

**MALONE COLLEGE  
BELFAST**



**MOBILE PHONE  
ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY  
2020**

# ACCEPTABLE USE FOR MOBILE PHONES

## 1. Purpose

1.1. The widespread ownership of mobile phones among young people requires that school administrators, teachers, students, parents and carers take steps to ensure that mobile phones are used responsibly at schools. This Acceptable Use 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. Malone College has established the following Acceptable Use Policy for mobile phones that provides teachers, students, parents and carers guidelines and instructions for the appropriate use of mobile phones during school hours.

1.3. Students, their parents or carers must read and understand the Acceptable Use Policy before students are given permission to bring mobile phones to school.

1.4. The Acceptable Use Policy for mobile phones also applies to students during school excursions, camps and extra-curricular activities.

## 2. Rationale

2.1. Personal safety and security Malone 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 school. It is acknowledged that providing a child with a mobile phone gives parents 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 school 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.

3.3. Parents/carers should be aware if their child takes a mobile phone to school.

## **4. Acceptable Uses**

4.1. Students should protect their phone numbers by only giving them to 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.

4.2. The school 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.

## **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 school lessons and other educational activities, such as assemblies. Mobile phones are only to be used in the event of an emergency and with permission from a member of staff.

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 with ringtones, music or beeping.

5.4. Using mobile phones to bully and threaten other students is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. In some cases it can constitute criminal behaviour.

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 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 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 school.

## **6. Theft or damage**

6.1. Students should mark their mobile phone clearly with their names.

6.2. Mobile phones that are found in the school and whose owner cannot be located should be handed to front office reception.

6.3. The school accepts no responsibility for replacing lost, stolen or damaged mobile phones.

6.4. The school accepts no responsibility for students who lose or have their mobile phones stolen while travelling to and from school.

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.

## **7. Inappropriate conduct**

7.1. Any student/s caught using a mobile phone to cheat in exams or assessments will face disciplinary action as sanctioned by the Principal.

7.2. Any student who uses vulgar, derogatory, or obscene language while using a mobile phone will face disciplinary action as sanctioned by the Principal.

7.3. During school Students with mobile phones may not engage in personal attacks, harass another person, or post private information about another person using SMS messages, students should not be taking or sending photos or objectionable images. Students using mobile phones to bully other students will face disciplinary action as sanctioned by the Principal.

7.4 Failure to hand over a Mobile phone when requested will escalate the sanctions to Stage 2 immediately and a referral to Head of Year.

[It should be noted that it is a criminal offence to use a mobile phone to menace, harass or offend another person. As such, if action as sanctioned by the Principal is deemed ineffective, as with all such incidents, the school may consider it appropriate to involve the police.]

## **8. Sanctions**

8.1. Students will be given an initial warning prior to sanctions to put their phone away.

8.2 On the first infringement of this policy the mobile phone would be confiscated by the teacher and taken to a secure place within the school office. The student will be able to collect the mobile phone at the end of the school day and a record will be made of the incident. A letter will also be sent to the parent/carer to inform them of the incident. The location and form of the secure place will be one deemed appropriate by the management team.

8.3. On the second infringement the mobile phone would be confiscated by the teacher and taken to a secure place within the school office. Parents will be notified and the pupil will not be permitted to collect the phone without a parent/carer's consent. If a parent/carer is unable to attend the school they are permitted to phone and give verbal consent for their child to collect the phone and must speak to a member of the management team or student support. The incident will be recorded.

8.4. On the third infringement the mobile phone would be confiscated by the teacher and taken to a secure place within the school office. Parents will be notified and the pupil will not be permitted to collect the phone without a parent/carer present. After the third infringement the school will withdraw the agreement to allow the student to bring the mobile telephone to school.