



## **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.
- 2.3. In a world full of technology, UTC wishes to support students with their face-to-face communication therefore the use of mobile phones are not allowed during school hours. Students are taught explicit oracy skills and encouraged to interact with their peers and staff members during social time.

## **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 reception remains a vital and appropriate point of contact and can ensure your child is reached quickly and assisted in any relevant way.

## **4. Acceptable Uses**

- 4.1. Mobile phones should be switched off and stored in specific holding areas for each mentor group during morning briefing. 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 directed 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 Headteacher's discretion. Any evidence of this, even outside of the school day, will result in a full investigation. We will not hesitate to involve outside agencies and/or the police if any criminal act is suspected or revealed.
- 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). This includes before and after school.
- 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.

## **5. Unacceptable Uses**

- 5.1. Unless expressed permission is granted, mobile phones should not be used to make calls, send SMS messages, access 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 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 ensure their mobile phone is clearly recognisable.
- 6.2. Students who bring a mobile phone to the college should leave it in their mentor phone box when they arrive, by 8:30.
- 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 students who lose or have their mobile phones stolen while travelling to and from the College.
- 6.5. 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.
- 6.6. 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. Any continued infringement of the mobile phone policy will lead to a meeting with parents/carers and may result in an exclusion or a referral to relevant agencies.

UTC PLYMOUTH POLICIES

VERSION CONTROL SHEET

**POLICY NAME: Mobile Phone Policy**

**Policy Prepared by: Jo Ware**

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