



# Acceptable Use of Mobile Phones Policy (Students)

## Document provenance

This policy was approved by

Approver: Education Committee

Date of Approval: June 2023

Executive Leadership Team (ELT) Owner:

Date of Review: June 2026

Director of Education

*Unless there are legislative or regulatory changes in the interim, this policy will be reviewed every 3 years. Should no substantive changes be required at that point, the policy will move to the next review cycle.*

## Policy purpose and summary

This policy sets out what E-ACT determines as the minimum Trust-wide expectations for acceptable use of mobile phones by our E-ACT students.

It sets out the expectations that all E-ACT academies should follow and enables our academies to set additional requirements in relation to their academy local context.

This Acceptable Use of Mobile Phones Policy must be read in conjunction with the E-ACT Behaviour, Anti-Bullying and Exclusions Policy.

## Related policies or guidance:

- Behaviour, Anti-Bullying and Exclusions Policy
- Online Safety Policy
- Social Media Policy

## Acceptable Use of Mobile Phones Policy (Students)

### 1. Introduction and Purpose

- 1.1. The widespread ownership of mobile phones among young people requires that Headteachers, leaders, administrators, teachers, students, and parents take steps to ensure that mobile phones are used responsibly in all E-ACT academies.
- 1.2. This policy is designed to ensure that potential issues involving mobile phones can be clearly identified and tackled, so that Trust-wide we ensure the benefits that mobile phones provide (such as increased safety) can continue to be enjoyed by our students.
- 1.3. E-ACT has established the following policy for mobile phones that provides teachers, students, parents and carers with specific guidelines and instructions for the appropriate use of mobile phones during academy hours.
- 1.4. This policy sets out Trust-wide expectations and Headteachers may decide to issue additional academy specific guidance pertinent to their academy context. Such guidance will however complement not conflict with Trust-wide expectations issued in this policy.
- 1.5. This policy also applies to students' acceptable use of mobile phones during academy excursions and other extra-curricular activities.
- 1.6. Students, parents, and carers should read this policy and the Academy's Acceptable Use of Mobile Phones Policy before students are given permission to bring mobile phones to the academy.
- 1.7. Academies should add to this policy in Appendix A, any academy specific guidance which is in addition to the requirements set out in this policy.

### 2. Use of Mobile Phones

#### 2.1. Acceptable Use

- 2.1.1. If students decide to bring a mobile phone to the academy, then they should either:
  - 2.1.2. If an academy has specific guidance pertaining to points A to C above, then academies must include that in Appendix A.
  - 2.1.3. It is for each individual academy to decide whether or not students may use their mobile phones at break or lunch times and in what areas of any academy this is permitted. This must be stipulated in Appendix A completed by each academy and only with direct permission of staff. This is to ensure safety for all of our E-ACT students.

2.1.4. If this is not stipulated, then as a Trust we expect that students will only be allowed to use their mobile phones before or after school and not on academy premises. The use of mobile phones at these times will be at designated areas to ensure only 'off-line' usage i.e., listening to music or playing downloaded games. 'On-line' usage such as SMS messaging, telephone calls and Facebook/other social media are not permitted. The camera facility is not permitted anywhere on the academy premises.

2.1.5. Students should protect their phone numbers by only giving them to friends and students should keep a note of whom 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.

## **2.2. Unacceptable Use**

2.2.1. All mobile phones must be switched off and kept out of sight during lessons.

2.2.2. Mobile phones must not be used in any manner or place that is disruptive to the normal routine of the academy.

2.2.3. Bluetooth devices must be turned off during the academy day and not used to exchange data.

2.2.4. Mobile phones must not be used or taken into changing rooms or toilets or used in any situation that may cause embarrassment or discomfort to their fellow students, staff, or visitors to the academy.

2.2.5. Should there be repeated disruptions caused by a mobile phone, the responsible student may face disciplinary actions sanctioned by the Headteacher.

2.2.6. Using mobile phones to bully and threaten other students is unacceptable and will not be tolerated at any E-ACT academy. In some cases, it can constitute criminal behaviour. All students must adhere to the E-ACT Behaviour, Anti-Bullying and Exclusions Policy and to the Code of Conduct that is specific to the E-ACT academy they attend.

## **3. Inappropriate Conduct**

3.1. Any student(s) caught using a mobile phone to cheat in examinations or assessments will face disciplinary action as sanctioned by the Headteacher.

3.2. As a Trust, E-ACT believes that all members of our Academies should be able to learn in a calm, safe and purposeful environment. Bullying behaviour is always unacceptable and will not be tolerated because:

- 3.3. Any incident of Cyberbullying (using the internet, games, mobile telephones, social networking sites which upsets someone else) is unacceptable. Students with mobile phone must 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. This also includes using mobile phones to photograph or film any student without their consent and taking 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.
- 3.4. Students using mobile phones to bully other students will face disciplinary action sanctioned by the academy.
- 3.5. It is important to recognise that 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. As such, if action as sanctioned by the school is deemed ineffective, as with all such incidents, the academy may consider it appropriate to involve the police.

#### 4. Sanctions

- 4.1. Students who infringe the rules set out in this policy document could face having their phones confiscated by staff. If confiscated the mobile phone will be taken to a secure place within the academy and the student's parent informed. Appropriate arrangements will then be made for the parents to collect the mobile phone.
- 4.2. Repeated infringements may result in the withdrawal of the agreement to allow the student to bring the mobile telephone to the academy.
- 4.3. Section 15 in the E-ACT Behaviour, Anti-Bullying and Exclusions Policy, sets out the steps that Headteachers can take if there are concerns that a mobile phone has been used to threaten, menace, or intimidate others or that the mobile may contain prohibited material.
- 4.4. Headteachers and staff authorised by them have a statutory power to search pupils or their possessions, without consent, where they have reasonable grounds for suspecting that the pupil may have a prohibited item. Section 15 sets out the Trust-wide policy for upholding the guidance set by the Department for Education (DfE) in January 2018' *Searching, screening and confiscation Advice for headteachers, school staff and governing bodies*<sup>1</sup>.
- 4.5. It is important to note that when an electronic device, such as a mobile phone, has been seized by a member of staff, the staff member can examine data or files and delete these where there is good reason to do so. There is no need

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<sup>1</sup> DfE January 2018 guidance, *Searching, screening and confiscation Advice for headteachers, school staff and governing bodies*

to have parental consent to search through a young person's mobile phone. In establishing good reason to do so headteachers and authorised staff must refer to the categories stated in the DfE 2018 statutory guidance as above.

- 4.6. If an electronic device that is prohibited by the Academy Code of Conduct has been seized, and the member of staff has reasonable grounds to suspect that it contains evidence in relation to an offence, they must give the device to the police as soon as possible.
- 4.7. Material that is suspected to be relevant to an offence should not be deleted before giving the device to the police.
- 4.8. If the staff member does not find any material that they suspect is evidence in relation to an offence and decides not to give the device to the police, they can decide whether it is appropriate to delete any files or data from the device, or whether to retain the device as evidence of a breach of the academy's behaviour Code of Conduct.

## 5. Theft or damage

- 5.1. Students should mark their mobile phone clearly with their names.
- 5.2. Mobile phones that are found in the academy and whose owner cannot be located must be handed to the academy reception.
- 5.3. The academy accepts no responsibility for replacing lost, stolen, or damaged mobile phones.
- 5.4. The academy accepts no responsibility for students who lose or have their mobile phones stolen while travelling to and from the academy.
- 5.5. 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. Responsibilities

- 6.1. It is the responsibility of students who bring mobile phones to the academy to abide by the requirements outlined in this Policy and any additional guidelines set by the E-ACT academy they attend.
- 6.2. The decision to provide a mobile phone to their children, should be made by parents or carers with respect to this Trust-wide policy and to the academy specific policy.
- 6.3. Parents must know if their child is taking a mobile phone to the academy.

6.4. Permission to have a mobile phone at an E-ACT academy while under the academy's supervision is contingent on parent/carer permission. Parents/carers should sign the required form issued by the academy and return it to the academy granting their permission. Parents/carers may revoke their approval at any time.

## **7. Monitoring and Compliance**

7.1. The Regional Education Directors (REDs) working with the National Director of Education (NDE) will ensure compliance with this policy and ensure that any additional guidance issued by Headteachers complements this policy. This means Headteachers can prescribe specific requirements of students in the acceptable use of mobile phones in and around their respective academies and such requirements should be published alongside this policy on all academy websites.

7.2. This policy will be reviewed on a three-year cycle or as required if there are legislative changes that inform changes we may need to make.

## Appendix A

**Additional expectations about the acceptable use of mobile phones at:**

**Name of E-ACT Academy:**

**Academy year:**

**As agreed by the Headteacher and Education Director on:**

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The information below sets our additional expectations about the acceptable use of mobile phones at our academy and this is in addition to the guidance issued in this Trust-wide policy.

All students must: