



Mobile Phone Policy

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Reviewed by	Office and Support Services Coordinator
Approved by	Operations Director
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Policy owner	Office and Support Services Coordinator
Location	Trust Website

Introduction

This policy covers the use of mobile phones issued to staff by Staffordshire University Academies Trust (SUAT), and also the use of personal mobiles within our Trust. This policy is not contractual but sets out the way in which we allocate mobile phones, our guidance and rules relating to these.

Mobiles Issued by the Trust and Academies

Where a mobile phone has been issued by SUAT or an Academy within the Trust, it will remain the property of SUAT. The user(s) will be responsible for its safekeeping, proper use, condition and eventual return to the Trust. If a replacement is required, the SUAT Central Team will organise this.

A mobile phone is provided primarily to enable the user to do their job, i.e. to keep SUAT or the academy informed at the earliest opportunity of matters which it needs to know about and to be similarly contactable by SUAT, or to contact stakeholders, when working away from the holder's usual place of employment. Therefore, it is the user's responsibility to ensure that the mobile phone is kept charged and switched on whilst on duty.

SUAT recognises that users may have to make personal calls or send personal text messages during working hours, or outside normal working hours. This shall be undertaken using personal mobile phones. Where it is deemed that an unreasonable amount of personal calls/text messages have been made using the mobile phone, SUAT reserves the right to deduct those costs, either through deduction from pay, or otherwise. SUAT may, after formal investigation, take action under the Disciplinary Procedure if such use is excessive or unauthorised. Users will be expected to make payment for private calls.

If it is found, following investigation, that there has been excessive personal data use, then the user will be asked to reimburse the Trust for the cost of this and action may be taken under the Disciplinary Procedure.

The user agrees that upon termination of employment, should they not return the allocated mobile phone, or should the mobile phone be returned in an unsatisfactory condition, the cost of replacement, or a proportional amount of this as decided by the Trust, will be deducted from any final monies owing, or the user will otherwise reimburse the Trust.

All SUAT or Academy issued devices must comply with the Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR. Devices must use strong passwords, PIN, and where possible, multi-factor authentication. Staff must not share login credentials or store personal or pupil data insecurely. Personal and business critical data must not be downloaded to the device.

Use of a Mobile Phone Whilst Driving

The user must ensure they have full control of any vehicle that they are driving at all times. It is an offence to use handheld mobile phones whilst driving or whilst the engine is turned on. The user will be liable for prosecution if they are holding a mobile phone, or any other type of handheld device to send or receive any sort of data, be it voice, text or pictorial images. The user will be regarded to be driving if they are in charge of a vehicle with its engine running on a public road, even if the vehicle is stationary. It is therefore strictly forbidden for the user to use a handheld mobile phone whilst driving.

A mobile phone may only be used where there is an in-coming call or an out-going voice activated call through a hands free device that is activated without a need to hold the phone at any time, in which case the call should be kept to the shortest possible time and only to effect essential communications. When the phone needs to be operated to make or deal with a call through the hands free device for longer than receiving or giving a short communication, before doing so the user should stop and park the vehicle where it is safe and lawful to do so and with the engine

switched off. Whilst driving they must not use the text message facility on the mobile phone, or if available through such a phone, an image facility or internet access.

Individuals are personally responsible for the payment of any fine or fixed penalty (including any externally raised admin charges) incurred whilst in charge of the vehicle. It should be noted carefully that a breach of the Trust's rules on the use of a mobile phone whilst driving may render the user liable to action under the Disciplinary Procedure.

Lost or Stolen Mobiles

The user is responsible at all times for the security of the work-issued mobile phone and it should never be left unattended. A PIN number must be used on the mobile to enable voicemails and messages to be picked up securely.

If a SUAT issued phone is lost or stolen, this must be reported to the Central Team as soon as possible. If an Academy issued phone is lost or stolen, this must be reported to the Headteacher as soon as possible. In the event of theft, the incident must also be reported to the police and an incident number obtained. Please provide this incident number when reporting the loss to the Central Team or Headteacher.

The Trust reserves the right to claim reimbursement for the cost of the phone, or excess usage charges should the correct procedures not be followed, a user reports repeated loss of their mobile, it is deemed that the user has not taken appropriate measures to safeguard the equipment, or reported the loss thereof (which will be investigated by the Trust and judged at its absolute discretion).

Support

Should there be any queries on the use of the Trust mobile, please contact the Central Team to speak to the appropriate person.

Monitoring of Usage and Costs

The Trust receives itemised billing for all Trust mobile phones and this is monitored on a monthly basis. The billing system identifies all calls, texts and data usage (if appropriate) and the costs related to this, by user, destination, duration, frequency, etc. High or clear personal usage will be reported to line management for investigation (high usage is defined as usage which falls outside of the normal usage pattern for the individual, or outside of the usage pattern in comparison to other similar users).

This monitoring will allow the Trust to identify any areas of potential misuse or training that may be required, or to negotiate with suppliers any necessary changes in tariffs to ensure cost efficiency.

If it is found the mobile has been misused, the Trust may, after formal investigation, take action under the Disciplinary Procedure.

Confidentiality

Employees should be aware that other people may overhear conversations made on mobile phones, and take steps to ensure they do not inadvertently breach any of our rules on confidentiality.

Health and safety considerations

In addition to not using them while driving, those who are issued with mobile phones are instructed not to use them whilst doing anything else where safety is important and their use might interfere with concentration.

Courtesy to others

Out of courtesy to colleagues, employees should ensure that their mobile phone ring is discreet. To avoid unnecessary interruptions, we normally require that mobile phones are turned off during meetings and training sessions.

Mobile Phone Use Abroad

All Trust mobile phones are barred from being used abroad unless the network provider has been specifically instructed by the Trust. In the event that a bar needs to be lifted, please contact the Central Team in order that this may be considered.

Anti-Harassment

Staff must be aware that certain operations that may be performed on mobile phones may breach Trust rules and procedures. The sending of text messages or digital images that are or could be deemed offensive is strictly prohibited.

The photographing or filming of fellow employees, pupils, visitors or any member of the public without their consent will breach an individual's right to privacy and could, in certain circumstances, constitute harassment. This is therefore strictly forbidden.

It is against the principles of the Trust for any person to be harassed in such a way, and will not be tolerated. Any instance that comes to the Trust's attention will be investigated. Should a staff member be found to have used a mobile phone in such a way they may be subject to the Disciplinary Procedure, which could include dismissal.

If an individual feels they have been a victim of this form of harassment, they should bring this to the attention of line management immediately.

Staff must not use the mobile phone to access, use or distribute any material, or to participate in any activity, which is not, or might reasonably be regarded as, distasteful, offensive or indecent or harmful to other users. The following list gives examples of the sort of material or activities that will be regarded as unacceptable. It is not exhaustive.

- Bullying or harassment
- Personal insults, attacks or abuse
- Racist or sexist activity
- Chain letters or games
- Pornography
- Online gambling
- Any material that is illegal

Personal mobile phones

Personal mobile phones should not be used excessively during working hours. If the academy Principal considers that an employee is making or receiving an unreasonable number of calls/texts during working hours, the setting reserves the right to request the employee to turn the phone off, other than during break periods. Mobile phones may only be used in designated mobile phone zones on school premises (e.g. staffrooms, offices, or other approved areas).

Use in Designated Mobile Phone Zones

Use of mobile phones is prohibited in classrooms, corridors, playgrounds, and any area where pupils are present, unless authorised for a specific work purpose. Staff must ensure no pupil can view personal or work related content when a phone is in use.

Storage of Personal Mobile Devices

Personal mobile phones must be stored securely and out of sight (e.g. lockers, desk drawers, or staff bags) whilst staff are on duty.

The Trust and its academies accept no responsibility for loss, theft, or damage to personal devices brought onto site. These are brought at the owner's risk.

Prohibition on Use Around Pupils

Staff must not use personal mobile phones in the presence of pupils except in exceptional circumstances and with prior permission from the Headteacher. Personal mobile phones must not be used to contact pupils, parents or carers under any circumstances.

Safeguarding and Photography Restrictions

Photographing or recording pupils on personal mobile phones is strictly prohibited.

Any authorised photography or video for school purposes must be conducted using school provided equipment only.

Notification and Visibility

Mobile phone alerts, notifications, and ringtones must be set to silent or vibration mode during work hours.

Devices should not be visible on desks or work surfaces unless required for a legitimate school related task.

Remote and Hybrid Working

Staff using Trust issued mobiles for remote or hybrid working must ensure confidentiality and professionalism during calls. Devices should be used in a secure private location where conversations cannot be overheard.