched off and stored in specific holding areas for each year group during morning briefing, locked in the phone cupboard in each Mentor base or Reception for late students, and will be collected at the end of the school day. Parents/carers are requested that in cases of emergency they contact the College first so we are aware of any potential issue and may make the necessary arrangements. Students are encouraged to leave their phones, in the phone slots provided, throughout the day. The only students excused from this are students with diabetes monitoring applications that require their phones on them at all times.
- 4.2. Any student known to have used their mobile phone for bullying or accessing, viewing or distributing inappropriate material will have sanctions imposed at the Executive Headteacher's discretion up to and including a total ban on having their mobile phone in school.
- 4.3. Mobile phones must not be used in any manner or place that is disruptive to the normal routine of the College (see below).
- 4.4. Students should protect their phone numbers by only giving them to close friends and keeping a note of who they have given them to. This can help protect the student's number from falling into the wrong hands and guard against the receipt of insulting, threatening or unpleasant voice, text and picture messages.
- 4.5. The College recognises the importance of emerging technologies present in modern mobile phones e.g. camera and video recording, internet access, MP3 and MP4 playback, blogging etc. In the future teachers may wish to utilise these functions to aid teaching and learning and pupils may have the opportunity to use their mobile phones in the classroom. On these occasions pupils may use their mobile phones in the classroom when express permission has been given by the teacher. The use of personal mobile phones in one lesson for a specific purpose does not mean blanket usage is then acceptable.

5. Unacceptable Uses

- 5.1. Unless express permission is granted, mobile phones should not be used to make calls, send SMS messages, surf the internet, take photos or use any other application during College teaching hours.

- 5.2. The Bluetooth function of a mobile phone must be switched off at all times and not be used to send images or files to other mobile phones.
- 5.3. Mobile phones must not disrupt classroom lessons, so must be placed in provided slots during Mentor time at the beginning of the day.
- 5.4. Using mobile phones to bully and threaten other students is unacceptable. 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.
- 5.5. It is forbidden for students to "gang up" on another student and use their mobile phones to take videos and pictures of acts to denigrate and humiliate that student and then send the pictures to other students or upload it to a website for public viewing. This also includes using mobile phones to photograph or film any student or member of staff without their consent. It is a criminal offence to use a mobile phone to menace, harass or offend another person and almost all calls, text messages and emails can be traced.
- 5.6. Mobile phones are not to be used in changing rooms or toilets or used in any situation that may cause embarrassment or discomfort to their fellow students, staff or visitors to the College.
- 5.7. It is unacceptable to take a picture or encourage others to take pictures of any individual including students, staff and visitors without their permission. In the event that this happens the student will be asked and expected to delete those images.

6. Theft or damage

- 6.1. Students should mark their mobile phone clearly with their names.
- 6.2. Students who bring a mobile phone to the College should leave it in the storage box when they arrive.
- 6.3. Mobile phones that are found in the College and whose owner cannot be located should be handed to front office reception.
- 6.4. The College accepts no responsibility for replacing lost, stolen or damaged mobile phones.
- 6.5. The College accepts no responsibility for students who lose or have their mobile phones stolen while travelling to and from the College.
- 6.6. It is strongly advised that students use passwords/pin numbers to ensure that unauthorised phone calls cannot be made on their phones (e.g. by other students, or if stolen). Students must keep their password/pin numbers confidential. Mobile phones and/or passwords may not be shared.

- 6.7. Lost and stolen mobile phones in the U.K. can be blocked across all networks making them virtually worthless because they cannot be used.

7. Inappropriate conduct

- 7.1. Mobile phones are banned from all examinations. Students **MUST** hand phones to invigilators or leave their phone in their bags/lockers and place them in the designated area before entering the exam hall. Any student found in possession of a mobile phone during an examination will have that paper disqualified. Such an incident may result in all other exam papers being disqualified.
- 7.2. Students with mobile phones 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 calls. Students using mobile phones to bully other students will face disciplinary action. [It should be noted that it is a criminal offence to use a mobile phone to menace, harass or offend another person. As such, the College may consider it appropriate to involve the police.]
- 7.3. Students must ensure that files stored on their phones 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. Any such behavior will be reported to the relevant authority.

8. Sanctions

- 8.1. Students who infringe the rules set out in this document could face having their phones confiscated by teachers. If the phone is being used inappropriately the student must give it to a teacher if requested. Phones will be placed at Reception and can be collected at the end of the day.
- 8.2. On the first infringement of this policy the mobile phone would be confiscated by the teacher and taken to the College reception. The student will be able to collect the mobile phone at the end of the College day and a record will be made of the incident.
- 8.3. Any continued infringement of the mobile phone policy will lead to a meeting with parents/carers and may result in a ban on bringing a mobile phone to the College.

UTC PLYMOUTH POLICIES

VERSION CONTROL SHEET

Document - date reviewed	Summary of changes required
April 2015	New Policy
June 2019	Amendments and review
June 2021	Amendments and review
June 2023	Amendments and review
June 2026	Amendments and review