

Personal Devices Policy (Learners)

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Gretton School is owned and operated by Newcome Education, a subsidiary group of Cavendish Education.

This policy is one of a series of school policies that, taken together, are designed to form a comprehensive statement of the school's aspiration to provide an outstanding education for each and every one of its learners and of the mechanisms and procedures in place to achieve this. Accordingly, this policy should be read alongside all of these policies in order to ensure an awareness of the bigger picture. In particular it should be read in conjunction with the Equality Policy, the Health and Safety Policy and the Safeguarding Children and Child Protection Policy.

All of these policies have been written, not simply to meet statutory and other requirements, but to evidence the work that the whole school is undertaking to ensure the implementation of its core values.

In all the school's policies, unless the specific context requires otherwise, the word "parent" is used in terms of Section 576 of the Education Act 1996, which states that a 'parent', in relation to a child or young person, includes any person who is not a parent (from which can be inferred 'biological parent') but who has parental responsibility, or who has care of the child. [Department for Education guidance](#) considers a 'parent' to include:

- *all biological parents, whether they are married or not*
- *any person who, although not a biological parent, has parental responsibility for a child or young person - this could be an adoptive parent, a step-parent, guardian or other relative*
- *any person who, although not a biological parent and does not have parental responsibility, has care of a child or young person*

A person typically has care of a child or young person if they are the person with whom the child lives, either full or part time and who looks after the child, irrespective of what their biological or legal relationship is with the child.

The school employs the services of the following consulting companies to ensure regulatory compliance and the implementation of best practice:

- *Peninsula HROnline*
- *Peninsula BusinessSafe (Health and Safety)*
- *Carecheck (DBS)*
- *Educare (online CPD)*

This Policy applies to all learners of Gretton School and is shared with learners, parents and staff, including senior leaders, paid staff, volunteers and sessional workers, agency staff, anyone working on behalf of Gretton School, external agencies and members of the public.

1 INTRODUCTION AND AIMS

At Gretton School, the welfare and well-being of our learners is paramount. The aim of the Personal Devices Policy is to allow users to benefit from modern communication and other technologies, whilst promoting safe and appropriate practice, through establishing clear and robust acceptable user guidelines.

This is achieved through balancing protection against potential misuse, with the recognition that mobile phones, and other similar devices, can be effective communication and social interaction tools. It is recognised that it is the enhanced functions of many devices that cause the most concern, offering distractions and disruption to the school day, and which are most susceptible to misuse - including the taking and distribution of indecent images, exploitation, access to inappropriate materials and bullying. However, as it is difficult to detect specific usage, this policy refers to ALL personal mobile and communication devices.

We recognise that mobile phones and personal devices are part of everyday life for many children and that they can play an important role in helping learners to feel safe and secure; many are also used, both in school and at home, as incentives and as tools for self-regulation. Given this mixed picture of positive and negatives, Gretton School asks learners to:

- Have a clear understanding of what constitutes misuse
- Know how to minimise risk
- Avoid putting themselves into compromising situations
- Understand the need for boundaries and clear guidelines regarding the use of devices in school

The use of phones/other devices (inc. receiving/sending texts and emails) should be limited to the designated times as stipulated in the Devices Charter where a learner has opted for use of a 'dumbphone,' and not in class during lesson time. Smartphones and other personal devices that have data enabled (including WhatsApp and internet connection) cannot be used during the school day and must be handed in for safekeeping upon arrival. Learners will be respectfully asked to deposit their personal devices with class staff upon their arrival to school. Each learner will have a personal bag which will be located in a class box and locked away in storage during the school day and returned to learners as they leave to travel home. Learners who have a dumbphone will be respectfully asked to keep these in their bags during lesson time.

If a learner does not have a dumbphone, and there are circumstances where they feel they need to contact a parent/carer, the learner should make their class staff aware and they will be supported to make contact home.

Learners are not, at any time, permitted to use recording equipment on their personal devices, for example: to take recordings of other children, staff or visitors, or for sharing images. Legitimate recordings and photographs should be captured using school equipment only. Staff and learners should report any usage of mobile phones or devices that causes them concern to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or Headteacher.

In light of recent concerns regarding devices with batteries, Gretton School also requests the following in relation to the management of any personal phone or device in school:

- Devices should not be charged in school

2 CONSEQUENCES OF MISUSE

Personal devices not handed in upon arrival, or used in school at inappropriate times, during lesson times or without appropriate permission may be confiscated and returned at the end of the day. Learners will be asked respectfully to submit their personal device under this policy. If learners are unwilling to submit their personal device, parents/carers will be contacted to arrange a meeting to discuss the personal device use in school.

The request to submit personal devices sits within the school's wider policies around relational practice. The school aims to provide all learners with the best possible learning opportunities and the disruptive nature of mobile devices has led to the change outlined in this policy, together with new governmental guidance. As such, in the same way as the school manages ongoing disruptive or challenging behaviours, so too will the school address ongoing issues around mobile phone and personal device use.

Where mobile phones or communication devices are used in or out of school to bully or intimidate others, then the Headteacher or Designated Safeguarding Lead reserves the right to intervene 'to such an extent as it is reasonable to regulate the behaviour of learners when they are off the school site'. This may include conversations/meetings with parents, the safe storage of the personal phone or device whilst the learner is on the school site or the request to parents to install monitoring technology to ensure safe and appropriate usage.

The school also reserves the right to inform external agencies and at times may be required to do so, such as the police or local authority where the misuse could constitute an illegal activity, for example, bullying or harassment.