



Atlantic Academy & Bideford College Mobile Phones policy

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This policy will be reviewed annually on or before September 2027

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1 Introduction

- 1.1 The Trust's strategy is aimed at creating a culture with high expectations of behaviour and establishing calm, safe, and supportive environments conducive to learning across academies.
- 1.2 This policy outlines the requirement that pupils will not have access to a mobile phone during school time. In drawing it up, the Trust has considered the Department for Education's statutory guidance on mobile phones.
- 1.3 This policy should be read in conjunction with the behaviour policy, safeguarding and child protection policy, online safety policy, SEND policy, supporting pupils with medical conditions policy and acceptable use of IT policy, all of which can be found on the website. It will be reviewed annually by the board of trustees.

2 Aims and objectives

By establishing a mobile phone-free environment, the Trust and its academies aim to:

- Maximise the quality of teaching and learning by removing digital distractions during the school day.
- Reduce the risks associated with mobile phone use, including loss of focus in lessons, classroom disruption, and an increase in bullying.
- Protect the wellbeing, mental health, and online safety of all pupils and staff.
- Provide an ethos and environment within which everyone feels safe.
- Safeguard pupils from harmful online content, exploitation, and child-on-child abuse facilitated through mobile devices.
- Encourage pupils to see a mobile phone-free environment as desirable and valuable, creating intrinsic motivation to support the school culture.
- Support staff in consistently enforcing expectations and modelling responsible behaviour around technology.
- Comply with the Trust's legal duties, including under the Equality Act 2010 and the Children and Families Act 2014.

3 Application of policy

- 3.1 References to mobile phones in this policy should also be taken to refer to other communications and smart technology which each academy has decided to include, including smart watches, wireless earbuds connected to a mobile phone, and any other

device with the ability to send and/or receive notifications or messages via mobile phone networks or the ability to record audio and/or video. Further detail on the scope of the policy is set out in the Annex.

3.2 This policy applies to all pupils on the academy roll. It also applies to all adults on site, including staff, governors, and volunteers, in so far as the provisions concerning role modelling apply (see section 4.4). It applies:

- On the academy premises during the school day, including during lessons, the time between lessons, breaktimes, and lunchtime.
- On academy-organised trips and residential visits (see also section 9).
- In any context where a pupil is wearing academy uniform or is otherwise identifiable as a pupil of the academy.

3.3 Where academies within the Trust operate a Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) scheme to facilitate the use of laptops or tablets for learning, such devices should be used in accordance with the academy's BYOD policy and ICT acceptable use policy. BYOD policies do not include mobile phones.

4 Roles and responsibilities

All members of the Trust community are expected to follow this policy and treat one another with dignity, kindness, and respect. Roles, responsibilities, and expectations of each section of the Trust community are set out in detail below.

4.1 Board of trustees

The trustees will work with the central team and the academy's senior leadership team to set the ethos and a set of core values that promote high standards of expected behaviour from pupils attending its academies. Trustees will monitor and evaluate the impact of the policy and will hold the CEO and principal to account for its implementation.

4.2 The chief executive officer

The CEO will ensure that this policy is applied consistently across the academy and will report back to the trustees on educational outcomes, behaviour management, support strategies, and early intervention for pupils requiring additional support.

4.3 Principal

The principal, with support from their senior leadership team, will ensure that staff are supported and up to date with policy changes. They will monitor how staff implement

this policy to ensure sanctions are applied fairly and consistently, and that searches are carried out lawfully.

4.4 **Staff**

All staff will:

- Consistently enforce this policy in a fair, proportionate, and non-discriminatory manner, taking account of any adaptations or reasonable adjustments agreed for individual pupils.
- Staff should not use their own mobile phone for personal reasons in front of pupils throughout the school day. This will empower staff to better challenge pupils to meet the academy's expectations and effectively enforce the prohibition of mobile phones throughout the school day.
- Confiscate mobile phones and devices in accordance with section 6 of this policy where a pupil breaches this policy.
- Record all confiscations and sanctions in accordance with the academy's behaviour recording system.
- Make reasonable adjustments for disabled pupils, as required.

4.5 **Parents**

Parents have an important role in supporting the academy's policy on prohibiting the use of mobile phones. Parents are expected to:

- Support the academy in the application and enforcement of this policy.
- Where they need to contact their child during the school day, contact the school office rather than the pupil's mobile phone directly, where staff will be aware of the academy's policy on relaying messages and facilitating contact.
- Inform the academy in writing of any medical condition, disability, or other exceptional circumstance that may require their child to access a mobile phone during the school day (see section 8).

4.6 **Pupils**

All pupils are expected to:

- Comply with the approach set out in section 5 of this policy.

- Not use or display a mobile phone or device covered by this policy during the school day, unless expressly authorised to do so under an agreed adaptation (see section 8).
- Understand the risks associated with the use of mobile phones, both in school and more broadly, including loss of focus in lessons, classroom disruption, and an increase in bullying.
- Hand over a device immediately when asked to do so by a member of staff.
- Not attempt to circumvent this policy, including by concealing a device or passing it to another pupil.

5 **Prohibiting use**

- 5.1 **[OPTION 3 - Phones brought to school but not accessed on site]** Pupils may bring mobile phones or devices within the scope of this policy onto academy premises but must keep them switched off (or on silent and in flight mode) and completely out of sight at all times and in a locker or bag during the school day, including during lessons, the time between lessons, breaktimes and lunchtime. Pupils must not access, display, use or handle their phone at any point during the school day.
- 5.2 Any phone which is seen, heard (including vibrating or ringing) or otherwise accessed during the school day will be confiscated immediately in accordance with section 6.
- 5.3 Bideford College applies this policy in full to sixth-form pupils, with the exception that sixth-form pupils in Year 12 and above in the sixth form common room only may access their mobile phone at lunchtime only/during designated free periods only, provided they do so within the designated sixth-form area and not in the presence of younger pupils. This exception does not apply where a sixth-form pupil is supervising or present with younger pupils. Sixth-form pupils remain subject to all other provisions of this policy, including sanctions.

6 **Sanctions & confiscation**

- 6.1 Schools can use a range of sanctions for breaching the mobile phone policy appropriate to their context, including confiscation, detention, and suspension, as set out in the academy's behaviour policy. All sanctions will be proportionate to the circumstances, and due consideration will be given to the pupil's age, any SEND, and any agreed adaptations under section 8.

7 **Searching**

- 7.1 The principal and staff authorised by them have a statutory power to search a pupil or their possessions where they have reasonable grounds to suspect that the pupil is in

possession of a prohibited item, or any item identified in the school rules as an item that may be searched for. Details are set out in the academy's behaviour policy, however, mobile phones and similar devices within the scope of this policy are identified as items that may be searched for.

8 Adaptions and reasonable adjustments

- 8.1 Whilst the academy prohibits the use of mobile phones throughout the school day to reduce distraction and disruption; we will consider and make reasonable adjustments where necessary under the Equality Act 2010.
- 8.2 There may be other exceptional circumstances where adaptations to this policy for specific pupils may be made, however, these are expected to be genuinely exceptional. This section does not provide an exhaustive list of exceptional circumstances, and the academy will assess each case on its own merits.

9 Outside of the school day

- 9.1 Where pupils are taking part in academy-organised activities outside the normal school day on academy premises (such as after-school clubs or school trips), this policy will apply unless the member of staff leading the activity has expressly confirmed otherwise for a specific and legitimate educational purpose.

10 Complaints and review

- 10.1 If parents have any concerns or complaints over the application or implementation of this policy, they should raise their concerns with a staff member or the principal in the first instance.
- 10.2 Any parent who believes that this policy has been applied unlawfully, or that a reasonable adjustment has been wrongly refused, may raise a complaint through the Trust's complaints procedure.

Annex 1 **Definitions and scope of "mobile phone"**

Device type	In scope?
Mobile phone (smartphone or otherwise)	Yes
Smart watch with mobile connectivity	Yes
Wireless earbuds/headphones connected to a mobile phone	Yes
Personal tablet/iPad with mobile connectivity (SIM-enabled)	Yes
Personal tablet/iPad (Wi-Fi only)	No
School-issued device	No
Medical monitoring device	No - subject to section 8