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### 1.0 Key Information

**Implementation:** It is the responsibility of line managers to ensure that staff members are aware of and understand this policy and any subsequent revisions.

**Compliance:** This policy complies with all relevant regulations and other legislation as detailed in the Compliance with Regulations & Legislation Statement.

**The term ‘phone’ in this policy denotes mobiles phones, iPods, iPads, MP3, MP4 players and any similar portable electronic devices.**

### 2.0 Introduction

**2.1.** The widespread ownership of mobile phones among young people requires that college administrators, teachers, young learners, parents and carers take steps to ensure that mobile phones are used responsibly at college. 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 young learners.

**2.2.** Syon Manor College has established the following Acceptable Use Policy for mobile phones that provides teachers, young learners, parents and carers guidelines and instructions for the appropriate use of mobile phones during college hours.

**2.3** The appropriate use agreement will be signed by all young learners who would like to be able to benefit from access to their mobile phones during college hours. Without this agreement young learners are not able to access these benefits during college hours and mobiles will be stored

safely in the college office from the moment they arrive until the time they leave on college transport.

**2.4.** Young learners, their parents or carers must read and understand the Acceptable Use Policy as a condition upon which permission is given to bring mobile phones to college. There is a student friendly acceptable use agreement provided for young learners to support their understanding.

**2.5.** The Acceptable Use Policy for mobile phones also applies to young learners during college excursions, camps and extra-curricular activities both on the college campus and off-site.

### **3.0 Rationale**

**3.1.** The College recognises that mobile phones, cameras and digital devices are now an integral part of our culture and can be of considerable value, particularly in relation to personal safety. However, balanced with this is the need to safeguard young learners and staff from cyber bullying, inappropriate use of the Internet and telecommunications, peer on peer abuse through sexual harassment and sexting, the use of mobile phones for non-consensual photography and the misuse of social media such as Twitter, Facebook, Discord, Snapchat and Instagram.

**3.2.** Personal safety and security-Our College accepts that parents/carers give their young learners mobile phones to protect them from everyday risks involving personal security and safety. There is also increasing concern about young learners travelling alone on public transport or commuting long distances to college. It is acknowledged that providing a young person with a mobile phone gives parents reassurance that they can contact their young person if they need to speak to them urgently.

**3.3.** The college also recognises that mobile technologies have a part to play in supporting independence for young learners and young people with complex communication needs. Many young learners at Syon Manor College use mobile based apps as a communication aid as part of their Augmentative & Alternative Communication (AAC) program. To this end, an outright ban on mobile devices would not be appropriate in our setting.

### **4.0 Responsibility**

**4.1.** It is the responsibility of young learners who bring mobile phones to college to abide by the guidelines outlined in this document and the guidelines they have agreed to on the acceptable use agreement.

**4.2.** The decision to provide a mobile phone to their young learners should be made by parents or carers. It is incumbent upon parents to understand the capabilities of the phone and the potential use/misuse of those capabilities.

**4.3.** Parents/carers should be aware if their young person takes a mobile phone to college. It is assumed household insurance will provide the required cover in the event of loss or damage. The college cannot accept responsibility for any loss, damage or costs incurred due to its use.

**4.4.** Pupils are responsible for keeping the college informed of their current mobile phone to aid return if lost on the college campus.

**4.5.** Parents/carers are reminded that in cases of emergency, the college office remains the first point of contact and can ensure your young person is reached quickly and assisted in any relevant way. Passing on messages through college reception also reduces the likelihood of inadvertently disrupting lessons.

**4.6** Parents/carers are responsible for ensuring that they check the content of their young person's mobile phone.

**4.7** The college reserve the right to check phones without the consent of the parents should they believe that there is evidence of inappropriate usage for example downloading of pornographic material or the taking of non-consensual video and pictures. Phones can be checked, and data deleted from phones should this be appropriate to do so however, data can also be downloaded or phones confiscated should this become a police matter, for example if sexually explicit photos are seen which have been passed between young learners like 'nude selfies'.

**4.7** Syon Manor College's internet filtering system ensure that young learners cannot access inappropriate content online.

**4.8** Some parents/carers choose allow their young learners data plans for the purposes of accessing the internet. The colleges filtering system does not allow for the blocking of unsavoury or inappropriate content. Parents are advised to choose a data plan that allows for parental filtering. The link below provides you information on Mobile providers who offer this service.

<https://www.uswitch.com/mobiles/guides/best-mobile-networks-for-kids-and-teens/>

**4.9** Parents should be aware that young learners using mobile phones to access inappropriate content or to take non-consensual photographs will not be allowed to have mobile phones on their person during the college day.

## **5.0 Acceptable Uses**

**5.1.** Mobile phones should be switched off and kept out of sight whilst moving between lessons. This supports young learners preparing for adulthood and the world of work. Parents/carers are requested that in cases of emergency they contact the college first so we are aware of any potential issue and may make the necessary arrangements.

**5.2.** Mobile phones should not be used in any manner or place that is disruptive to the normal routine of the college (see below).

**5.3.** Young learners should protect their phone numbers by only giving them to close friends and keeping a note of who they have given them to. This can help protect against 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.

**5.4.** The college 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. Teachers may wish to utilise these functions to aid teaching and learning and pupils will 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. The use of personal mobile phones in one lesson for a specific purpose does not mean blanket usage is then acceptable.

## **6.0 Unacceptable Uses**

**6.1.** 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 college lessons and other educational activities, such as assemblies. The college has developed a traffic light system to state when mobile phones can be used in the classroom.

**6.2.** Mobile phones must not disrupt classroom lessons with ring tones, music or beeping. They should be turned off during '**red lesson**' times

**6.3.** Using mobile phones to bully and threaten other young learners is unacceptable. Cyber bullying will not be tolerated. In some cases, it can constitute criminal behaviour. If the use of technology humiliates, embarrasses or causes offence it is unacceptable regardless of whether 'consent' was given.

**6.4.** It is forbidden for young learners 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 young learners or upload it to a website for public viewing. This also includes using mobile phones to photograph or film any student or member of staff 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.

**6.5** Parents are asked to monitor the activity of their young person's social media usage including WhatsApp, Messenger and other chat applications. They should ensure conversations are supportive of kind and supportive friendships and do not represent any conversations which could be interpreted as bullying. Should this be the case the college have the right to revoke mobile phone privileges based on the young person's agreement to the acceptable use policy.

**6.6.** 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 young learners, staff or visitors to the college.

**6.7.** Should there be more than one disruption to lessons caused by a mobile phone, the responsible student will incur a mobile phone confiscation.

**6.8.** It is unacceptable to take a picture of a member of staff without their permission. In the event that this happens the student will be asked and expected to delete those images.

**6.9.** Mobile phones are not permitted during morning break times, they are however permitted during lunchtime and AM regulation in designated areas, which are clearly outlined with visual mobile devices.

## **7.0 Theft or damage**

**7.1.** Young learners who bring a mobile phone to college should leave it in their bag when they arrive.

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

**7.3.** The college accepts no responsibility for replacing lost, stolen or damaged mobile phones.

**7.4.** The college accepts no responsibility for young learners who lose or have their mobile phones stolen while travelling to and from college.

**7.5.** It is strongly advised that young learners use passwords/pin numbers to ensure that unauthorised phone calls cannot be made on their phones (e.g. by other young learners, or if stolen). Young learners must keep their password/pin numbers confidential. Mobile phones and/or passwords may not be shared.

## **8.0 Inappropriate Conduct**

**8.1.** Mobile phones are banned from all examinations. Young learners are expected to hand phones to invigilators before entering the exam room. Any student found in possession of a mobile phone during an examination will have that paper disqualified. Such an incident may result in all other exam papers being disqualified.

**8.2.** Any student who uses vulgar, derogatory, or obscene language while using a mobile phone will face consequences in line with the college behaviour policy the same as they would should this occur in face to face interactions.

**8.3.** Young learners with mobile phones may not engage in personal attacks, harass another person, or post private information about another person using SMS messages, taking/sending photos or objectionable images, and phone calls. Young learners using mobile phones to bully other young learners will face disciplinary action. *[It should be noted that it is a criminal offence to use a mobile phone to menace, harass or offend another person. As such, the college may consider it appropriate to involve the Police.]*

**8.4.** Young learners must ensure that files stored on their phones do not contain violent, degrading, racist or pornographic images. The transmission of such images is a criminal offence. Similarly, 'sexting' – which is the sending of personal sexual imagery - is also a criminal offence.

**8.5** Young learners should be aware that 'upskirting' as outlined in the peer on peer abuse policy is the act of attempting to take photos under a person's clothing without them knowing, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm; o sexting (also known as youth produced sexual imagery).

## **9.0 Sanctions**

**9.1.** Young learners who infringe the rules set out in this document could face having their phones confiscated by teachers. If the phone is being used inappropriately the student must give it to a teacher if requested.

**9.2.** On the first infringement of the acceptable use agreement the mobile phone would be confiscated by the teacher and taken to a secure place within the college office. The student will be able to collect the mobile phone at the end of the college day and a record will be made of the incident for future reference.

**9.3.** Any further infringements of the mobile phone acceptable use agreement may result in a ban on bringing their mobile phone to college.

**9.4.** As set out in the previous section, failure to heed the rules set out in this document and the acceptable use agreement may result in an alleged incident – of a serious nature - being referred to the Police for investigation. In such cases, the parent or carer would be notified immediately.

**9.5** If a student has their device confiscated for the third time, the student's parents will be required to come to the college to collect the device. At this time, it will be discussed with parent/s if it is appropriate for the device not be brought to college for a designated period of time.