



Ashfield Girls' High School



“Each different. Each talented. All valued.”

Mobile Phone Policy

Author(s)	Mrs C Hoey (Assistant Vice Principal - Online Learning)
Adopted Date:	March 2025
Review Date:	March 2027





Contents Page

Page	Contents
3	Executive Summary
4	Section A – Aims of the Policy
5	Section B – Legislative Context and Linked Policies
6	Section C – Policy Procedures
8	Section D – Roles and Responsibilities
10	Section E – Consultation, Communication, Monitoring and Evaluation
Appendices	Appendix 1: Application of the Addressing Bullying Policy Appendix 2: Support Services



Executive Summary

The Ashfield Girls' Mobile Phone Policy aims to balance the benefits of mobile technology with the need for a focused and safe learning environment. While mobile phones can offer security and reassurance to students and parents, their unsupervised use can lead to risks such as bullying behaviour, classroom disruptions, and inappropriate online behaviour.

To foster a conducive educational atmosphere, the policy strictly prohibits the use of mobile phones during school hours, from 8:50 AM to 3:10 PM. Phones must be switched off and stored in bags, with silent or discreet settings deemed unacceptable.

Consequences for unauthorised use include confiscation of the device, which will only be returned at the end of the school day. Continued non-compliance may lead to further sanctions in accordance with the Behaviour for Learning and Positive Behaviour Policy.

However, the policy allows for supervised mobile phone use under specific circumstances, such as for medical needs or when directed by a staff member for educational purposes. In emergencies, students can access phones through designated school staff.

Ultimately, this policy is designed to safeguard student welfare, minimise distractions, and maintain a strong focus on learning. Ashfield Girls' High School is not liable for any loss, damage, or theft of personal mobile devices brought onto school premises.



Section A (Aims of the Policy)

Promote a Focused Learning Environment: To minimise distractions and disruptions in the classroom, ensuring that both teaching and learning can occur without interruptions caused by mobile phone use.

Ensure Student Safety and Well-Being: To create a safe and secure school environment, protecting students from the potential risks associated with unsupervised mobile phone use, including bullying behaviour and inappropriate online behaviour.

Establish Clear Guidelines for Mobile Phone Use: To provide clear rules regarding the acceptable use of mobile phones during school hours, ensuring that all students understand the consequences of unauthorised use.

Support Educational Objectives: To allow for the supervised use of mobile phones for educational purposes, enhancing learning experiences when appropriately integrated into the curriculum.

Facilitate Emergency Communication: To ensure that students can access communication methods in cases of emergencies or medical needs, while maintaining a structured process for such use.

Promote Responsible Technology Use: To foster a culture of responsible technology use among students, encouraging them to recognize the importance of maintaining focus on their education while using devices in a safe and supervised manner.

Clarify School Liability: To inform students and parents that the school is not responsible for the loss, damage, or theft of personal mobile devices, thus encouraging personal responsibility for such items.

Enhance Staff and Student Relationships: To empower staff to maintain a positive learning atmosphere by reducing the time spent addressing issues related to mobile phone misuse, allowing for more effective teaching and interaction with students.

Section B (Legislative Context and Linked Policies)

The Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (Northern Ireland) 2016
The Education and Libraries Order (Northern Ireland) 2003
The Education (School Development Plans) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2010
The Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995
The Human Rights Act 1998
The Health and Safety at Work Order (Northern Ireland) 1978
The Relationships and Sexuality Education (Northern Ireland) (Amendment) Regulations 2023
Equality Act 1995
Children's Services Co-operation Act (2015)
Special Educational Needs and Disability Order (2005)
The United Nations Convention on the Rights of a Child (1998)

DENI: Pastoral Care in Schools: Promoting Positive Behaviour (2011)
DENI: Every School a Good School (2009)
DENI: Every Child (2023)
ETI: Inspection and Self-Evaluation Framework (2017)
Children and Young Peoples' Emotional Health and Wellbeing Framework (2021)
Children and Young People's Strategy 2020-2030
Safeguarding and Child Protection in Schools (Updated September 2024).
DENI Circular 2024/14 – Guidance for Schools on Pupils' Personal Use of Mobile Phones and other Similar Devices During the School Days
DENI Circular 1998/25 – Promoting and Sustaining Good Behaviour in Schools: Summary of New Legislative Provisions
DENI Circular 2015/19 – Notification of Pupil Suspension to the Education Authority
DENI Circular 2024/1 - Guidance on Amendments to The Relationships And Sexuality Education (RSE) Curriculum Content
DENI Circular 2015/22 - Relationship and Sexuality Education Guidance
DENI Circular 2013/16
DENI Circular 2011/22 Internet Safety
DENI Circular 2013/25 eSafety Guidance
DENI Circular 2016/26 Effective Educational Uses of Mobile Digital Devices (currently under review)
DENI Circular 2016/27 Online Safety (currently under review)
SBNI Online Safety Hub <https://onlinesafetyhub.safeguardingni.org/>
Safer Schools App <https://saferschoolsni.co.uk/>
CCEA Digital for Life and Work <https://ccea.org.uk/learning-resources/digital-life-and-work>

Linked Policies

Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
Behaviour for Learning and Positive Behaviour Policy
Special Educational Needs Policy
Health and Safety Policy
Positive Behaviour Policy
Educational Visits Policy
E-Safety Policy
Pupil Wellbeing Policy



Section C (Policy and Procedures)

Mobile phones, alongside other forms of technology are changing the way and speed in which we communicate. They can provide security and reassurance for pupils and their parents; however, there are also associated risks - namely bullying behaviour, disruption to lessons and inappropriate web usage.

Use of mobile phones is prohibited, unless under supervision from a member of staff

- We believe that unsupervised use of a mobile phone, or similar device, does not benefit the learning and teaching experience. Staff and pupils have a right to teach and to learn in a school environment that is safe and free from interruptions or distractions from mobile phones and other devices when not used for educational purposes.
- As a result, the use of mobile phones is prohibited during the school day. Mobile phones must be switched off and kept in school bags during school hours i.e. between 8.50am and 3.10pm (including lunch and breaktime). Silent or discreet settings are not acceptable.
 - The use of mobile phones includes, but is not limited to, sending and receiving of text messages, engaging on any social media platforms, creating video recordings, sending emails or creating images, without permission.
 - During internal and external examinations pupils are not permitted to bring a mobile phone into the examination hall or room under any circumstances. If a student is discovered with a mobile phone in an external examination, her paper will be declared invalid and she will be awarded a zero mark.

Consequences of using a mobile phone during the school day

- A mobile phone, used without permission, will be removed from the student by a member of staff and sent to the main office. Items will only be returned at the end of the school day.
- Pupils who fail to follow these guidelines, will be sanctioned in line with the Positive Behaviour Policy.

Pupils should not take photographs, record or publish online images, audio or video content, of others, without their permission. We discourage pupils from sharing images showing their school uniform online, for safeguarding reasons. As per the Behaviour for Learning and Positive Behaviour Policy, this applies at all times whilst in school, when travelling to / from school in school uniform and whilst on Educational Visits.



Supervised use of a mobile phone is permitted in the following circumstances:

- For medical purposes; for example, to read or record blood sugar levels for pupils with diabetes.
- In exceptional circumstances where the need has been identified by SLT.
- When requested to do so by the class teacher for a limited duration, for educational purposes, which includes, but is not limited to:
 - Logging into MS Teams
 - Recording an important date, e.g. a class test
 - Taking a photograph of work from the board
 - Downloading an image / video clip for use in a class project
 - Using a quiz app as part of a lesson.

In case of emergency, or medical necessity

In the case of emergency or medical necessity, arrangements are in place for communication between school and home. Pupils may access the use of a phone via their Form Teacher, Head of Progress, or the School Office. The staff will continue to contact parents/ carers directly in the event of an emergency or sickness.

These measures have been implemented to safeguard the welfare of pupils and to enable staff and pupils to focus on learning, rather than staff having to spend an excessive amount of time following up on a range of pastoral matters linked to the inappropriate use of mobile phones, or other devices, during the school day.

Ashfield Girls' High School is not responsible for mobile phones, or other devices, that are brought into the school building and we will not investigate the loss, damage or theft of these devices.



Section D (Roles and Responsibilities)

Board of Governors:

- Have a written Mobile Phone Policy in place.
- Ensure that the expected standards of the Mobile Phone Policy are upheld.
- Ratify the policy and ensure that it is reviewed every two years, or when guidance changes.
- Monitor the effectiveness of the policy.
- Identify trends and priorities for action.
- Assess the effectiveness of strategies aimed at the misuse of mobile phones.

Principal:

- Has operational responsibility for the policy and its implementation.
- Ensure that the policy follows the appropriate DENI guidance.
- Ensure that staff are aware of the policy and its procedures.
- Ensure that the policy follows the appropriate DENI guidance.
- Provide professional learning opportunities.
- Ensure that the application of the policy is consistent and fair.
- Ensure that responses are provided, including by other staff, about any concerns about the misuse of mobile phones.
- Ensure the review of this policy, updating it when there is new guidance.

Vice-Principals:

- Ensure that the procedures outlined in this policy are followed – fairly and consistently.
- Ensure that Preventative Curriculum is being delivered, to ensure pupils are equipped to respond to challenges they may face.
- Support staff when dealing with mobile phone misuse concerns.
- Monitor and evaluate the policy's effectiveness and ensure that it is being followed.

Assistant Vice-Principal (Online Learning):

- Ensure that the procedures outlined in this policy are followed – fairly and consistently.
- Provide professional learning about the use of mobile phones.
- Guide the Pastoral and Personal Development Teams on the learning needed in relation to mobile phones and the impact of their use.
- Review the Mobile Phone Policy, updating it when there is new guidance released.



Staff:

- To demonstrate professional conduct.
- Are aware of this policy, linked policies, and their application.
- To be fair and consistent.
- Manage behaviour, including the misuse of mobile phones
- Should communicate the school expectations, routines, values and standards.
- To respond promptly to any concern raised by pupils or parents.

Parents:

- Should be aware of the contents of this policy (and linked policies) and support it.
- Encourage their child to display '3R' (respectful, responsible, ready) behaviour
- Encourage their child to follow the school rules.
- Should report any concerns they may have regarding the misuse of a mobile phone of their child, promptly, especially about potential bullying behaviour.
- Should report any concerns they may have regarding the misuse of a mobile phone of another child, promptly.
- Accept that rules at home may differ from agreed rules in school – school rules apply to all.

Pupils:

- Should be aware of the school rules, including the rules around mobile phone use – available in their planner.
- Should demonstrate the 3Rs
- Should be aware of the expected high standards of positive behaviour and how this affects the rights of others.
- Should report any concerns about the misuse of a mobile phone.
- Treat others with respect and value all members of the school community.
- Accept ownership of their own behaviour and learning and develop the skill of working independently
- Reflect on their own behaviour.



Section E (Consultation, Communication, Monitoring and Evaluation of the Policy)

This policy has been developed in consultation with governors, staff, pupils and parents.

The policy will be monitored via a range of methods. It is based on addressing presenting issues, established by a range of methods including following Department of Education Northern Ireland guidance, pupil surveys, pupil discussions, those raised at Student Council meetings and parent discussions.

The Mobile Phone Policy will be reviewed by all stakeholders and, if required, updated:

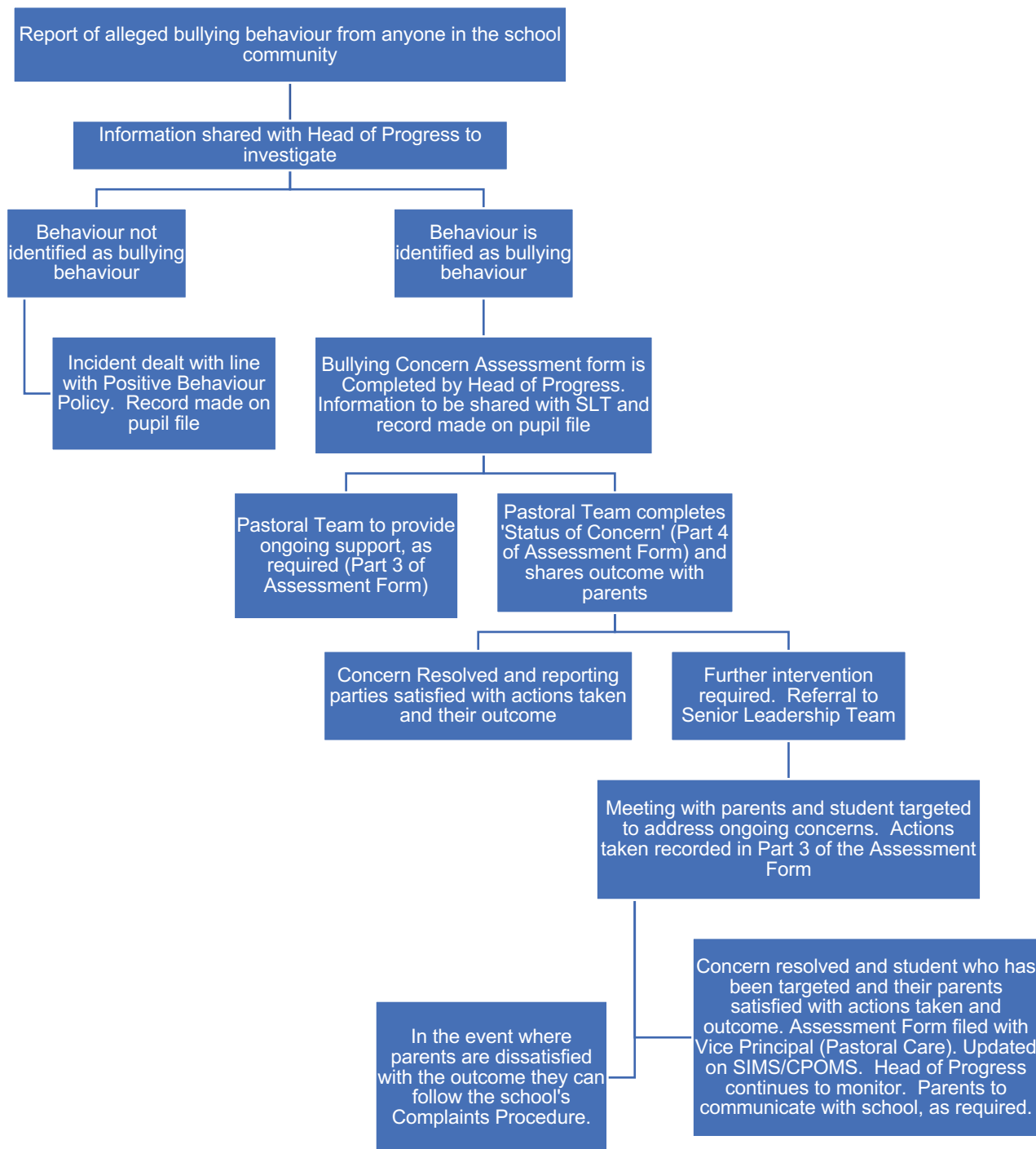
- following any incident which highlights the need for such a review.
- when directed to by the Department of Education Northern Ireland and in light of new guidance.
- Every two-years (as identified on the front cover of this policy).

To appropriately monitor the effectiveness of the policy, the Board of Governors shall:

- be updated regularly on any regulation changes, respective of behaviour in school
- identify current issues, trends and priorities for action.
- assess the effectiveness of strategies aimed at ensuring that pupils' needs are met in relation to mobile phone use.

Appendix 1 – Application of the Addressing Bullying Policy / Linked to the Misuse of a Mobile Phone.

Ashfield Girls' High School reserve the right to modify this process and/or stage of entry as deemed appropriate by the Senior Leadership Team or as circumstances require.



Appendix 2 – Support Services

Pupils and parents can contact the following organisations for information and support.

<p>Safer Schools App https://saferschoolsni.co.uk/</p>	<p>Kidscape 020 7730 3300 www.kidscape.org.uk</p>	<p>Familyworks Counselling 028 9182 1721</p>	<p>National Child Protection Helpline 0800 800 500</p>
<p>NSPCC Helpline: 0808 800 5000 www.nspcc.org.uk</p>	<p>Parents' Advice Centre 028 9023 8800</p>	<p>Parenting NI 0808 8010 722 www.parentingni.org</p>	<p>Lifeline 0808 808 8000 www.contact.org</p>
<p>Childline 0800 1111 www.childline.org.uk</p>	<p>CEOP The Centre for Exploitation and Online Protection www.ceop.gov.uk</p>	<p>Thinkuknow www.thinkuknow.co.uk</p>	<p>Kidsmart www.kidsmart.org.uk</p>
<p>Chat Danger www.chatdanger.com</p>	<p>Internet Watch Foundation www.iwf.org.uk</p>	<p>Urzone website www.urzone.com</p>	<p>Police Service of Northern Ireland 101 www.psnri.police.uk</p>





Challenging girls today; creating women of value in the future



Principal: Mrs Louise Hanvey BSc (Hons) PGCE, PQHNI, PGDH

Hollywood Road, Belfast
BT4 2LY

Tel: 028 9047 1744

www.ashfieldgirls.org
info@ashgirls.belfast.ni.sch.uk