



Alloa Academy
Mobile Phone Policy
August 2024

Rationale

This policy has been introduced as a result of shared concerns regarding the negative impact mobile phones are having on learning within the classroom. A survey was issued to learners, staff and parents/carers in May 2024 and the feedback received was overwhelming.

There is also an abundance of research studies which clearly evidences the negative impact of mobile technology on our young people whilst in school. This includes recent international figures, released by the OECD's Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) which evidenced that around a third of pupils admitted to being distracted by phones in almost or every lesson.

In addition to this, in a further study by UNESCO, it has been evidenced that even having a mobile phone nearby when notifications are coming through is enough to break pupils' concentration, with one study showing that it can take up to 20 minutes to refocus on learning.

Some links to such research studies can be found below:

<https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2023/08/online-learning-digital-divide-mobile-phone-school-education/>

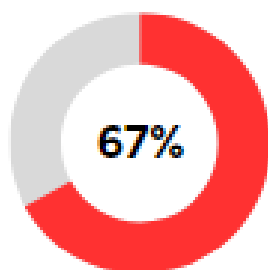
<https://www.unesco.org/en/articles/smartphones-school-only-when-they-clearly-support-learning>

Jonathan Haidt: Smartphones vs. Smart Kids <https://youtu.be/yVq4ARlINVg?feature=shared>

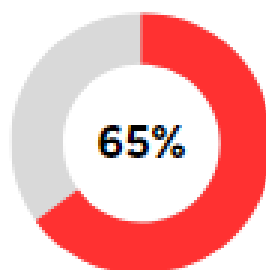
Some data from the surveys conducted with our learners, parents/carers and staff can be found below:

Quantative Data

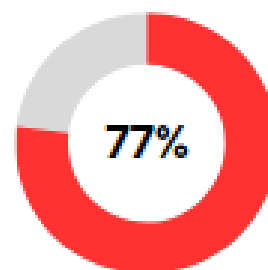
Learner Feedback



of young people feel that mobile phones disrupt their learning.

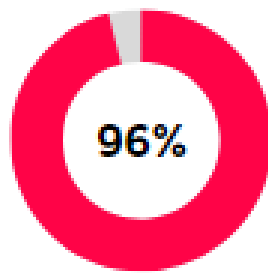


of young people reported hearing a phone beep, ring or make a noise in their lessons.

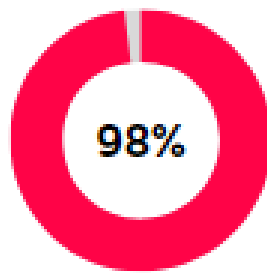


of young people reported seeing teachers having to stop lessons due to learners' inappropriate mobile phone usage.

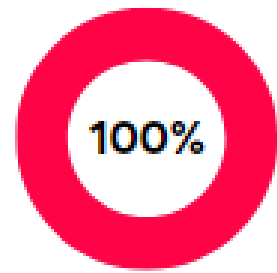
Staff Feedback



of staff reported that young people had their mobile phones on their desks or in sight in their lessons.

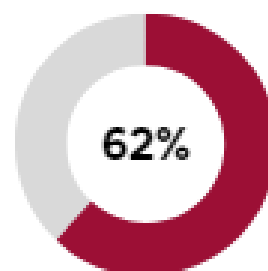


of staff reported challenges when asking a young person to put their mobile phone away/out of sight.

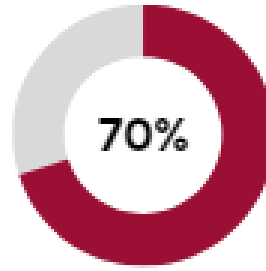


of staff reported seeing young people on their mobile phone between classes.

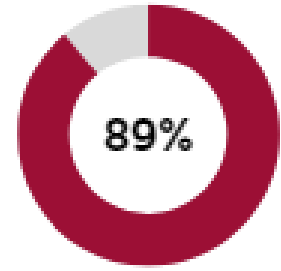
Parent/Carer Feedback



of parents/carers are concerned about their young person's use of their mobile phone at school.



of parents/carers are concerned that their young person is more engaged with their phone than their learning when in class.



of parents/carers do not feel their young person should be able to use their mobile phone as they please when in class.

Sample of Qualitative Data – Staff

Can you please detail below any ways in which you have experienced mobile phones causing a barrier to learning within your class room setting?

- Constant use during class/inputs/learning/tasks. Pupils texting to arrange meets at the toilet. Used to disrupt the class by pupils playing songs and sound on them. Playing games and not working. Taking calls from parents.
- Pupils taking calls, pupils making calls (few occasions) playing games, checking social media. It is all under the pretence of checking the time! Pupils will give you their phone as long as they know they will get back at the end of the period. More reluctant if they think it is going to the office. Pupils are much better now in leaving their phones when going to the toilet.

- Young people are distracted by their phone which pulls their attention away from the lesson taking place. Additionally, it can be used to communicate with their peers and this can result in them trying to co-ordinate when they go to the bathroom.
- Pupils can be disengaged due to phone use. If they are not on their phone, they are often distracted by it due to constant notifications - I have witnessed this when phones have been on my desk. There can often be a notification every few minutes. Occasionally when asking a pupil to put their phone away results in conflict as they refuse to hand it over.
- Pupils listening to music on air pods, sitting on social media/texting. In practical lessons, some pupils put phones in valuables box but some try to hide them in pockets, tucked into waistbands. They cannot perform to an acceptable standard as they are running/ moving trying to keep hold of their phones.

Sample of Qualitative Data – Parents/Carers

What would you like/expect to see in a whole school mobile phone policy?

- To make sure they are not using them in the classroom;
- No phones during lessons. Teaching must be hard enough without pupils blatantly ignoring by using phone;
- I think kids shouldn't have their phones in the class but should allow access to phones at break times.
- Banned from the classroom. I feel there is a need to take phone to school but not for use during class time. But as a working parent it's good to check on my son after school so needs his phone for that.
- Phones are switched off and away during class time or handed in to teacher/phone storage.

Sample of Qualitative Data – Learners

What do you think are fair expectations for teachers to have of pupils regarding their mobile phones in classes and corridors?

- We should have the ability to check phones during class change overs but phones shouldn't be seen in class unless asked by a teacher to have them out.
- Phones should be away during lessons no matter what. We should only go on phone to check our timetable at the end of the period.
- We should have them on silent and bare minimum in our pocket.
- No phone in classes and they should remain in pockets or bags. However, they should be allowed in corridors.
- I think in corridors it should be okay to have your phone out but not in class, as it is a huge distraction if the teacher is trying to teach. In corridors it should be allowed as its time before class to check if you have missed anything during class and also you can check your timetable.

Agreed Procedures

- All classrooms have the mobile phone policy poster displayed within their classroom and each classroom will be allocated a 'phone booth'.

- Teachers will remind learners at the start of **every class** of our new mobile phone policy and the need for learners to have their phone out of sight and on silent or off.

Learners will be provided with a chance to place their phone in their pocket or school bag at the beginning of a lesson if they haven't already put it away. However, it is the expectation that mobile phones are out of sight upon entry to each lesson.

Phones must be either in a learner's pocket or school bag.

A learner may choose to place their phone in the class phone booth at the start of a lesson so as not to be distracted by it. This is the learner's choice but they will only have their phone returned to them at the end of the lesson.

- Should a learner have their phone out at any point in the lesson without the permission of the teacher, the teacher will give them one warning to put their phone away.

- Should the learner not put their phone away upon this warning or bring their phone out again, they will be asked by the teacher to place their phone in the class phone booth.

- The mobile phone will remain in the class phone booth for the duration of the lesson. The teacher will return the phone to the learner at the end of the lesson. Learners should not approach the phone booth to retrieve their phone themselves.

- A mobile phone demerit will be issued to the learner by the teacher. Demerits are monitored by Guidance and Year Heads who will meet with the learner concerning their demerits and will contact home to discuss next steps with the learner's parent/carer.

- In instances whereby a learner requires to leave the classroom to access the toilet, their mobile phone must remain in the classroom. If not in their bag, a learner should hand their phone to the teacher who will return it to them once they are back in class.

- Should a learner refuse to place their mobile phone in the class phone booth when asked, the teacher should contact the Senior Leadership Team and the relevant year head will attend the class to remove the phone from the individual. The individual should report to them at the end of the class where appropriate action will be taken.

What is a Phone Booth?

A phone booth is simply a plastic box with different foam compartments in which a young person's phone can be placed in and remain visible but not accessible to them.

Research has evidenced that young people feel less anxious if they are able to see their phone in instances where they are unable to access them therefore, we feel this approach will meet the needs of our young people far greater than if the phone were to be placed in a drawer or sent down to the school office.



Exemptions

There will be a very small group of learners for whom they will be exempt from the mobile phone policy. For example, a learner with diabetes who uses their phone to check/regulate blood sugar levels. The names of those who are exempt will be communicated to staff.

Leaving Phone in Class – Toilets

With regard to learners leaving the classroom to access the toilet, learners are not permitted to take their mobile phone with them. Phones should remain in their pocket or bag or if it has been placed within the class phone booth, it should remain there.

Mobile Phones in PE

Within practical PE lessons please note the following:

- Learners are encouraged to bring their phone to class, once they are changed, and place their phone in the class phone booth. This will remain in the environment the lesson is being taught in or if the class are going outside, will be placed in a secure place.
- Learners who choose to leave their phone in the changing rooms within a bag or jacket do so at their own risk.

Mobile Phone Use in Corridors

Our new mobile phone policy currently only covers classroom use of mobile phones. Staff will remind learners of the new policy when in the corridor and will ask learners to remember to follow the policy and expectations wherein when going into class.

Emergencies

Should a parent or carer require to get in touch with their young person in the case of the emergency, we would encourage them to contact their young person's Guidance teacher or Year Head. In such occasions, this allows the school to support you and your young person and take the necessary action required. The main school office number is **01259 452 311**.

Will there be a review of this policy?

There will be an initial review of this policy prior to the October holidays with a fuller review conducted later in the session.