

Mobile Phone Policy

Policy Owner: The British School of Almeria

Policy Area: Safeguarding

Reviewed: May 2025

Next Review: July 2026

A. RATIONALE AND GUIDANCE

At the **BRITISH SCHOOL OF ALMERIA**, we fully understand that technology plays an increasingly important role in all of our lives. This has become increasingly apparent in recent years with the emergence of smartphones, iPhones and smart watches which include many additional and more frequently used functions including:

- Instant messaging
- Integrated camera and video functions
- Full access to the internet (search engines, social networking sites, video content etc)

The well-being and holistic development of our students are our top priorities. To ensure a safe and distraction-free learning environment, the following regulations regarding the use of mobile phones within the school premises have been established. This policy is based on current educational legislation and recommendations from international organisations specialising in pedagogy and digital safety.

B. LEGAL FRAMEWORK

This policy is based on current educational legislation in Spain and the school's internal regulations. Additionally, it aligns with recommendations from organizations such as UNESCO and the World Health Organization, which warn about the negative impact of excessive digital device use on minors, affecting their cognitive and social development. Both institutions highlight that the presence of mobile phones in school environments reduces attention, increases anxiety, and negatively affects academic performance.

C. GENERAL REGULATIONS

All Key stages

Students are not allowed to use mobile phones at any educational stage during the school day, including class time, breaktimes, complementary and extracurricular activities, as well as during school arrivals and departures. This measure aims to promote concentration, social interaction, and academic development.

If parents need to communicate with their children during the school day, they may call the school's administrative office, which will ensure the message is appropriately delivered to the student. This guarantees an effective communication channel without disrupting the educational environment.

D. EXCEPTIONS

Exceptions to this policy will be evaluated and authorized solely by the school administration under specific circumstances. There are two specific situations where mobile phone use may be permitted within the school:

1. **Medical Reasons:** Parents or guardians may request authorization for their child to bring a mobile phone in case of a documented medical need. i.e. for monitoring purposes. To do so, they must submit a written request along with relevant medical documentation. The school administration will assess the request, and if approved, clear usage conditions will be established.
2. **Specific Educational Projects:** In certain pedagogical activities, the school may authorize the use of mobile phones for specific projects. In such cases, families will be informed in advance, specifying the time frames and conditions of use. However, mobile phone use will never be mandatory or essential for the activity, and parents may decide not to send the device to school if they prefer.
3. **Other exceptional circumstances (KS5):** KS5 pupils may use their mobile phones as a study tool in the event of not having access to another electronic device in order to carry out a specific task. This should only happen during a set period of time and with prior authorisation from their head of Key Stage.

E. PROCEDURE IN THE CASE OF NON-COMPLIANCE

If a student uses a mobile phone without authorisation, the following protocol will be applied:

1. **First Offence:** The device will be confiscated and held in the school administration office. Parents or legal guardians will be notified and must personally collect the device at the end of the school day. Additionally, the student will receive a formal written warning.
2. **Second Offence:** In addition to the previous measures, a meeting will be arranged between the parents or legal guardians, the student, and the school administration to address repeated non-compliance and establish a corrective action plan. The student may be subject to additional disciplinary measures, such as community service tasks within the school.
3. **Third and following Offences:** The violation will be considered a serious disciplinary offense. The student may face stricter sanctions, including temporary suspension from classes. An additional meeting with the parents or legal guardians will be required to assess the student's continued enrolment in the school.

F. RESPONSIBILITY AND SECURITY

The school is not responsible for the loss, theft, or damage of mobile phones brought by students under any circumstances, even if they have received authorisation to bring these items to school. Students are strongly advised not to bring these devices to school to avoid any issues. Furthermore, any misuse of the device inside or outside the school premises will be the sole responsibility of the student and their family. However, in the event of a lost device, the student must promptly report the incident to a member of staff.

G. MISUSE AND CONSEQUENCES

When used correctly, mobile phones and other technological devices have tremendous potential to support and enhance our pupils' learning experiences. However, we are aware that mobile phones are often misused within schools.

BSA Mobile Phone Policy

Families and students must understand that the misuse of mobile phones by pupils or any other members of the school community will not be tolerated. Common examples of misuse which are often seen inside and outside schools include:

- Use of mobile phones in toilet facilities
- Bullying by text, instant messaging, sending images or email.
- Sending disrespectful or abusive messages via text, instant message, social media sites or email.
- The use of mobile phones for "sexting" (sending provocative messages or images)
- Unauthorised and unconsented capture of images
- Pupils posting material on social media sites which may be damaging to the reputation of others
- Diffusing personal information of others
- Possession of a mobile phone during examinations*

****Please note that, in the case of external examinations, the school is required to report any such incident to the examination board. This may lead to the examination being cancelled for the candidate in question.***

Dealing with incidents of misuse

- Misuse will be dealt with in line with the current school behaviour policy with the sanction being proportionate to the severity of the incident and to the potential danger or consequences of such action.
- Unauthorised use of mobile phones in school will lead to their immediate confiscation, Families will be requested to collect the device from the school reception.
- In cases of moderate to severe misuse, families will be asked to cooperate with school staff in order to carry out the necessary investigations
- In the case of a serious incident, which may constitute a criminal offence, it is our duty to report the matter directly to the Police and any other relevant authorities.

Further investigation of incidents

The school will not directly oblige pupils to share the content held on their personal device in the event of the need for further investigation but will request collaboration from parents.

BSA Mobile Phone Policy

Incidents involving mobile phone misuse, which compromise the safety and welfare of either the perpetrator or other pupils or staff,

will be reported to the school safeguarding team

Parents are expected to cooperate with school staff to help to investigate any serious incidents which occur either within or outside of school hours.

In cases where a serious incident may constitute a criminal offence, the matter will be directly reported to the Police.

H. AWARENESS AND TRAINING

As part of our PSHE programme. The school will conduct awareness programmes for students, families, and educational staff regarding the responsible and safe use of digital technology, promoting a culture of respect and responsibility in the digital environment. Information will be provided on cybersecurity, addiction, and the risks associated with unsupervised mobile device use. These programmes will be run with the support of the local and national police.

I. RELATED POLICIES AND DOCUMENTATION

BSA ICT and E-Safety Policy

BSA Acceptable Use Policy Agreement -Staff and Volunteers

BSA Acceptable Use Policy Agreement - Pupils

This policy will be communicated to the entire educational community and will be subject to periodic reviews to adapt to the evolving educational and technological landscape. Any modifications will be duly communicated to all stakeholders.

Date of Policy: May 2025

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To be Reviewed: September 2025