

Mobile Phones in School

The Department for Education has signalled a national move towards restricting smartphone use in schools. We have been ahead of time as far as this matter is concerned, the use of mobile phones has been banned in Moor Park for over twenty years, long before smartphones were ever invented.

We know parents want to keep in touch with their children and therefore whilst mobile phones are banned, we do this through a “never seen” policy. For over twenty years, our **“never seen”** mobile phone rule has been fully understood by pupils and families. It is very simple: **phones must be switched off and kept at the bottom of school bags at all times.**

We will be consulting parents next term, to seek their views on the possibility of moving towards a smartphone-free school, or to remain with the current policy and your voice will be essential in shaping this decision. However, we can only remain with the current policy if pupils follow it all the time.

Although our long-standing “never seen” mobile phone policy continues to work well *when pupils follow it*, over the last few terms we have seen a rise in mobile-phone confiscations. Pupils have been found:

- taking phones out in lessons,
- using them on corridors,
- taking them out on the yard,
- and in some cases, recording other pupils, which is extremely serious and breaches safeguarding expectations.

Sanctions from Summer Term onwards:

Phone “Seen or Heard” on school site	Sanctions
First time	Confiscation & 1.5-hour school detention
Second time	Confiscation & 1 day in isolation
Third time onwards	Confiscation & Suspension from school
Refusal to hand over phone or banned item	Suspension from school

Safeguarding children:

The school recognises that mobile phones present significant safeguarding risks when used in private and unsupervised areas such as toilets. Research highlights that children may misuse mobile phones to take photos, videos, or recordings, which is a known safeguarding concern and includes the misuse of camera and recording functions that can cause harm to themselves or others.

Evidence also shows that mobile phones increase opportunities for cyberbullying, including the taking or sharing of embarrassing images, which can have severe negative impacts on pupils’ wellbeing and safety. Furthermore, Department for Education guidance advises schools to prohibit the use of devices capable of recording audio or video throughout the school day due to the heightened safeguarding risks they pose.

While toilets are supervised at break and lunchtime, reducing the likelihood of misuse, they are not supervised during the school day. For this reason, any pupil who needs to use the toilet during lesson time (for medical or other authorised reasons) will be required to report to reception and

briefly empty their pockets to show that they are not in possession of a mobile phone before proceeding.

This measure ensures that pupils cannot take phones into unsupervised toilet areas during the school day and supports the school's duty to safeguard all children. Any breach of this rule will be treated as a serious safeguarding matter and dealt with in accordance with the school's behaviour and safeguarding policies.

Confiscation

Schools have a statutory power under the Education and Inspections Act 2006 to search pupils and confiscate items, including mobile phones, where there are reasonable grounds to suspect a breach of school rules or possession of a prohibited item.

Mobile phones are banned on site. They are not permitted to be out in lessons, on corridors, on the yard, or in toilets. If a pupil decides to get their phone out, **confiscation will happen**. This is not negotiable. When a pupil chooses to take their phone out in school, that is exactly what it is: **a choice**. And when pupils make that choice, there will be a clear consequence.

We appreciate that many pupils use their phones to store bus passes, and we understand that parents often want to be in contact with their children. This is precisely why pupils must keep their phones **in their bags and switched off**. If pupils follow the rule, **there will never be a confiscation**.

If pupils need to contact home during the school day, they can speak to a member of staff at break or lunch and use a school telephone. We do not leave children unable to contact parents, but we do expect them to follow the rules that keep everyone safe.

It is important that parents understand that it is not the school's responsibility if a pupil chooses to break the phone rule. It is the school's responsibility to **enforce** the rule. Staff are required to confiscate banned items, and we have the **legal authority** to do so.

Confiscated phones will **not** be returned on the same day. They will only be returned to parents or carers **by appointment**, during times when senior staff are available. This is because senior leaders have meetings, duties and training commitments after school. We will arrange the earliest possible appointment, but this will depend on diary availability.

We therefore ask that parents do not direct frustration at staff who are simply carrying out the school's safeguarding and behaviour policies. Instead, we ask for your support by reinforcing with your child the importance of not using mobile phones on school premises, and of following the rules that keep every pupil safe.

These changes are driven entirely by pupil safety, respect for others, and the need to maintain a calm and focused learning environment.