

The Wallace High School

Policy on hand-held electronic devices

Introduction

At The Wallace High School we recognise and value the increasingly wide opportunities that information technology provides to our staff and pupils. Whilst it is our aim that all members of our school community avail as fully as possible of this technology we also appreciate the need for safeguards to be in place. Young people have many opportunities to benefit from what are becoming very sophisticated hand-held devices outside school however it should be recognised that at present their usefulness in the school context is limited.

Aims:

To ensure that all members of the school community are fully informed as to the types and features of hand-held electronic devices that may arise within the school context and to be aware of the boundaries regarding their use.

Types of hand-held devices covered by this policy:

Mobile phones:

Whilst in the main these are used for texting and voice calls many phones now enable the user to take photographs and video, to listen to music, to play games, to communicate wirelessly via Bluetooth and, increasingly, to access the web.

MP3 players:

Used primarily for listening to music many now enable the user to watch video, to take and store both photographs and video, to play games and to communicate wirelessly via Bluetooth.

Dedicated (digital) video cameras:

Now marketed with the express aim of taking video and downloading to a PC.

Games consoles:

Solely used for playing games but some now have photographic capability.

Responsibilities of pupils:

It is recognised that most pupils will carry a mobile phone when in school and that it is regarded as a very useful and significant communication device. In addition some may choose to carry an MP3 player but they should be aware of the following restrictions:

- All hand-held devices brought to school are done so at the pupil's own risk. Any pupil with one, or more, of the above is responsible for its safe-keeping and the school cannot be held responsible for any loss or damage.

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- Pupils should recognise that hand-held devices used for communication must not be used in any way which could be construed as bullying. This includes the sending of abusive texts, taking and sharing photographs/videos without consent, using offensive Bluetooth names (see Anti-bullying Policy for further details).
- If a device supports it, Bluetooth may be used in class for file transfer but only with the permission of a member of staff.
- For reasons of Child Protection pupils are not permitted to use the photographic or recording facilities on a hand-held device (including a camera) without the permission of a member of staff.
- Pupils must not, under any circumstances, have any of these devices on their person while they are in an examination room.
- All devices covered by this policy must be switched off when a pupil is in class, in assembly or during personal study time. Pupils are permitted to use their phone at break and lunchtime but they must not be used in the corridor at any time during the school day.
- MP3 players should not be used in class or in assembly by any pupil. Sixth Form students may use them in supervised study provided they are not used in such a way so as to disturb other students. There are exceptional cases in which an MP3 player may be used in class in line with that department's policy.
- Whilst some MP3 players have software offering some of the features of a scientific calculator it is expected that all pupils should possess a scientific calculator for use in both class and examinations.
- Pupils are not permitted to bring games consoles to school or on a school trip without the permission of a member of staff.
- On school trips pupils bring hand-held devices at their own risk and must ensure they are switched off when appropriate e.g. on an airplane, in a theatre, or when directed so to do by the member(s) of staff in charge.

Pupils should be aware of the likely sanctions to be applied when a hand-held device is used inappropriately or in contravention of any of the above. Persistent misuse may lead to confiscation of the device by a member of staff and a parent may be requested to collect it from the school.

Responsibilities of parents

We expect our parents to

- ensure that their child appreciates the need to keep such items safe and to use them in accordance with the school procedures outlined above.

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- recognise the potential dangers associated with unmonitored access to the internet provided by WAP technology now found in many mobile phones.
- refrain from contacting their child when they are in class, assembly or personal study time. Urgent messages from parents/guardians should be passed through the Front Office.

Responsibilities of staff

We expect our staff to assist in educating pupils, where appropriate, about the use and misuse of these devices and to enforce the procedures outlined above.

Review of policy

In accordance with school procedures this policy will be reviewed every 3 years during which pupils, parents and staff will be consulted.