

Mobile Phone Policy

Approved by	FGB	Date July 2026
Last reviewed	July 2026	
Next review due	July 2027	

1. Introduction and Aims

At our school, we recognise that mobile phones and similar devices, including smartphones, are an important part of everyday life for our students, parents/carers and staff, as well as the wider school community. In our context as a City Centre school, many of our students depend upon mobile devices for travel to and from school.

Our policy aims to:

- Promote safe and responsible phone use, ensuring that students are able to bring a mobile phone to school if it is necessary e.g. for transport whilst ensuring that students do not access their mobile phones during the school day.
- Set clear guidelines for the use of mobile phones for students, staff, parents/carers, visitors and volunteers.
- Support the school's other policies, especially those related to child protection and behaviour.

Our policy is guided by four key priorities:

- **Our unique context.** As a city centre school drawing students from every postcode in the city and beyond.
- **Understanding teenage habits.** Recognising that our students are digital natives with lifelong technology access.
- **Addressing teenage pressures.** Acknowledging that mental health challenges and peer issues often stem from digital connections and FOMO ('fear of missing out').
- **Balancing expectations.** Considering the diverse perspectives held by parents/carers, staff, and students.
- **Adhering to national guidance and law.**

Where the policy refers to mobile phone, it also refers to smartwatches. Headphones are referred to specifically and are considered differently.

We have carefully considered and analysed the impact of this policy on equality and the possible implications for pupils with protected characteristics, as part of our commitment to meet the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) requirement to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations.

2. Our Values

The ethos of our school is based around our Alive Model of learning, including our 15 Alive values. The position we take centres strongly around Diversity and Choice, Trust and Truth, alongside Justice and Respect. Our policy takes into account the diversity of our student population and our context:

- The importance of making good choices everyday through respecting 'Safe Boundaries'.
- Acknowledging the importance of justice and fairness by keeping to the rules and maintaining 'Good Relationships'.
- Being trusted and truthful in words and actions to develop good character and enabling young people to make their unique contribution to the world.

3. Department for Education (DfE) Guidelines

The DfE now requires all schools to be mobile phone-free environments by default; anything other than this should be by exception only.

"Develop a mobile phone policy that prohibits the use of mobile phones and other smart technology with similar functionality (for example the ability to send and/or receive notifications or messages via mobile phone networks or the ability to record audio and/or video) throughout the school day, including during lessons, the time between lessons, breaktimes, and lunchtime."

The Department for Education (DfE) expects schools to implement a policy whereby pupils do not have access to their mobile phone throughout the school day including during lessons, the time between lessons, breaktimes and lunchtime.

All students are expected to ensure that they do not have access to their mobile devices throughout the day, this is evidenced by them not being 'used, seen or heard'. Each student is provided with a personal locker and is expected to take reasonable choices about the safekeeping of their mobile device. Lockers are provided as a secure place to prevent access to mobile devices during the school day. If any student is seen to have access to their phone, evidenced by it being 'seen, used or heard', sanctions will apply. Further guidance that should be considered alongside this policy is [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#).

4. Use of Mobile Phones by Staff

All staff (including teachers, support staff, and supply staff) are responsible for consistently enforcing this policy with everyone in the school. No student, staff member, or visitor should have a personal mobile phone visible in front of students.

Personal mobile phones

Staff (including volunteers, contractors, and anyone else otherwise engaged by the school) are not permitted to use their personal mobile phone on the school site where children are present. Use of personal mobile phones must be restricted to non-contact time and to areas of the school where students are not present (such as the staffroom).

There may be circumstances in which it is appropriate for a member of staff to have use of their phone during contact time for personal reasons. For instance (this list is non-exhaustive):

- For emergency contact by their child, or their child's school
- In the case of acutely ill dependents or family members

The Headteacher will decide on a case-by-basis whether to allow for special arrangements. If special arrangements are not deemed necessary, school staff can use the Main School number 0117 377 2100 as a point for emergency contact.

Data protection

Staff must not use their personal mobile phones to process personal data, or any other confidential school information, including entering such data into generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools such as chatbots (e.g. ChatGPT and Google Bard). Please refer to the school's [Online Safety and Acceptable Use Policy](#).

Safeguarding

Please refer to the school's [Online Safety and Acceptable Use Policy](#).

Using personal mobiles for work purposes

Please refer to the school's [Online Safety and Acceptable Use Policy](#).

Work phones

Some members of staff are provided with a mobile phone by the school for work purposes. Only authorised staff are permitted to use school phones, and access to the phone must not be provided to anyone without authorisation.

Staff must:

- Only use phone functions for work purposes, including making/receiving calls, sending/receiving emails or other communications, or using the internet.
- Ensure that communication or conduct linked to the device is appropriate and professional at all times, in line with our Staff Code of Conduct.

5. Use of Mobile Phones by Students

Students should not access or use their mobile phones/smartwatches during the school day, including during lessons, in the time between lessons, at breaktimes, or at lunchtimes.

- Students should store mobile phones in their school lockers for the day.
- Mobile phones are not needed during school hours and should remain out of reach and sight.
- Students who choose not to use lockers or forget to use their lockers must ensure that phones are not accessed through the school day, evidenced by being 'never used, seen, or heard'.
- The 'never used, seen, or heard' definition includes visible phone outlines in pockets or bags.
- There will be consequences for non-compliance.

To ensure this policy is effective, clear consequences will be consistently applied:

- Confiscation of phones for up to 5 school days.
- Phones will only be returned to parents/carers or other priority contact recorded in our school MIS. Phones will not be returned to students or siblings.
- If phones are not collected by a parent/carer/priority contact within 5 days, they will be handed back to the student at the end of the fifth school day.
- While confiscated, phones will be held securely. The school accepts no liability for these items; however, they will be stored in a secure place until collection or return.
- Phones will not be held by the school over a holiday period.
- If a student breaks the policy repeatedly, they will be subject to further restrictions and a behaviour contract to ensure they do not access their device during the school day.

6. Parents/Carers' Responsibility

- Parents/carers should establish a 'Plan B' for students who rely on phones for travel to and from school in case of confiscation, for example for bus tickets or bus payments. This is particularly important as school staff cannot be responsible for students after the end of the school day. The school encourages families to prepare alternative travel arrangements in case of confiscation.
- Parents/carers should ensure their child has a school bag.
- Parents/carers should note that Reception on B Floor is open between 8am and 4pm. Phones will not be returned outside of these hours.

- Parents/carers must not expect to contact their child through the school day, as phones should not be 'never used, seen or heard'. Any communication needs to be through the school reception teams and/or Year teams.
- The school recognises parents/carers concerns about students being unable to travel home if their phones are confiscated. The school is sympathetic to this but need to be clear that the school's responsibility is safeguarding students while they are in school. Parents/Carers are responsible for student safety after school hours. Therefore, parents/carers must ensure that they talk to their child about the importance of not breaching the rules in order to support the school and their child.
- Confiscation of items can be emotive. It is important to stress that rudeness, verbal abuse, or any other form of unnecessary behaviour by parents/carers (or students) towards members of staff will never be tolerated.
- Where a student needs to use a mobile phone for medical purposes, e.g. electronic monitoring of diabetes, adjustments will be put in place through working with key staff, and students must respond to the trust they are given by keeping to the agreed boundaries.
- Use of mobile phones when off site, e.g. after school PE fixtures or a field trip, will be decided on a case-by-case basis, e.g. based upon the length of the day or the distance travelled. Expectations will be made clear to students by the trip leader, and when students return to the school during the school day the phone rules will always apply. When onsite, students must never have access to their mobile devices, evidenced by them never being 'used, seen or heard'.
- The school recommends that students wear a wristwatch (not a smartwatch) during the school day to help them manage their time.

7. Daily Routines

- When arriving at school, students must put their phones away in bags before they pass the school gate. School gates have clear signage instructing students to put phones away. We advise that students who text parents/carers to say they have arrived at school should do this before they pass the school gate. Students must not block entrance to the gate while messaging.
- Once at their lockers, students may get their phones out of their bags briefly to put them into their lockers. This should be done quickly and sensibly.
- Any phones that are accessed, evidenced by being 'used, seen or heard' will be confiscated for up to 5 days.
- Parents/Carers can collect phones from Reception on B Floor (between 8am and 4pm, 3.30pm on Fridays) at any point before the end of the 5th day.
- Once the end-of-day bell rings, phones may be accessed. Students will not be sanctioned for using their phones, unless the students are in detention or in twilight lessons/interventions.
- Smart watches are treated in the same way as phones and should not be worn in school.
- Headphones (including air pods and similar devices) should not be worn in school. Wearing headphones will lead to a bag search, as it indicates that a phone is connected and being accessed, and is therefore in breach of our rules. If headphones are worn as an accessory, they will be confiscated for a minimum of one day and returned to the student at the end of the next school day. The phone will be confiscated for the duration set out above. Any student who requires headphones or ear loops due to a documented SEND need will have reasonable adjustments in place for their day-to-

day needs and Exam Access. They should carry evidence with them of this (e.g. a pass or confirmation signed into their planner) to help support their communication if challenged by a member of staff. If this is an issue for a child that we are not aware of, parents/carers are asked to contact our SEND team in the first instance.

8. Communication Processes with Parents/Carers

The school will endeavour to inform parents/carers about phone confiscations via MCAS/text communications, though this cannot be guaranteed and will depend on timing and circumstances.

9. Repeated Non-Compliance by Students

Students who have phones confiscated twice will be placed on a phone contract requiring them to:

- Hand in their phone to a designated place at 8:30 am.
- Collect it at the end of the day from the designated place.

The duration of this arrangement will be determined by pastoral leaders and communicated to parents/carers.

10. Non-Compliance Consequences

The school has clearly communicated a new policy which became operational from September 2025 and updated in 2026. Students who refuse to hand over a phone and/or are verbally abusive or rude will face significant consequences (potentially including suspension) and will still be required to comply with the confiscation rules.

When a student is told to hand over their phone, they must do so immediately, and without argument. If a student argues or delays the process, they will lose the right to have their phone back through parental collection and will incur a secondary sanction for non-compliance. It is essential that students are compliant if found to be breaking the rules.

11. Guidance for Parents/Carers: Supporting Your Child

The school understands that this is a topic that generates strong opinions. We listened to parent/carer perspectives during the consultation period, through individual communications, surveys, and forums. We will continue to take a balanced approach and ask for parent/carer support in:

- Clearly communicating these rules at home.
- Supporting the policy as a family.
- Helping your child focus on learning while developing a healthy relationship with technology.

We appreciate this approach may cause inconvenience to parents/carers and we apologise for any inconvenience if or when this occurs, but we will hold to our procedure. The best safeguard against inconvenience is for our students to comply with these clear expectations by ensuring their phones are 'never used, seen or heard'. It is vital that any frustration is not projected onto school staff, as inappropriate conduct towards members of staff enforcing this expectation will not be tolerated, nor will the sanction be changed.

Our intention is that through clear communication we can maintain good relationships with students and families whilst 'holding the line' on our expectations and any consequences.

12. Educational Support

Our school takes an active role in educating students about issues around technology and social media use through our PSHE curriculum, which is delivered via the ViP and the Pastoral Curriculum. Parents/Carers can also guide their children in making good screen time choices.

For additional support and guidance, please visit:

- [Children and technology: Age-appropriate usage advice \(NSPCC\)](#)
- [Let's Talk About Smartphones \(Ten:Ten Resources\)](#)
- [Solutions \(Papaya Parents\)](#)

13. The School's Right to Confiscate

The DfE's guidance on [Searching, Screening and Confiscation](#) states:

"Schools' general power to discipline enables a member of staff to confiscate, retain or dispose of a student's property as a disciplinary penalty, where reasonable to do so. The law protects members of staff from liability in any proceedings brought against them for any loss of, or damage to, any item they have confiscated, provided they acted lawfully."

This is referenced in our [Behaviour and Good Relationships Policy](#).

The DfE's guidance on [Mobile Phones in Schools](#) states:

"Schools can use a range of sanctions for breaching the mobile phone policy appropriate to their context, including confiscation and detention. Schools have the power to confiscate mobile phones or similar devices as a disciplinary penalty. The law protects staff from liability in any proceedings brought against them for any loss or damage to items they have confiscated as a sanction, providing they have acted lawfully. Staff should consider whether the confiscation is proportionate and consider any special circumstances relevant to the case."

14 Exceptions for Special Circumstances and For Sixth-Form Students

Some students may be allowed to use a phone in school due to medical or SEMH needs, and these are dealt with on a case-by-case basis.

Sixth-form students are allowed access to their mobile phones during the school day, to reflect their increased independence and responsibility, but must not compromise our policy on the use of mobile phones for other students. This should include prohibiting the use of mobile phones by sixth-form students in front of younger pupils, limiting use to the Sixth Form centre and, when in the Main School, only inside lessons at the instruction of the teacher. Sixth-form students are also subject to the school's behaviour policy and misuse of their phone may lead to sanctions such as confiscation.

They should set a good example to younger students and prevent safeguarding risks by ensuring that their phones are not used outside of the classroom. Therefore, they are only permitted to use their mobile phones out of sight of younger students.

Misuse of mobile phones by students in the sixth form will lead to sanctions according to our [Behaviour and Good Relationships Policy](#).

15. Loss, Theft, or Damage

The school accepts no responsibility for mobile phones or accessories that are lost, damaged, or stolen on school premises or transport, during school visits or trips, or while students are travelling to and from school ([Online Safety and Acceptable Use Policy](#)).

16. Equality Impact Assessment

This policy has been assessed for its impact on equality and does not unlawfully discriminate against individuals or groups on the basis of any protected characteristic as defined by the [Equality Act 2010](#).

In developing and implementing this policy, the school has given due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation, and any other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

The school is committed to ensuring that this policy is applied fairly and consistently to all members of the school community, taking account of individual needs and circumstances where appropriate.

The Governing Board and Headteacher will monitor the implementation and impact of this policy to ensure it remains compliant with equality legislation and supports the school's commitment to inclusion, diversity, and equal opportunity.

Appendix 1: Code of Conduct for students who bring their phones to school.

You must obey the following rules if you bring your mobile phone to school:

1. You may not use your mobile phone, headphones, or smartwatch during the school day.
2. You must turn off your phone, smartwatch, and headphones before you enter the school gates and put them in your bag.
3. You may get your phone, smartwatch, and headphones out of your bag to put them directly into your locker.
4. You must switch off your devices and store them safely for the day.
5. Your phones should be stored in your locker. Any student who does not use their locker must be responsible for ensuring that their phone is 'never used, seen or heard'.
6. You are responsible for your actions. If your phone is confiscated, you will need to find alternative plans for transport to home. You must avoid this situation but prepare for the eventuality with your parents/carers.
7. If your phone's outline is visible in a pocket or bag, it is classed as 'seen' and therefore will be confiscated.

Appendix 2: Code of Conduct for students who are allowed to keep their phones on during the school day due to exceptional circumstances.

You must obey the following rules if you bring your mobile phone to school and are allowed to use it during the day due to exceptional circumstances:

1. Mobile phones are always prohibited in the toilets or changing rooms. This is to protect the privacy, safeguarding, and welfare of other students. You must never get your phone out when getting changed, e.g. for PE.
2. You must immediately comply with a request by a member of staff to hand over a phone. Refusal to comply is a breach of the school's [Behaviour and Good Relationships Policy](#) and will be dealt with accordingly.
3. You cannot take photos or recordings (either video or audio) of school staff or other students without their consent.
4. You should avoid sharing your contact details with people you don't know, and don't share other people's contact details without their consent.
5. Do not share your phone's password(s) or access code(s) with anyone else.
6. Do not use your mobile phone to bully, intimidate, or harass anyone. This includes bullying, harassing, or intimidating students or staff via:
 - a. Email
 - b. Text/messaging apps
 - c. Social media
7. Do not use your phone to send or receive anything that may be criminal, for example, by 'sexting'.
8. Rules on bullying, harassment, and intimidation apply to how you use your mobile phone even when you aren't in school. The Police work with the school to enforce the law.
9. Do not use discriminatory, obscene, or derogatory language while using the phone or when using social media. This language is not permitted under the [school's Behaviour and Good Relationships Policy](#).
10. Do not use your phone to view or share pornography or other harmful content.

11. Mobile phones are not permitted in any internal or external exam or test environment. If you have a mobile phone, you will be asked to store it appropriately, or turn it over to an exam invigilator, before entering the test room. Bringing a phone into the test room can result in your exam being declared invalid.
12. You must always use your phone discreetly so that other students do not feel that there is inequality.
13. You must always carry your permission card so that if you are questioned, you can explain your situation with evidence.