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## MOBILE PHONE AND DEVICE POLICY 2026- 2027

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**DRAFT SUBJECT TO APPROVAL OF COMMITTEE**

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## Contents

|                                                |    |
|------------------------------------------------|----|
| Purpose .....                                  | 3  |
| Quick Summary .....                            | 3  |
| Why is the school doing this? .....            | 4  |
| Scope .....                                    | 5  |
| Clear Rules and Expectations .....             | 6  |
| Secure Pouches and Screening at Gates .....    | 6  |
| Exceptions and reasonable adjustments .....    | 7  |
| Sixth form .....                               | 8  |
| Communication with home during the day.....    | 8  |
| Expectations for pupils .....                  | 8  |
| Expectations for staff .....                   | 9  |
| Sanctions and consequences .....               | 9  |
| Refusal to hand over a phone .....             | 9  |
| Searching, confiscation and safeguarding ..... | 9  |
| Recording, photography and online misuse ..... | 10 |
| Storage and liability.....                     | 10 |
| Trips, visits and enrichment activities .....  | 10 |
| Publication and communication .....            | 11 |
| Monitoring and review .....                    | 11 |

## Wrotham School Mobile Phone and Device Policy

This policy applies to all pupils at Wrotham School and should be read alongside the school's:

- Behaviour Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Searching, Screening and Confiscation procedures
- Online Safety / Acceptable Use Policy
- SEND Policy
- Sixth Form expectations, where applicable

## Purpose

At Wrotham and Aylesford Schools, we are committed to providing a calm, safe and focused environment for learning. In line with current DfE guidance, our school is a mobile phone and device-free environment by default. Pupils must not have access to mobile phones, devices or similar smart technology during the school day.

## Quick Summary

### Clear Rules and Expectations

#### Years 7-11

Pupils must not use, access or have visible possession of a mobile phone or similar smart device during the school day.

#### The school expectation is that:

- pupils either do not bring a mobile phone/ device to school, or
- if a phone is brought to school, it must be switched off and stored and locked securely in a secure pouch (secured in advance from the school with a £10 deposit)

Students who bring a phone and store this correctly can use this device as they wish outside of the school boundary including journeys to and from school.

#### The options for students are:

1. A mobile phone/ device is not brought to school
2. Their mobile phone/ device is locked in a school issued "pouch" during the school day

If a child does not follow one of the above any phone/ device will be confiscated until such time as a parent can collect it and a sanction will be issued as per the school's behaviour policy.

## Why is the school doing this?

The Department for Education expects schools to be mobile phone-free environments by default.

Our policy is designed to protect learning time, reduce distraction, support wellbeing and create a calm and safe school culture. This is a national expectation that is required to be adopted in ALL schools. This also forms part of Ofsted's inspection of school standards and safety.

Evidence nationally and from our own schools strongly suggest that mobile phones have a significant impact on concentration, safety, normal childhood social behaviours they are also increasingly linked to exposure to extreme material, bullying and risk so children's physical and emotional safety.

Strong evidence from schools that have banned mobile phones, and their use have seen significant improvements in children's learning and wellbeing during the school day.

**The government policy can be found here:**

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/mobile-phones-in-schools/mobile-phones-in-schools>

## **This policy exists to:**

- reduce distraction and disruption to learning
- support positive behaviour and attention in lessons
- protect the wellbeing of students and to ensure the highest standards of safeguarding in school.
- reduce risks linked to bullying, filming, online conflict, crime, exposure to inappropriate content and misuse of technology
- promote face-to-face interaction, social development and wellbeing
- ensure clear, consistent expectations for pupils, staff and families

## Scope

### **This policy applies:**

- from arrival on school site until the end of the school day

### **This includes -**

- during lessons
- between lessons
- at breaktime and lunchtime
- during tutor time, assemblies and other supervised sessions
- on educational visits unless a separate risk-assessed exception is agreed by the school.

For the purpose of this policy, the term “**mobile phones and devices**” includes:

- smartphones
- mobile phones without internet access (sometimes known as “dumb” or “brick” phones.
- tablets and iPads.
- smartwatches and similar wearable technology
- any smart or communication device with similar connectivity, functionality, including the ability to send or receive messages or notifications, access the internet, or record audio/video. Including smart glasses and ear pod/ air pod or wireless headphones.

### **Smartwatches/ tablets and similar devices**

Smartwatches and similar devices that can send messages, receive notifications, make calls, access the internet, record audio/video or otherwise operate like a phone are covered by this policy.

### **Where such a device is worn:**

- it must not be used during the school day
- **Must not** have its own 4/5G internet access or ability to message without a phone device.
- the school may require it to be removed, switched off, handed in or not brought to school at all if the school judges it to be misused.

## Clear Rules and Expectations

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Students who bring a phone and store this correctly can use this device as they wish outside of the school boundary including journeys to and from school.

#### **The options for students are:**

3. A mobile phone/ device is not brought to school
4. Their mobile phone/ device is locked in a school issued "pouch" during the school day

If a child does not follow one of the above any phone/ device will be confiscated until such time as a parent can collect it and a sanction will be issued as per the school's behaviour policy.

## Secure Pouches and Screening at Gates

#### **Pouches:**

- Pouches are to be sealed/ locked at the school gates at the start of the day and can be unlocked at the gate or when leaving school at the end of the day at clearly identified lock/ unlock points.
- The school will provide a secure pouch to students following receipt of a £10 deposit paid in advance on sco-pay. Deposits will be refunded in full on the return of the pouch to the school.
- Pouches use a magnetic lock system to secure and unlock the pouch at the start and end of the day. Additional locking/ unlocking points can be found in reception for those leaving site during the day. Students will keep their pouch with them at all times.
- Students and parents are responsible for the pouch at all times. Deliberate damage or loss of the pouch will mean that the deposit is lost and a new deposit required before a new pouch is issued.
- If the pouch is lost then the deposit will be lost and require a new deposit to be made before a replacement is issued.

## Wrotham School Mobile Phone and Device Policy

- Where normal wear and tear takes place or the pouch has become worn over time – the school will replace the pouch and no new deposit will be required.

### Screening:

- Staff will meet students on the gate/ single point of entrance each morning and screen students as they enter the site to check for:
  - Unsecured devices
  - Second or additional devices.
- Staff will be equipped with electronic wands to check every child is mobile phone free at the start of each day, or when arriving to school. This is a non-evasive method that does not require contact with the child or unnecessary bag searches.
- Any child caught on school site with a mobile phone/ device, or attempting to enter the school site with a mobile phone not in a pouch, will have their phone confiscated until it can be collected by a parent.
- Any child caught with a mobile phone on school site will be subject to sanctions as per the school's behaviour policy.

## Exceptions and reasonable adjustments

The school recognises that some pupils may require an **adaptation or reasonable adjustment** to this policy due to specific and individual medical need or another exceptional circumstance.

Any exception must:

- be individually considered
- be agreed in advance by the school
- be clearly recorded
- set out what is permitted, when, where and under whose supervision
- be communicated to relevant staff.

Examples may include:

- a medical monitoring need for example (Diabetes – blood sugar monitoring)
- a communication need linked to disability

Any exceptions will be agreed in writing with the school's pastoral team on provision of medical or similar evidence from the parent/ student.

## Sixth form

The school's default position remains that the wider school is a mobile phone-free environment. However, the school recognises their maturity of our sixth form students and the trust that comes with that. Where the school permits limited sixth form access, this will only be:

- in the sixth form common areas.
- away from younger pupils at all times

Where this is not met the sanctions and rules apply to all in the same way.

## Communication with home during the day

If a pupil needs to contact home urgently, they must do so via the school office / pastoral team / reception, and the team will support them to make contact.

If a parent or carer needs to contact a pupil urgently during the school day, they should contact the **school office**, which will ensure the message is passed on promptly.

This is similar to expectations in primary schools where mobile phones are not widely used or brought to school.

## Expectations for pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- follow this policy at all times
- hand over a phone or smart device immediately when instructed by staff
- avoid bringing phones unless necessary
- never use a phone to record, photograph, message or access online content during the school day
- report concerns linked to phone/ device use, online conflict, bullying, image sharing or misuse of devices to a trusted adult.

Pupils will be reminded of this policy and its consequences at the start of each year and at intervals during the year.

## Expectations for staff

Staff will:

- apply the policy consistently
- model the expectations of a mobile phone-free environment
- avoid using personal mobile phones in front of pupils for personal reasons during the school day, except where appropriate and professionally necessary
- record breaches in line with school systems
- escalate repeated or serious breaches
- consider safeguarding implications where misuse indicates risk.

## Sanctions and consequences

A breach of this policy will be treated as a behaviour matter. Sanctions will be applied as per each schools behaviour policy

## Refusal to hand over a phone

Refusal to hand over a phone or smart device when instructed will be treated as a more serious breach because it is a failure to follow a reasonable staff instruction.

This may result in:

- immediate escalation to senior staff
- more serious sanctions
- immediate request for parental meeting/ support.
- consideration of further behaviour consequences in line with the behaviour policy.

## Searching, confiscation and safeguarding

Where appropriate and lawful, the school may search for and confiscate a mobile phone or similar device in line with the school's behaviour policy and the DfE's searching, screening and confiscation guidance.

The school is both legally enabled and protected to conduct searches/ confiscations when following our searching, screening and confiscation policy and guidance.

Staff will follow safeguarding procedures where misuse of a phone raises concerns about harm, bullying, exploitation, image-sharing or other risk. This will be recorded as appropriate on our safeguarding records and external agencies, including the police contacted.

## Recording, photography and online misuse

The use of any phone or smart device to:

- photograph or film another pupil or member of staff
- record audio
- share indecent, inappropriate or abusive material
- post content intended to shame, bully or intimidate
- arrange conflict during the school day

will be treated as a serious matter and may trigger safeguarding action, additional sanctions, external agency involvement or police referral where appropriate.

## Storage and liability

Where pupils bring a phone to school, they do so at their own risk unless the school has taken possession of the device under its confiscation arrangements.

The school will take reasonable care of confiscated or officially stored devices, but will not accept liability for loss or damage where pupils bring devices against school advice or fail to follow storage procedures, except where the law requires otherwise.

The school is clear – mobile phones are brought to school at the owners full risk and in full knowledge and understanding of the rules/ policy. The school/ trust bears no responsibility for any damage physical or otherwise caused by the confiscation and storage of prohibited items including mobile phones/ devices when enforcing these clear rules.

## Trips, visits and enrichment activities

On trips or visits, the trip leader will set out whether phones:

- are not permitted
- may be brought but not used
- may be used only at agreed times for travel or safety purposes.

Any variation must be risk assessed and communicated in advance.

## Publication and communication

This policy will be:

- published on the school website
- shared with staff
- explained to pupils
- communicated to parents before implementation and reinforced regularly.

## Monitoring and review

Leaders will monitor:

- frequency of breaches
- consistency of staff implementation
- pupil and parent understanding
- impact on behaviour, learning and wellbeing
- whether any adjustments or exceptional arrangements remain appropriate.

**END**