Whitchurch High School
Ysgol Uwchradd Yr Eglwys Newydd

Acceptable Use Policy for Mobile Phones and Digital Devices

This policy applies to all digital devices, whether school-owned or personally owned, that are capable of connecting to the internet, storing data, or communicating electronically. This includes, but is not limited to, mobile phones, tablets, laptops, smartwatches, gaming devices, and any emerging or future technologies with similar capabilities.

Responsible staff members: C.Robson / S.Britt / N.John
Approved by Governing Body:
To be reviewed: Summer 2026 by SLT and Governing Body

Introduction

At Whitchurch High School, our vision is shaped by the journey of Alex, a fictional student who leaves us confident, resilient, and ready to thrive in a complex and ever-changing world. All stakeholder groups, (practitioners, learners, parents, carers, governors and the wider community) were represented in developing this vision for Alex and consequently Alex is at the heart of all that we do. This link provides further specific details linked to our curriculum at Whitchurch High.

Our Acceptable Use Policy for Mobile Phones and Digital Devices (AUP) is not simply about compliance; it is about partnership. Just as Alex learned to think critically, act responsibly, and engage respectfully, this policy supports all students in developing the digital habits and self-regulation skills they will need in life beyond school. By working together, we aim to create a safe, focused, and respectful learning environment where technology enhances learning without becoming a distraction. This policy is one step in helping every student become a thoughtful, ethical, and capable digital citizen[1] - just like Alex.

1.   PURPOSE

1.1.   The widespread ownership of mobile phones, smartwatches and other similar digital devices among young people requires that support staff, teachers, students, parents and carers play a key role in making sure these devices are being used responsibly. This AUP helps us identify and manage any problems that might arise, while still allowing students to access the benefits of technology, such as improved safety and access to learning. It sets out clear expectations so that mobile phones and digital devices can support, rather than disrupt, school life.

1.2.   Whitchurch High School has established the following AUP for these devices that provides teachers, students, parents, carers and visitors with guidelines and instructions for their appropriate use on the school site during school hours (also see point 1.3 below).

1.3.   The AUP also applies to students during school trips, excursions, and extra-curricular activities both on the school site and off-site during the school day.

1.4.   Permission to bring mobile phones, smartwatches, or other digital devices onto school premises is strictly conditional upon both the student and their parent or carer having read, understood, and agreed to the terms set out in this AUP.

2.   RATIONALE

2.1.   This policy has been developed in consultation with students, parents, carers, school staff and governors to ensure that mobile phones and other digital devices are used in a way that supports a safe, respectful, and inclusive learning environment for all members of the school community.

We recognise that digital technology plays a significant role in students' lives and can enhance learning, communication, and wellbeing when used appropriately. However, we also acknowledge the potential risks associated with improper use, including distraction, cyberbullying, breaches of privacy, and heightened stress and anxiety.

The purpose of this policy is to:
- Promote responsible and respectful use of digital devices.
- Protect students' right to learn in a focused and disruption-free environment.
- Safeguard the wellbeing, privacy, and dignity of all students and staff.
- Ensure consistency and clarity in expectations across the school.
- Support students in developing healthy digital habits and digital citizenship skills.
- Contribute to the school's Whole-School Approach to Mental Health and Wellbeing by promoting balanced, mindful use of technology and reducing digital-related anxiety and harm.
- Align with national guidance, safeguarding legislation, and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).

[1] A digital citizen is someone who uses technology safely, responsibly and respectfully. This includes how we communicate online, protect our privacy, treat others and use digital tools to learn and grow.

This policy applies to all students, staff, parents, carers, visitors and volunteers and is designed to be fair, inclusive, and adaptable to individual needs through reasonable adjustments.

2.2   Our approach is aligned with the Welsh Government's statutory framework for a whole-school approach to emotional and mental wellbeing. This ensures that our digital safety and wellbeing initiatives are not only evidence-based but also part of a nationally supported strategy. By embedding these principles across the curriculum and school culture, we aim to create a safe, supportive environment for all learners, in line with the Curriculum for Wales.

2.3. The school acknowledges that parents and carers may provide their children with mobile phones and similar devices for a variety of reasons, including personal safety, security, communication, and convenience. While we understand these motivations, our school policies aim to ensure that such devices are used responsibly and do not disrupt learning or wellbeing

2.4   The school understands that it has a responsibility along with parents and carers to prepare students for their life beyond school and to safeguard students from potential harm associated with unacceptable mobile phone or digital device use. This includes helping them understand the risks of inappropriate device use and how to manage technology responsibly.

3.   <u>RESPONSIBILITY</u>

3.1. It is the responsibility of students who bring mobile phones and other digital devices to school to abide by the guidelines outlined in this policy. This includes using devices in a way that reflects respect, responsibility and safety – key qualities of a responsible digital citizen.

3.2. The decision of whether to give a child a mobile phone should be made by the parents or carer. There is no expectation for parents/carers to provide their child with a mobile phone or other digital device for school. Parents and carers should understand the capabilities of the device and the potential use/misuse of those capabilities.

3.3. Parents and carers should be aware that if their child takes a mobile phone or other digital device to school, they are responsible for it and parents and carers are advised to ensure that such items are covered by insurance. **The school cannot accept responsibility for any loss, damage or costs incurred due to its use**.

3.4. Students are required to inform the school if they believe they have lost their device in school. This may assist with recovery. **However, the school accepts no liability for not securing such a recovery.**

3.5. Parents and carers are reminded that in cases of emergency, they should contact the main school office on 029 2062 9700 or email at whs@whitchurch.cardiff.sch.uk. This ensures that students can be reached quickly and safely and helps avoid disruptions to learning. All communication during the school day should be made through the school.

4.   <u>ACCEPTABLE USE</u>

Reasonable adjustments[2] will be taken into consideration where appropriate, based on specialist advice. Please see appendix 1 below for clarification of where reasonable adjustments may apply.

4.1   Mobile phones and digital devices may only be used during the school day for educational purposes, planning, organisation and appropriate communication. See appendix 2 for clarification.

4.2   Mobile phones and digital devices must be switched off or on silent with no vibration alert and stored out of sight during lessons unless clear permission has been given by a member of staff for their use.

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[2] A reasonable adjustment under the Equality Act 2010 is a change made to remove or reduce a disadvantage caused by a disability, ensuring equal access to education, employment, or services.

4.3. Parents and carers are requested that in cases of emergency; they contact the school first so we are aware of any potential issue and may make the necessary arrangements.

4.4. While on school premises (and at break times only), if students need to receive important messages, they should only use silent features such as text messaging.

4.5. Mobile phones and other digital devices should not be used in any manner or place that is disruptive to the normal routine of the school. They should remain in bags and switched off or on silent unless being used for educational purposes, planning/organisation or appropriate communication.

4.6. Students should protect their personal contact information - such as phone numbers, email addresses, and social media handles - by only sharing them with trusted individuals. Keeping a record of who has access to this information can help prevent it from falling into the wrong hands and reduce the risk of receiving insulting, threatening, or inappropriate messages via calls, texts, or online platforms.

4.7 Parents, carers, and students should ensure that mobile phones and other digital devices are secured using password protection or similar security measures. This helps prevent unauthorised access and protects personal information, contributing to a safer digital environment both in and out of school.

4.8. The school acknowledges the value of emerging technologies found in modern mobile phones - such as cameras, video recording, internet access, and educational apps. Teachers may choose to incorporate these features to support teaching and learning. In such cases, students may be allowed to use their mobile phones in the classroom, but only with the teacher's explicit permission.

Permission to use a mobile phone in one lesson for a specific educational purpose does not imply that general or ongoing use is permitted. Mobile phones will only be allowed in class when their use clearly enhances or improves the learning experience. This must be a deliberate and purposeful decision by the teacher.

For students who do not have access to a mobile phone, laptops will be provided during these occasions.

4.9 In the event of illness or feeling unwell, students should refrain from using mobile phones or digital devices to contact parents and carers directly to make personal collection arrangements without the prior knowledge of first aid, registration or pastoral staff. This ensures the school can support them appropriately and avoid confusion or disruption.

5. <u>UNACCEPTABLE USE</u>
5.1 Designated Digital Device Free Zones have been established throughout the school. In these areas, the use of all digital devices - including mobile phones, audio players, smartwatches, tablets, and similar technology - is strictly prohibited. This policy is in place to protect privacy, maintain focus, and ensure a respectful environment for all. This applies to the following areas:
- ➢ Changing rooms.
- ➢ Toilets.
- ➢ Upper school and lower school canteens.
- ➢ Upper school and lower school libraries.
- ➢ Lower school Dutch barn.
- ➢ All exam venues.
- ➢ First aid rooms.
- ➢ Prayer rooms

5.2 Social media platforms and their associated messaging functions are not permitted to be accessed or used during the school day. This includes, but is not limited to the following:
- ➢ Facebook and Messenger.
- ➢ X (formerly Twitter).

- ➢ Instagram and Instagram Direct
- ➢ Snapchat.
- ➢ TikTok.
- ➢ Discord.
- ➢ Telegram.
- ➢ Non-educational YouTube videos and YouTube Shorts.

5.3 Messaging apps that are not age appropriate must not be used during the school day. Most messaging apps have a minimum age requirement of 13+, including, but not limited to:

- ➢ WhatsApp.
- ➢ Viber
- ➢ Signal

5.4 Headphones, earphones, or similar devices must not be worn by any member of the school community during the school day, nor may the music or video functions of digital devices be used. This is to ensure safety, maintain focus, and show courtesy to others.

5.5. Unless staff permission is expressly granted, mobile phones and other digital devices should not be used during school lessons and other educational activities, such as assemblies.

5.6. The Bluetooth function of a mobile phone or other digital devices must be switched off at all times and not be used to send images or files to other mobile phones or digital device.

5.8. Mobile phones and digital devices are not to be used or visible in changing rooms or toilets or used in any situation that may cause embarrassment or discomfort to their fellow students, staff or visitors to the school.

5.9. No photographs, videos or voice recordings can be taken at any time during the school day and whilst on the school site, unless express permission has been given by a teacher within a controlled environment. In the event that this happens, the student will be asked and expected to delete those images and the relevant sanction imposed.

5.10. Using mobile phones or digital devices to bully and threaten others is unacceptable. Cyberbullying will not be tolerated. If the use of technology humiliates, embarrasses, or causes offence it is unacceptable regardless of whether 'consent' was given. In some cases, it can constitute a criminal offence.

5.11. It is a criminal offence to use a mobile phone or any digital device to menace, harass, or offend another person. This includes sending threatening messages, sharing harmful content, or engaging in any form of cyberbullying. Such actions are not only a breach of school rules but may also lead to legal consequences under UK laws.

Students should be aware that:

- All digital communications - including calls, text messages, emails, and social media activity - can be traced and retrieved.
- Law enforcement agencies have the tools to investigate and prosecute digital harassment.
- Even if a message was sent as a "joke" or with supposed "consent," if it causes harm, distress, or fear, it may still be considered a criminal act.

The school takes these matters seriously and will involve parents, carers, and external authorities where necessary. Students are expected to use technology responsibly and respectfully at all times.

6. THEFT OR DAMAGE

6.1. Students should mark their mobile phone or other digital device clearly with their names to aid identification and recovery if lost.

6.2. Students who bring a mobile phone or other similar device to school should leave it in their bag switched off or on silent when they arrive. To minimise the risk of theft, students are advised to keep devices out of sight and avoid drawing attention to them.

6.3. Any mobile phone or digital device found on school premises without an identifiable owner must be handed in to the nearest school office or reception immediately.

6.4. The school accepts **no** responsibility for replacing lost, stolen or damaged mobile phones or other digital devices, whether on school grounds or during school activities.

6.5. The school accepts **no** responsibility for students who lose or have their mobile phones or other digital devices stolen while travelling to and from school.

6.6. Students are strongly advised to use passwords or PIN codes to protect their devices from unauthorised use. These credentials must be kept confidential and must not be shared with others. Devices and login details should remain private at all times.

6.7. Mobile phones that are lost or stolen can be blocked across all networks, making them unusable. It is the responsibility of parents and carers - not the school - to report the loss and arrange for the device to be blocked through their network provider. This helps protect personal data and prevent misuse.

7. INAPPROPRIATE CONDUCT

7.1. Mobile phones and similar digital devices are strictly prohibited in all examination environments, in accordance with regulations set by examination boards. **Any breach of this rule may lead to the disqualification of all examination papers, not just the one being taken at the time of the incident.** Students are responsible for ensuring that such devices are not brought into the exam room under any circumstances. However, approved digital calculators may be permitted in certain exams, as specified by the exam board. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that any calculator used complies with the regulations for that specific subject and exam.

7.2. Any student who uses vulgar, derogatory, or obscene language, or shares inappropriate images via a mobile phone or other digital device, will be subject to disciplinary action in line with the school's behaviour policy. This includes messages sent through text, social media, or other digital platforms, whether during school hours or in a way that impacts the school community.

7.3. Students with mobile phones or other digital devices may not engage in personal attacks, harassment or the sharing of private or objectionable content about others. This includes sending messages, taking/sending photos or objectionable images, phone calls or capturing images or videos without consent. Students using mobile phones or other devices to bully other students will face disciplinary action. It is a criminal offence to use a mobile phone or another digital device to menace, harass or offend another person. In such cases, the school may consider it appropriate to involve the police. Students are reminded that inciting hatred on the grounds of any of the protected characteristics is an offence.

7.4. Students must ensure that files stored on their phones digital devices do not contain any content that is violent, degrading, racist, pornographic or discriminatory. The transmission of such images is a criminal offence. This includes the act of 'sexting' – sending or receiving sexually explicit images or messages - which is illegal and will be treated with the utmost seriousness.

8. **SANCTIONS** – Parents and carers will be informed of any sanctions through the Parent SIMS App[3].

8.1. Students who violate the rules outlined in this policy may have their digital devices confiscated by staff and will be subject to appropriate disciplinary measures. Sanctions will be applied based on the nature and severity of the incident and may include:

During Lessons:
Level 1: Mobile Phone/Digital Device lesson - Mobile Phone/Digital Device out in lesson without permission: If a mobile phone or digital device is seen in a lesson without the express permission of the teacher, they will be confiscated and returned to the student at the end of the lesson and a level 1 recorded on the Parent and Student SIMS App.

Level 2: Mobile Phone/Digital Device lesson - Refusal to follow Mobile Phone/Digital Device policy: If mobile phones or digital devices are used and/or heard in a lesson, a Level 2 - will be recorded on the Parent and Student SIMS App in addition to a 30 minute after school detention. The mobile phone or digital device will also be confiscated and returned to the student at the end of the lesson.

Level 3: Mobile Phone/Digital Device lesson - Defiance: If a student uses a mobile phone or digital device in lesson and refuses to hand it over, a senior member of staff or a member of the Progress Team will be called, the phone will be confiscated for the remainder of the day. A Level 3 for Defiance will be recorded on the Parent and Student SIMS App and half a day in the Ready to Learn (RTL) room will be issued as part of the level 3 sanction.

Level 4: Continued Defiance or refusal to hand over their phone or digital device to the senior member of staff called is actioned by spending the remainder of the day in the De-escalation room A Parent or carer will also be contacted to collect the device. A level 4 will be added to the Parent and Student SIMS App and a day will be spent in the RTL room.

For minor infringements, the device will be confiscated until the end of the lesson. For more serious infringements or if there are safeguarding concerns or other concerns, the school may retain the phone or digital device until collected by a parent or carer. Should there be more than one disruptive incident, or a serious first time, infringement caused by a mobile phone or other digital device, the student may face a consequence reflective of the severity of the incident(s). This will be recorded as a Level 4, 5 or 6, serious misuse of a mobile device and sanctioned by a full day in the RTL room or may result in exclusion.

Across the school site:
Level 1: Mobile Phone/Digital Device school site - Mobile Phone/Digital Device being used for non-educational activity: Issued if a mobile phone or digital device is being used for a non-educational activity other than organisation/planning and appropriate communication without permission from a member of staff within a controlled environment including. This could include, but is not limited to:
- Accessing social media platforms.
- Taking photos, videos or voice recordings.
- Playing games or using entertainment apps
- Phone seen in a Digital Device Free Zones.
- Listening to music or watching non-educational videos.
- Browsing non-educational websites or content.
- Sharing memes, GIFs, or other non-educational media.
- Using the device during assemblies, school trips, or other formal school events without permission.

A level 1 will be recorded on the Parent and Student SIMS App.

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[3] This is the title of the App provided by our SMS provider. This app is available for parents and carers to download. For further details, please contact the relevant progress team.

Level 2: Mobile Phone/Digital Device school site - Refusal to follow Mobile Phone/Digital Device policy: Every occasion that 3 or more level 1 sanctions, mobile phone or digital device related are recorded within 10 school days (school site or in lesson), a Level 2 - will be recorded on the Parent and Student SIMS App and a 30 minute after school detention will be issued.

Level 3: Mobile Phone/Digital Device school site - Defiance: 2 or more level 2 sanctions, within a half term for refusal to follow mobile phone and digital device policy will result half a day in the RTL room. A Level 3 for Mobile phone/Digital device - Defiance will be recorded on the Parent and Student SIMS App.

Across the school day: Mobile Phone/Digital Device – serious misuse - Level 4 and above: Should there be more than one disruptive incident, or a serious first time, infringement caused by a mobile phone or other digital device, the student may face a consequence reflective of the severity of the incident(s). This will be recorded as a Level 4, 5 or 6, serious misuse of a mobile or digital device and sanctioned by a full day in the RTL room or may result in exclusion.

8.2. In the case of repeated or more serious infringements, parents and carers will be asked to collect the device from school.

8.3. Any **further** infringements of the AUP may result in further restrictions being implemented.

8.4. In **exceptional or serious** circumstances the headteacher or senior member of staff may confiscate, retain, and hand over a mobile phone or other device to the police or appropriate external agency. In such cases the school will contact parents and carers at the earliest opportunity but not at the delay of such a process.

9. <u>STAKEHOLDER RESPONSIBILITIES</u>

9.1 In today's digital world, mobile phones and digital devices are part of everyday life - and when used appropriately, they can support learning, wellbeing, and communication across our school community. However, ensuring that technology is used safely, respectfully, and purposefully requires a shared commitment from everyone involved in school life.

This section outlines the specific responsibilities of each stakeholder group - students, sixth formers, staff, governors, parents, carers, and visitors - in upholding our AUP. These responsibilities are grounded in our Whole-School Digital Principles, which promote respect, safety, inclusion, and accountability.

By clearly defining expectations for each group, we aim to:

- Foster a consistent and respectful digital culture.
- Protect the wellbeing and privacy of all students and staff.
- Ensure that digital tools are used to enhance, not disrupt, learning.
- Encourage positive role modelling and shared responsibility.

Together, we can create a digitally safe, inclusive, and empowering environment for everyone in our school.

9.2   <u>Student Responsibilities:</u>
- Follow the AUP at all times, including during lessons, break times, and school trips.
- Keep mobile phones and other digital devices on silent or switched off and out of sight in lessons unless given express permission by a teacher for educational use.
- Use digital devices respectfully and responsibly - never to record, share, or post content without permission.
- Avoid using social media, games, or non-educational apps during the school day.
- Report any loss, damage, or misuse of digital devices to a member of staff immediately.
- Respect Digital Device Free Zones and never use digital devices in changing rooms, toilets, or other restricted areas.

- Understand that misuse may result in sanctions, including confiscation or loss of device privileges.
- Work with staff and your peers to help create a safe, respectful, and anxiety-free school environment. This includes using mobile phones in a way that supports wellbeing, avoids distractions, and promotes a positive atmosphere for everyone.
- Recognise that we all share responsibility for making our school a place where everyone feels secure, valued, and free from digital pressures.
- Never bring mobile phones and other digital devices into examination rooms under any circumstances.
- Do not wear headphones or broadcast music or other audio during or between lessons.
- Ensure that any files stored on devices do not contain material that is violent, pornographic, discriminatory, promotes criminal or unlawful activity, or may cause offence or pose a security risk. In serious cases, the school may involve the police.
- Never use mobile phones or any other digital device to bully, threaten, or humiliate others, including taking or sharing videos or images without consent.
- Understand that bringing a mobile phone and other digital devices to school is a privilege, not a right – unless it is part of a reasonable adjustment to support a specific need or disability. Failure to follow the policy may result in this privilege being withdrawn.
- If you are worried about harmful online behaviour, bullying, or concerning content, whether it affects you or someone else, please speak to a trusted adult, such as your wellbeing tutor, or a member of the Progress Team.
- See appendix 3 for digital health and wellbeing support document.

9.3   Sixth Form Responsibilities:
As senior members of the school community, Sixth Form students are expected to model exemplary digital behaviour and support younger students in developing responsible and respectful use of technology. At the request of the Sixth Form leadership team, the common room will not be designated as a Digital Device Free Zone. Instead, it will serve as a space where responsible and acceptable use of digital devices is expected.

- Adhere to this AUP at all times.
- Use mobile phones and digital devices responsibly, only in designated Sixth Form areas and in ways that do not disrupt learning, wellbeing, or the school environment.
- Model positive digital behaviour, setting an example for younger students through respectful, safe, and balanced device use.
- Support a healthy digital culture by promoting positive online behaviour and discouraging misuse among peers.
- Take ownership of their digital wellbeing, including managing screen time, social media use, and online interactions.
- Respect Digital Device Free Zones, recognising that leadership includes following expectations even when unsupervised.
- Report any misuse of digital devices or online behaviour that could harm others or breach school policy.
- Engage in digital citizenship, contributing to a safe, inclusive, and respectful digital environment.
- Understand that increased freedom comes with greater responsibility—misuse may result in sanctions or loss of privileges.
- Respect the privacy of others by never recording, photographing, or sharing content without explicit consent.
- Acknowledge that digital devices must not be used to gain unfair academic advantage (e.g. plagiarism).
- Use digital devices ethically and never to gain an unfair academic advantage, such as during assessments or coursework.
- Avoid any form of cyberbullying, harassment, or inappropriate communication online or via digital platforms.
- Be mindful of your digital footprint and how your online actions may affect your future opportunities and reputation.

- If you are worried about harmful online behaviour, bullying, or concerning content, whether it affects you or someone else, please speak to a trusted adult, such as your wellbeing tutor, or a member of the Sixth Form Progress Team.
- See appendix 3 for digital health and wellbeing support document.

9.4 School Governor Responsibilities:
- Support the annual review of the AUP to ensure it remains relevant, effective, and aligned with school values and statutory requirements.
- Monitor the effectiveness of the policy by reviewing data on digital behaviour, wellbeing, and Safeguarding.
- Promote a whole-school culture of safe, respectful, and responsible digital use.
- Ensure the policy supports equitable access to technology for all students, including those requiring reasonable adjustments.
- Provide strategic oversight to ensure digital policies align with the school's improvement plans and legal obligations.
- Engage in relevant training to stay informed about digital safeguarding, online risks, and governance best practices.
- Hold school leaders accountable for the consistent and fair implementation of the policy across all stakeholder groups.
- Encourage transparency and collaboration in how digital expectations are communicated and upheld throughout the school community.

9.5 School Staff Responsibilities:
- Model appropriate, professional, and balanced use of mobile phones and digital devices in school, setting a positive example for students.
- Use personal mobile phones and digital devices only during non-contact time and avoid use during lessons or while on duty - unless required for an emergency or a specific and vital school-related purpose.
- Personal mobile phones should be kept on silent and out of sight during lessons and any interactions with students. This helps maintain focus, minimise distractions, and model respectful behaviour.
- Use mobile phones or digital devices in the classroom only when they significantly enhance or improve the learning experience. This should be a deliberate and purposeful decision.
- Ensure that all students in the lesson have access to appropriate technology. If a student does not have a mobile phone or digital device, a school-provided laptop or device should be made available.
- Do not allow students to share personal mobile phones or digital devices during lessons to maintain privacy, safety, and equal access.
- Avoid using personal phones or other digital devices to take photographs or videos of students. School-approved devices should be used for any media capture, in line with safeguarding protocols.
- Ensure that any content stored on personal devices is appropriate, professional and aligned with the school's values.
- Maintain clear professional boundaries by not sharing personal contact details (including phone numbers, email addresses, or social media accounts) with students. Staff should not engage in messaging, video calls, or social media interactions with students via personal devices or platforms. All communication should take place through approved school channels.
- Work collaboratively with students, parents, carers and colleagues to create a calm, respectful, and digitally safe environment.
- Support students in developing healthy digital habits and help them navigate the challenges of mobile technology with empathy and guidance.
- See appendix 3 for digital health and wellbeing support document.

9.6 <u>Parent and Carer Responsibilities</u>

- Familiarise yourself with the AUP and support the school in applying it consistently.
- Support your child in understanding the school's Acceptable for Mobile Phones and Digital Devices Policy and encourage open conversations about responsible digital behaviour.
- Ensure your child's device is updated with the latest security settings, parental controls, and privacy protections.
- Inform the school if your child has specific needs that require access to a digital device during the school day, so appropriate adjustments can be made (see appendix 1).
- Avoid sharing school-related photos or videos of other students on social media without consent, in line with the school's safeguarding policy.
- Decide whether your child needs a mobile phone or other digital device in school and ensure they understand how to use it responsibly and respectfully.
- Ensure digital devices are clearly marked and insured, and that your child knows how to keep them safe.
- In case of emergencies, contact the school office rather than calling or messaging your child directly, to avoid disrupting learning.
- Work in partnership with the school to create a safe, respectful, and anxiety-free digital environment for all students.
- Ensure your child's mobile phone/digital device is password protected and secure.
- Set appropriate restrictions on your child's phone, including limiting access to social media and removing apps that are not age appropriate. Our school Wi-Fi restricts access to inappropriate websites and applications; however, we have no control over what students can access using personal mobile data (4G or 5G).
- Regularly monitor your child's phone use, including checking for any inappropriate activity during the school day. This could include reviewing messages, apps and activity logs.
- Encourage your child to report any concerns or misuse of digital devices and support the school's sanctions and guidance if issues arise.
- Help your child understand the importance of digital wellbeing, respectful communication, and the long-term impact of their online behaviour.
- Avoid using mobile phones and digital devices in a way that could disrupt learning and school routines.
- If you become aware of any concerning online behaviour, harmful content, or social media activity affecting your child or others, please contact the relevant Progress Team. School contacts can be found by accessing the following link on our school website: https://www.whitchurchhs.wales/Parents/Documents/SchoolContacts.pdf
- See appendix 3 for digital health and wellbeing support document.
- See appendix 4 for advice on supporting appropriate mobile phone use.

9.7 <u>Visitor Responsibilities:</u>
This applies to any visitor to the school premises during the school day, including parents/carers, contractors, practitioners, volunteers and guests attending events or meetings on the school premises.

- All visitors must follow the school's safeguarding procedures, including signing in at reception and wearing a visitor badge at all times.
- Respect the school's AUP while on site, including in Digital Device Free Zones which include:
  - ➢ Changing rooms.
  - ➢ Toilets.
  - ➢ Upper school and lower school canteens.
  - ➢ Upper school and lower school libraries.
  - ➢ Lower school Dutch barn.
  - ➢ All exam venues.
  - ➢ First aid rooms.
  - ➢ Prayer rooms

- Avoid using mobile phones or other digital devices in a way that disrupts learning, student wellbeing, or the school's routines.

- Support the school's commitment to creating a safe, respectful, and anxiety-free environment by modelling appropriate digital behaviour.
- Refrain from taking photographs, videos, or recordings of students or staff or school activities without express permission from School Leadership Team.
- Ensure that any digital device use during visits is discreet, purposeful, and in line with safeguarding expectations.
- Follow any additional guidance provided by staff during events, meetings, or visits to ensure a positive and respectful experience for all.
- Do not share images, videos, or information about students or school events on social media without explicit consent from the school.
- Report any safeguarding concerns immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead. They can be contacted via the main office on each site.
- If these expectations are not followed, individuals may be asked to leave the premises. Where appropriate, further action may be taken in line with the school's safeguarding and data protection policies.

AGREEMENT AND SHARED COMMITMENT
This Acceptable Use Policy for Mobile Phones and Digital Devices reflects our shared commitment to creating a respectful, safe, and focused learning environment. We ask all members of our school community - students, parents and carers, staff, visitors and governors - to support the consistent application of this policy.

By working together, we can help students develop healthy digital habits, stay safe online, and use technology in ways that support their learning and wellbeing.

We invite all stakeholders to read, understand, and uphold the expectations outlined in this policy. Your support is vital in helping us maintain a positive digital culture across the school.

APPENDIX 1: REASONABLE ADJUSTMENTS

In line with the Equality Act 2010, this mobile phone policy recognises our duty to make reasonable adjustments for pupils with disabilities. The Act requires education providers to take positive steps to ensure that disabled pupils can fully participate in education and enjoy the other benefits, facilities, and services provided by the school.

This policy, like the Equality Act itself, does not prescribe specific reasonable adjustments or provide an exhaustive list of factors to consider. It is the responsibility of the school to assess the reasonableness of any adjustment based on the individual circumstances of each case.

This includes circumstances where a student may require access to a mobile phone or digital device for medical reasons, such as managing a health condition or using a medical monitoring app.

When considering whether an adjustment to the mobile phone policy is reasonable, the school may take into account factors such as:

- The effectiveness of the proposed adjustment in overcoming the disadvantage.
- The financial and other resources available to the school.
- The impact of the adjustment on other pupils and staff.
- Health and safety considerations.
- Whether support or aids have already been provided through the Additional Learning Needs (ALN) framework

By embedding flexibility into the implementation of this policy, the school aims to uphold its legal obligations while maintaining a safe and focused learning environment for all pupils.

Where reasonable adjustments are made to allow a student to use a mobile device, all other aspects of the UAP - such as expectations around respectful use, safeguarding, and appropriate content - still apply. This ensures that students with adjustments are supported without being exempt from the core values of respectful and responsible use.

Please contact the relevant progress team if you wish to discuss any reasonable adjustments. School contacts can be found by accessing the following link on our school website:

https://www.whitchurchhs.wales/Parents/Documents/SchoolContacts.pdf

APPENDIX 2: CLARIFICATION: WHAT DO WE MEAN BY EDUCATIONAL PURPOSES, PLANNING, ORGANISATION AND APPROPRIATE COMMUNICATION.

To avoid confusion, this section explains what is meant by "educational purposes, planning, organisation, and appropriate communication" when using mobile phones or digital devices during the school day.

The examples below illustrate acceptable uses **outside of lessons**, including but not limited to the following activities. This list is intended to guide students, staff, parents, and carers in understanding what is appropriate and to support consistent expectations across the school.

1. Educational Purposes
Students may use mobile phones to support their learning in the following ways:

- Accessing learning platforms (e.g. Microsoft Teams).
- Using revision apps or flashcard tools (e.g. GCSE Bitesize).
- Researching topics related to lessons or homework – linked to current curriculum areas. This link provides a termly curriculum overview.
- Accessing digital textbooks, eBooks or subject-specific tools (e.g. calculator apps).
- Using translation apps responsibly (e.g. for EAL support).
- Accessing accessibility tools.
- Any work related to Individual Learning Pathway Plans. This link provides further information.

2. Planning and Organisation
Phones may be used to help students stay organised and manage their school day:

- Using calendar or planner apps to track homework, deadlines, and create revision timetables.
- Setting reminders.
- Using the SIMS Student App (timetables, sanctions, rewards, option choices, school messages).
- Using note-taking apps.
- Using the school email for clarification or support.

3. Appropriate Communication
Students may use their phones during breaks and lunchtime to communicate appropriately and respectfully:

- Messaging friends to arrange meeting points at break or lunch.
- Contacting parents or carers only when permitted (e.g. in case of illness or change in plans)
- Using the school email system.

Important Reminders:

- Devices must remain on silent (no sound or vibration) and be used discreetly.
- Use of devices must not disrupt others or interfere with the school environment.
- All other aspects of the AUP continue to apply.

APPENDIX 3: DIGITAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING SUPPORT

At Whitchurch High School, we believe in promoting digital wellbeing[4] for all members of our school community. This means using technology in a way that supports mental, emotional, and physical health.

Here are some key principles and tips for maintaining digital wellbeing:

1. **Balance Screen Time:** Set limits on the amount of time spent on digital devices each day. Take regular breaks to rest your eyes and move around.
2. **Create Tech-Free Zones:** Designate certain areas or times of the day as tech-free, such as during meals or before bedtime, to encourage face-to-face interactions and relaxation.
3. **Be Mindful of Content:** Be aware of the content you consume and share online. Avoid material that is harmful, negative, or inappropriate.
4. **Practice Digital Detox[5]:** Take occasional breaks from technology to recharge and focus on offline activities, such as reading, exercising, or spending time with family and friends.
5. **Stay Safe Online:** Protect your personal information and privacy. Be cautious about sharing details online and use strong, unique passwords for your accounts.
6. **Encourage Positive Interactions:** Use technology to connect with others in a positive and respectful way. Avoid engaging in or spreading cyberbullying, harassment, or negative behaviour.
7. **Seek Help When Needed:** If you feel overwhelmed or stressed by technology, talk to a trusted adult, teacher, or counsellor for support and guidance.

By encouraging these principles, we aim to foster a healthy and balanced digital environment that supports the wellbeing of within our school community. While we recognise that not all aspects of digital life are within our control; we believe that promoting awareness and positive habits can make a meaningful difference in how we engage with technology.

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[4]　Digital wellbeing refers to how technology affects our mental, emotional, and physical health—and how we can use it in a balanced, safe, and positive way. It's about making sure that time spent online supports learning, relationships, and wellbeing, rather than causing stress, distraction, or harm.

[5]　A digital detox is a period of time when someone intentionally takes a break from using digital devices—like smartphones, computers, tablets, or social media—to reduce stress, improve focus, and reconnect with the offline world.

APPENDIX 4: SUPPORTING APPROPRIATE MOBILE PHONE/DIGITAL DEVICE USE AND DIGITAL AWARENESS

At Whitchurch High School, we believe in working together to help our students develop healthy digital habits. This guide provides practical advice for parents and carers to support their children in using mobile phones responsibly, in line with our school's mobile phone policy.

Using Mobile Phones And Digital Devices Responsibly At School

Our mobile phone policy aims to create a safe, respectful, and focused learning environment. Students are expected to keep their phones switched off and out of sight during school lessons unless given permission for specific educational use.

Setting Screen Time Limits

Encourage your child to balance screen time with other activities. Here are some tips:

- Use built-in screen time management tools on your child's phone to set daily limits.
- Establish 'phone-free' times, such as during meals, homework, and bedtime.
- Encourage outdoor activities, hobbies, and face-to-face interactions.

Checking Phone And Digital Device Usage - https://www.commonsensemedia.org/app-reviews

Regularly review the apps and sites your child is using to ensure they are age-appropriate and safe. Consider the following:

- Check the app store ratings and reviews before allowing new downloads.
- Use parental control settings to restrict access to certain apps and sites.
- Discuss with your child the importance of using apps and sites that promote learning and creativity.

Monitoring Content

It's important to be aware of what your child is viewing and sharing online. Here are some steps you can take:

- Regularly check your child's phone or digital device for inappropriate content, including images, videos, and messages.
- Encourage open communication about online experiences and any concerns they may have.
- Teach your child about the importance of privacy and the potential risks of sharing personal information online.

Encouraging Healthy Digital Habits

Help your child develop a positive relationship with technology by promoting the following habits:

- Model responsible phone use by setting a good example.
- Encourage critical thinking about the content they consume and share.
- Discuss the importance of kindness and respect in online interactions.
- Help your child understand the long-term impact of their digital footprint[6].

Safety

Supporting your child's safety while using a mobile phone involves both digital tools and open communication. Here are some additional ways to help keep them safe:

Enable Location Sharing With Care

Consider using features like Find My iPhone (Apple) or Find My Device (Android) to help locate your child's phone if it's lost or in an emergency. Discuss with your child when and why location sharing is appropriate, and ensure it's only shared with trusted family members.

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[6] Digital Footprint: Trail of data left when using the internet. This includes websites visited, emails sent and information submitted online.

Set Up Emergency Features
Most smartphones allow you to add emergency contacts and enable SOS features. Teach your child how to use these in case they ever feel unsafe.

Use Safety-Focused Apps
Consider apps that offer real-time location updates, geofencing alerts (notifications when your child enters or leaves a set area), or panic buttons. These can provide peace of mind while respecting your child's independence.

Discuss Digital Boundaries
Talk about the importance of not sharing their location publicly on social media or with people they don't know. Reinforce the idea that privacy settings should always be reviewed and adjusted regularly.

Encourage Reporting
Let your child know they can come to you or a trusted adult if they ever feel uncomfortable or unsafe online. Reassure them that their safety is the priority and that they won't be in trouble for speaking up.

Supporting Sixth Form Students With Digital Awareness
While sixth form students are developing greater independence, it's still important to stay engaged with their digital habits. Encourage open conversations about how they use their devices and help them make informed choices. You can:

- Explore apps and websites together with your child using trusted resources like Common Sense Media, which provides expert reviews and age-based ratings to help you make informed, safe choices. Common Sense Media: Age-Based Media Reviews for Families | Common Sense Media
- Discuss the impact of screen time on sleep, focus, and wellbeing, and encourage regular breaks.
- Promote apps that support learning, creativity, and organisation, such as digital planners or study tools.
- Respect their growing autonomy, while remaining available to support them in navigating online challenges.

Useful websites
See the following websites for further information and advice:

- https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/social-media/
- https://wisekids.org.uk/wk/parents-online-guide/
- https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5c5b1510e5274a316cee5be8/UK_CMO_commentary_on_screentime_and_social_media_map_of_reviews.pdf - page 10 UK Chief Medical Officers' advice for parents and carers on Children and Young People's screen and social media use.