POLICY FOR THE STUDENT USE OF MOBILE DEVICES AT WESTTOWN SCHOOL

Note: The term ‘mobile device’ in this policy denotes mobile phones, hand-held music/video players, smart phones, tablet computers, laptops, netbooks, gaming devices, and similar devices that provide an interface with the Internet, access content from the Internet, and/or communicate with other devices wirelessly. In contrast to personal computing devices like the desktop computer, ‘mobile device’ generally refers to devices that are portable.

The following policy is meant to help maintain an educational focus in the classroom and other study areas while respecting the needs of today’s students to participate in formal and informal learning environments where mobile technologies and devices are integral to communication and information. Westtown recognizes that reasonable access to personal mobile devices is necessary to support flexible learning environments and 21st century teaching and learning.

Guiding Principle for Responsible Use of Mobile Devices

At Westtown, the guiding principle for the use of mobile devices is that they support the teaching and learning process and never detract from community interactions. Westtown therefore permits students to use mobile devices and technologies on campus. Similar to existing information and communication technology use, this use should adhere to rules, guidelines, and etiquette to instill good habits, educate students on responsible and appropriate use, and support learning.

General Guidelines

1. Westtown’s Policy for the Responsible Use of Technology governs any internet-connected mobile device or other mobile phone. It is important to highlight that this includes personally-owned devices. Therefore, students must ensure that files stored on their mobile devices do not contain illegal, violent, degrading or offensive images. The transmission of such images/information may be a criminal offense violating state and federal law. In the event of violations, Westtown will comply with the mandates of those laws.

2. All students who wish to use a mobile phone on campus must secure their phone with a passcode and register the device with their divisional office immediately upon bringing it to campus.

3. Responsibility for personally-owned mobile devices rests with the student and Westtown accepts no financial responsibility for damage, loss or theft.

4. Westtown School expects that mobile devices will be silenced at all times, except as permitted in designated areas. The school is a workplace, and audio/ringtones from mobile devices can interfere with the atmosphere and the workplace. Members of the community who use mobile phones for organizational purposes are asked to use the vibrate feature for notifications.

5. Because the value of community is central to our mission, the following locations and events are mobile device free (completely silenced and out of sight): Meeting for Worship, all meals in the dining hall, community meetings (assemblies, collections, homeroom, etc…), and at events and gatherings such as performances and speakers. Additionally, each division (in conversation with the principal and the Educational Technology Committee) may identify locations, events, days of the week and times of day where restricting use of mobile devices is necessary for preservation of the community.
6. Communication through mobile devices that disengages individuals with the immediate face-to-face community, such as phone calls, sustained texting, video calls, and other comparable behaviors or technologies, may only be used in designated areas of campus buildings, parking lots, main offices (with permission), or in a personal dorm room.

7. The use of camera-equipped devices is strictly forbidden in private areas, such as locker rooms, restrooms, and dressing areas. This applies on and off-campus. It is important to understand that use of camera-equipped devices in these private areas may be a criminal offense violating state and federal law. In the event of violations, Westtown will comply with the mandates of those laws.

8. The use of mobile devices to intentionally record (photograph, video, audio) any member of the Westtown community who is unaware that he/she is being recorded is prohibited. Individuals using mobile devices to intentionally record any member of the Westtown community must seek permission from the subject. Intentionally recording another individual without permission may be a criminal offense violating state and federal law. In the event of violations, Westtown will comply with the mandates of those laws.

9. The use of a mobile device to bully or harass another (cyber-bullying) is a major offense and will result in temporary confiscation of the device and referral of the student to the school’s disciplinary process.

10. Westtown School reserves the right to take disciplinary action to respond to any conduct on or off-campus that diminishes the well-being of any member of the Westtown community.

Classroom Guidelines

1. In classrooms, rules regarding the appropriate use of mobile devices will be established by the classroom teacher. As a general understanding, mobile devices are not to be used in the classroom unless there is clear and direct permission from the classroom teacher. This means that mobile devices must not be used for example, for checking the time, as a calculator, or accessing calendars without permission from the classroom instructor.

2. With information available from most internet-connected devices, it is extremely important for students to turn off completely and store away (in a backpack or locker) their mobile device during assessments or in testing environments. A mobile device that is discovered during a testing situation may be referred to the school’s disciplinary process for violation of academic integrity. Similar to the manner in which math instructors regulate the use of calculators, if a mobile device is beneficial or required for testing, the teacher will provide details regarding acceptable use during the testing period.

Managing Responsible Use

Responsible use of mobile devices is a community responsibility. If a faculty, staff member, or student leader observes a student who appears to be violating the mobile device policy, then the faculty, staff member, or student leader will engage the student in a brief conversation about their activity with the expectation of honesty and the knowledge that mobile device use is a privilege not a right. In addition to the conversation, the faculty or staff member has discretion on the following:

1. Ask the student to turn the mobile device off to prevent further disruption.
2. Immediately, confiscate the mobile device if there is a concern about images (recorded content) on the device or how the device is being used by the student. Confiscated devices will be turned into the appropriate divisional office. At the end of the day, another conversation will occur with the student at that time to confirm their understanding of the mobile device policy. The student may receive the mobile device back if a designated administrator deems it appropriate.

3. Each Division determines the developmentally appropriate responses to repeated violations of the Mobile Device and the Acceptable Use Policies. Please refer to the Lower School, Middle School, and Upper School Handbooks for specific consequences and disciplinary procedures.