Nether Stowe School

Be Respectful. Be Ambitious. Be Resilient

Personal Electronic Equipment Policy



Arthur Terry Learning Partnership

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1. Rationale

1.1 Whilst mobile devices are a useful accessory in 21st century modern Britain, we are finding that the dependency that students have towards their devices is detrimental to their education and to their emotional well-being. The government has recently recognised this and issued non-statutory guidance that prohibits the use of mobile devices through the school day. This is not to say that devices do not have a place in teenagers' lives, but at our school, to allow our students to be cognitively active and to allow them a small period of the day where face-to-face communication trumps any other form of communication, we will be making our school a device-free space using a pouch system. There are many other schools that have adopted this approach with great success, and the students in these schools have been overwhelmingly positive about the experience. We believe that phones have great utility, but we have also known that learning and social behaviour improve drastically when students are fully engaged with their teachers and classmates.

1.2 The school will be ensuring that students use a signal blocking secure pouch to store their phones and headphones. This will be used during their school day from when a student arrives at school until the end of the school day. Students are required retain their devices in their magnetically sealed pouch and carry them on their person throughout the day. The device remains the responsibility of the student.

1.3 Recent surveys conducted by schools to measure the effects of creating phone-free educational environments show that:

- 65% of schools saw an improvement in academic performance
- 74% of schools saw an improvement in student behaviour
- 83% of schools saw an improvement in student engagement in the classroom

1.4 The ATLP embraces the use of technology as an integral part of the learning experience. Students are provided with iPads issued by ATLP to support their educational activities. These devices are to be used in a meaningful, responsible, and monitored manner to enhance learning outcomes and maintain a safe digital environment. Non-ATLP issued devices cannot be monitored in the same way as ATLP-issued devices, and therefore their presence within the school environment is subject to specific restrictions outlined in this policy. ATLP issued devices are central to our learning futures strategy and are used in meaningful ways to enhance learning. All apps and communication on this school issued device are monitored and filtered by the school systems. This means that the safeguarding and student wellbeing concerns are mitigated and monitored as best as the technology allows.

2. Definitions

2.1 Mobile device: For the purposes of this policy please consider a mobile device to be any personal device that can be used to connect to the internet and social media platforms and/or make calls and send messages. Devices that play music without headphones are also covered under the term ‘mobile device’. This definition covers all mobile phones including non-smartphones.

2.2 Wearable devices: wearable devices include watches and heartrate/health monitors.

2.3 Headphones: any device that can be worn in the ear to play/listen to music.

3. Implementation

3.1 The system will operate in Years 7 to 11 inclusive.

3.2 Mobile devices and headphones are not to be used, heard or seen during school hours of 8.40am to 15.10pm. This time is extended until 15.40 and 16.10 for those specific pupils in detention each day. The policy also applies to those students attending extracurricular activities beyond the school day.

3.3 We understand that many parents wish to check that their child gets safely to and from school via tracking apps on smart phones. If a parent wishes for their child to bring a device into school then the device or earphones into school, they must secure their devices into their individual magnetically sealed pouch provided by the school.

3.4 Each morning, during the strong start line up, students will place their device and headphones into the pouch and seal it in front of school staff. The pouch will remain with the student in their bag throughout the day. At the end of the day, students will unlock their pouch and retrieve their device. Pouches will remain in school to avoid loss or theft. Students in afterschool detention will have their device pouch opened at the finish time of their detention.

3.5 Students arriving late or leaving early will pouch/unpouch their devices at the school reception.

3.6 Wearable devices can be worn and used to tell the time. However, if a member of staff suspects that wearable devices have been used for any other purpose i.e. used to send messages or make calls, or that they are being 'played with' when students should be completing learning activities then they then become a 'mobile device' and will be treated as such by this policy.

4. Enforcement

4.1 All staff are responsible for enforcing this policy.

4.2 The school operates a 'see it, hear it, lose it' policy. Any devices seen or heard should be confiscated immediately. No warnings will be given.

4.3 If a student is found with a device or has tampered with their pouch, the device will be confiscated and held until it is collected in person by a parent or carer. Parents will be informed of the confiscation by phone or email.

4.4 Deliberate damage or attempted damage to the pouch will result in a £15 replacement charge and a sanction in line with the school's behaviour policy. The definition of damage or attempted damage is any action that changes or seeks to change the aesthetics or functionality of the pouch.

4.5 Persistent violations of this policy will be treated as significant breaches of the behaviour policy and may result in fixed-term exclusion.

4.6 Between the hours of 8.40 and 15.10 mobile devices and wireless earphones not contained in a school approved pouch are a prohibited item (as per the school's behaviour policy). As such, the headteacher can authorise school staff to conduct searches in line with the government's

'Searching, Screening and Confiscation Advice for schools July 2022'. Please refer to the school's behaviour policy for processes regarding searches.

5. Exemptions

5.1 Exemptions will only be made in the most unique of circumstances. The most likely exception will be granted to students who require access to a device for a specific medical need. An example would be blood sugar monitor for diabetes. Written evidence will be required to support this adjustment.

5.2 In exceptional cases, for students with complex SEND or multi-agency involvement, reasonable adjustments will be made in consultation with professionals working with the student.

6. Trips and Visits

6.1 Educational visit leaders must consider mobile device supervision as part of their risk assessment and planning. The nature and duration of the visit will determine whether limited access is allowed or if pouches are used throughout. Details will be communicated in education visit letters. Pouch locking and unlocking devices can be taken on educational visits if needed.

7. Communication and Training

7.1 The policy will be implemented from September 2025.

7.2 It will be communicated to students, parents, and staff through the school website, assemblies, and letters home.

7.3 Staff will receive training to ensure consistent enforcement of the policy.

7.4 The SEND and pastoral teams will support students who struggle with the transition however all reasonable adjustments must be agreed with the school's SENDCo and be directly linked to a student's SEND need.

8. Complaints

8.1 There will be no appeals process for confiscations.

8.2 Parents may use the school's standard complaints policy if they wish to raise concerns.