

# Acceptable Use Policy for Mobile Devices

## 1. Purpose

1.1. The widespread ownership of mobile devices among young people requires that school administrators, teachers, students, parents/guardians take steps to ensure that these tools are used responsibly at school. This Acceptable Use Policy is designed to ensure that potential issues involving mobile phones, iPod Touches, iPhones, iPads, iWatches and other personal devices can be clearly identified and addressed, ensuring the educational benefits of such devices can to be enjoyed by our students.

1.2. Thomas Hart Academy has established the following Acceptable Use Policy for mobile devices that provides teachers, students, parents/guardians guidelines and instructions for the appropriate use of devices during school hours.

1.3. Students and their parents/guardians must read and understand the Acceptable Use Policy before students are given permission to bring mobile phones to school.

1.4. The Acceptable Use Policy for mobile devices applies to all times students are on school grounds, including during school activities, and extracurricular activities.

## 2. Rationale

2.1. Thomas Hart Academy accepts that parents/guardians give their children mobile phones to protect them from everyday risks involving personal security and safety. There is also the desire to keep in contact with students participating in extracurricular activities after school.

2.2. In the technology era the world of work is rapidly changing. Expectations for collaboration and management of tasks using technology exist in nearly all careers. Our students live in a digital age. Powering down for education is not teaching them the skills required for life.

2.3. Due to the rapid rate of growth and change in the world of mobile devices, this document is to be considered a “living” document, subject to regular changes and modifications. Such changes will be designed to ensure effective integration of technology to drive education and student learning; ensure student safety in regards to digital content and reinforce acceptable usage.

## 3. Responsibilities

3.1. It is the responsibility of students who bring mobile devices to school to abide by the guidelines outlined in this document.

3.2. The decision to provide a mobile device to their children should be made by parents/guardians.

3.3. Parents/guardians should be aware if their child takes a mobile device to school.

3.4. Permission to have a mobile device at school while under the school’s supervision is contingent on parent/guardian permission in the form of a signed copy of this policy.

Parents/guardians may revoke approval at any time. School administration may revoke approval due to improper use of technology.

3.5. Students are responsible for keeping the school informed of their current mobile phone number.

3.6. The school agrees that both home and school are responsible for teaching digital citizenship. At school, regular discussions regarding proper etiquette, safety and responsible use will be infused into assignments and activities across classrooms. Formal lesson plans regarding digital citizenship are taught within our Computers courses and Digital Citizenship course.

3.7. Students are responsible for connecting to THA school network wifi while on any mobile device on school grounds. This is a secured network with security blocks enabled to meet school safety mandates. Staff is responsible for clearly posting in classrooms how to log into the THA school network.

#### **4. Acceptable Uses**

4.1 The school recognizes the importance of emerging technologies present in modern mobile devices e.g. camera and video recording, Internet access, MP3 and MP4 playback, blogging etc. Some teachers may wish to utilize these functions to aid teaching and learning. Pupils may have the opportunity to use their mobile devices in the classroom. On these occasions pupils may use their mobile devices in the classroom when the teacher has given express permission.

4.2. Parents/guardians are reminded that in cases of emergency, the school office remains a vital and appropriate point of contact and can ensure your child is reached quickly and assisted in any appropriate way. Distractions to the educational process due to phone calls or text to and from home should be avoided. During school hours, student phone calls should take place in the school office. Phones will be turned on only with teacher permission for educational purposes.

4.3. While on school premises; students should have their phones on silent mode.

4.4. Mobile devices should not be used in any manner or place that is disruptive to the normal routine of the school.

4.5. Students should protect their phone numbers by only giving them to friends and keeping a note of which they have given them to. This can help protect the student's number from falling into the wrong hands and guard against the unwanted contact of voice, text and picture messages.

#### **5. Unacceptable Uses**

5.1. Unless express permission is granted, mobile devices should not be used to make calls, send SMS messages, surf the Internet, take photos, video record or use any other application during school lessons and other educational activities.

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

5.3. Mobile devices must not disrupt classroom lessons with ringtones, music or beeping.

5.4. Using mobile devices to bully and threaten other students is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. In some cases it can constitute criminal behavior.

5.5. It is forbidden for students to “gang up” on another student and use their mobile devices to take videos and pictures of acts to denigrate and humiliate that student and then send the pictures to other students or upload it to a website for public viewing. This also includes using mobile devices to photograph or film any student or teacher without their consent. It is a criminal offense to use a mobile phone to menace, harass or offend another person and almost all calls, text messages and emails can be traced.

5.6. Mobile devices are not to be used or taken into 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.

5.7. Should there be repeated disruptions to lessons caused by a mobile device, the responsible student may face disciplinary actions as sanctioned by administration and Discipline Policy.

## **6. Theft or Damage**

6.1. Students should mark their mobile device clearly with their names.

6.2. Students who bring a mobile device to school should place it in their homeroom teacher’s bin when they arrive.

6.3. Mobile devices that are found in the school and whose owner cannot be located should be handed to front office reception.

6.4. The school accepts no responsibility for replacing lost, stolen or damaged mobile devices.

6.5. The school accepts no responsibility for students who lose or have their mobile devices stolen while traveling to and from school.

6.6. It is strongly advised that students use passwords/pin numbers to ensure that unauthorized phone calls cannot be made on their phones (e.g. by other students, or if stolen). Students must keep their password/pin numbers confidential. Mobile devices and/or passwords may not be shared.

## **7. Inappropriate Conduct**

7.1. Any student/s caught using a mobile device to cheat in exams or assessments will face disciplinary action as sanctioned by the Head of School and THA Discipline Policy.

7.2. Any student who uses vulgar, derogatory, or obscene language while using a mobile device will face disciplinary action as sanctioned by the Head of School and THA Discipline Policy.

7.3. Students with mobile devices may not engage in personal attacks, harass another person, or post private information about another person using SMS messages, taking/sending photos or objectionable images, and phone calls. Students using mobile phones to bully other students will face disciplinary action as sanctioned by the Head of School and THA Discipline Policy. It should be noted that it is a criminal offense to use a mobile device to menace, harass or offend another person. As such, if action as

sanctioned by the Head of School is deemed ineffective, as with all such incidents, the school may consider it appropriate to involve the police.

## **8. Sanctions**

8.1. Students who infringe the rules set out in this document could face having their phones confiscated by teachers and/or school administration.

8.2. Depending on severity and type of offense, the first infringement of this policy will minimally result in the mobile device being confiscated by the teacher and taken to a secure place within the school office. The student will be able to collect the mobile device at the end of the school day and a record will be made of the incident. A letter will also be sent to the parent/guardian to inform them of the incident. The location and form of the secure place will be one deemed appropriate by the school administration. Depending on severity, the school reserves the right to withdraw the agreement to allow the student to bring the mobile device to school.

8.3. Depending on severity and type of offense, the second infringement of this policy will minimally result in the mobile phone being confiscated by the teacher and taken to a secure place within the school office. Parents will be notified and the student will not be permitted to collect the phone without a parent/guardian's consent. If a parent/guardian is unable to attend the school they are permitted to phone and give verbal consent for their child to collect the phone and must speak to a member of the administrative team. The incident will be recorded. Depending on severity, the school reserves the right to withdraw the agreement to allow the student to bring the mobile device to school.

8.4. Depending on severity and type of offense, the third infringement of this policy will minimally result in the mobile phone being confiscated by the teacher and taken to a secure place within the school office. Parents will be notified and the pupil will not be permitted to collect the phone without a parent/guardian present. After the third infringement, the school will withdraw the agreement to allow the student to bring the mobile device to school.

8.5. As set out in the previous section, failure to heed the rules set out in this document may result in an alleged incident being referred to the police for investigation. In such cases, the parent/guardian would be notified immediately.

**Effective: August 2022**

**Parent/Guardian Permission for BYOD**

I have read and understand the above information about appropriate use of mobile devices at Thomas Hart Academy and I understand that this form will be kept on file at the school and that the details may be used (and shared with a third party, if necessary) to assist identify a phone should the need arise (e.g. if lost, or if the phone is being used inappropriately). I give my child permission to carry a mobile device to school and understand that my child will be responsible for ensuring that the mobile phone is used appropriately and correctly while under the school's supervision, as outlined in this document.

Parent name (print): \_\_\_\_\_

Parent signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Student name (print): \_\_\_\_\_

Student Mobile phone number: \_\_\_\_\_

**\*\*Please return this signed form on the first day of school. \*\***