



Mobile Phone Policy

Date Policy due to be reviewed: September 2028

Committee Responsible for Policy: Full Trust Board

WORK HARD | BE KIND | AIM HIGH

Contents

1. Introduction and aims
2. Relevant guidance
3. Roles and responsibilities
4. Use of mobile phones by staff
5. Use of mobile phones by pupils
6. Use of mobile phones by Parents/Carers/Visitors
7. Loss, theft or damage
8. Monitoring and review

1. Introduction and aims

At Hillcrest School and Sixth Form Centre, our policy aims to:

- Ensure our environment is mobile phone-free by default.
- Ensure the safe, responsible and lawful use of mobile phones, where applicable.
- Provide clear guidelines for the use of mobile phones for pupils, staff, parents/carers, visitors and volunteers.
- Support the school's other policies, especially those related to child protection and behaviour.

This policy also aims to address some of the challenges posed by mobile phones in school, such as:

- Risks to child protection.
- Data protection issues.
- Risk of theft, loss or damage.
- Appropriate use of technology for learning purposes.

Note: Throughout this policy, "mobile phones" refers to mobile phones and similar devices.

2. Relevant guidance

This policy meets the requirements of section 36 of the [Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act 2026](#), and the Department for Education (DfE)'s [mobile phone guidance](#) and [behaviour guidance](#). Further guidance to be considered alongside this policy includes Keeping Children Safe in Education, which sets out the expectation that all schools should be mobile phone-free by default.

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 Staff

All staff (including teachers, support staff and supply staff) are required to actively enforce this policy and challenge any breach of mobile phone restrictions immediately and consistently.

Volunteers, or anyone else otherwise engaged by the school, must alert a member of staff if they witness or become aware of a breach of this policy.

The Deputy Headteacher for Culture and Inclusion is responsible for monitoring the policy, reviewing it annually, and holding staff and pupils accountable for its implementation.

Staff will address any questions or concerns from parents/carers quickly and clearly communicate the reasons for prohibiting mobile phone use.

4. Use of mobile phones by staff

4.1 Personal mobile phones

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

There may be circumstances in which it's appropriate for a member of staff to use 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-case basis whether to allow for special arrangements.

If special arrangements are not deemed necessary, school staff can use the school office number: 0121 464 3172 as the emergency contact point.

4.2 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 Gemini).

4.3 Safeguarding

Staff must not give their personal contact details to parents/carers or pupils, including via social media and messaging apps.

Staff must avoid publicising their contact details on any social media platform or website to prevent unwanted contact from parents/carers or pupils.

Staff must not use their personal mobile phones to take photographs or recordings of pupils, their work, or anything else that could identify a pupil. If it's necessary to take photos or recordings as part of a lesson/school trip/activity, this must be done using school equipment.

4.4 Using personal mobiles for work purposes

In some circumstances, it may be appropriate for staff to use personal mobile phones or similar devices during the school day, in front of pupils, for work. Such circumstances may include, but are not limited to:

- Issuing homework, rewards or sanctions.
- Use of multi-factor authentication.
- Emergency evacuations.
- Supervising off-site trips.
- Supervising residential visits.

On trips and visits, staff will carry a school mobile phone to avoid using a personal device. Parents and Carers are issued with the school mobile phone number in advance of any trip.

In these circumstances, staff will:

- Use their mobile phones in an appropriate and professional manner, in line with our staff code of conduct.
- Not use their phones to take photographs or recordings of pupils, their work, or anything else that could identify a pupil.
- Refrain from using their phones to contact parents/carers. If necessary, contact must be made via the school office.

4.5 Sanctions

Staff who fail to adhere to this policy may face disciplinary action.

See the staff code of conduct for more information.

5. Use of mobile phones by pupils

Hillcrest School and Sixth Form Centre are a phone-free school.

Pupils must not use their mobile phones during the school day, including during lessons, between lessons, at breaktimes, and at lunchtimes, unless explicitly authorised by a member of staff (see exceptions 5.2).

The school recognises that students may need to bring a mobile phone to school for their personal safety when travelling to and from school. However, mobile phones and other smart devices must not be seen, heard or used at any time from the moment students enter the school gates until they leave at the end of the school day. Before entering the school site, students must switch off their mobile phones and place them securely in their school bag. Mobile phones must not be kept in blazer or trouser pockets.

Pupils will be taught about the risks associated with mobile phone use, both in school and more broadly, to ensure they understand the decision to prohibit their use throughout the school day. These risks can include a loss of focus in lessons, classroom disruption and an increase in bullying. Pupils will be encouraged to see a mobile-phone-free environment as desirable and valuable.

5.1 Use of smartwatches by pupils

The DfE's statutory [mobile phones guidance](#) includes in the term 'mobile phones' all devices with communications and smart technology that the school chooses to include in its policy.

Smartwatches are wristwatches with built-in smart technology. They can be used to tell the time, send and receive text and voice messages, make calls and listen to music. Some smartwatches have wellness and health-related features.

Students may bring a smartwatch or other wearable communication device to school; however, it must be switched off and stored securely in their school bag throughout the school day. It must not be worn or used during lessons, between lessons, at breaktime or at lunchtime.

If a smartwatch is seen, heard or used, it will be confiscated and dealt with in accordance with the school's mobile phone procedures and Behaviour Policy. Exceptions will be made only where its use is necessary for a medical need, forms part of an agreed reasonable adjustment or has been authorised in advance by a senior leader.

5.2 Exceptions for special circumstances and for Sixth Form Students

- Exceptions are made to the policy for certain groups of students:
- Sixth Form students can use their mobile devices only in the Sixth Form Common Room.
- Pupils with diabetes who use their phones to monitor their blood glucose levels. These students will have a medical card which they will show to staff.
- A young carer who needs to be contactable

In cases of exceptional circumstances, permission will be granted only where there is a documented safeguarding or medical necessity. To request such permission, pupils or parents/carers will need to contact **Mr Gariff – Deputy Headteacher for Culture and Inclusion**.

Any pupils granted permission must then adhere to the school's mobile phone policy.

Sixth Form students are allowed to have their mobile phones during the school day to reflect their increased independence and responsibility but must not compromise our policy on mobile phone use for other pupils.

Therefore, they are only permitted to use their mobile phones or smart devices out of sight of younger pupils, and in the Sixth Form Common Room. Misuse of mobile phones or other devices by pupils in the Sixth Form will result in sanctions under our behaviour policy.

5.3 Sanctions

First use of mobile phone/smartwatch in school:

If a student is seen with a mobile phone or smartwatch, they will be expected to hand the device to a member of staff. They will receive a C3 and serve a 60-minute detention that day. Parents/Carers will be contacted by the relevant Head of Year, and the mobile phone/smartwatch will remain locked in the school safe until the parent/carer collects it.

Second use of mobile phone/smartwatch in school:

If a mobile phone or smartwatch is confiscated for a second time, it will be kept at school for 48 hours. The student will receive a C3 and serve a 60-minute detention that day. Parents/Carers will be invited into school to meet with their child's Head of Year. The device will be handed to the Parents/Carers after this meeting. The device will be stored in the school safe until this meeting has taken place.

Third use of mobile phone/smartwatch in school:

If a student's phone is confiscated on three or more occasions, the mobile phone/smartwatch will be confiscated and kept at school for a full school week (five school days). The student will receive a C3 and serve a 60-minute detention that day. Parents/Carers will be invited to the school to meet with the Deputy Headteacher, Culture and Inclusion. The device will be handed to the parent at the end of the five-day period. The device will be stored in the school safe until this meeting has taken place. Further meetings may be arranged with the Headteacher and Chair of Governors if this behaviour is repeated.

At any of the stages outlined above, if a student refuses to hand over their mobile phone / smart watch to a member of staff, they will be sent to the Reset Room for the remainder of the day and will receive an initial one-day fixed-term suspension. The student will be required to hand in their phone to main reception for 5 days after returning to school from their fixed-term suspension. If a student fails to hand

in their phone for five days, they will be issued a two-day fixed-term suspension. The length of the suspension for refusal to hand over their mobile phone/smart watch to a member of staff will be based on the number of times a student has been seen with their mobile phone/smart watch in school.

Photographs and Recordings:

Using a mobile phone or similar device to record conversations, making videos, or taking photographs of any member of the school community (staff, students, visitors, parents/carers) without their permission is not allowed and will result in a fixed-term suspension. Similarly, the display, supply, and/or posting of any such materials, including the use of AI-generated content and technology, will result in a fixed-term suspension. Depending on the nature of the content and severity of the behaviour, this may result in a suspension up to 10 days or permanent exclusion.

Students are also not allowed to wear meta spectacles in school. These are items with cameras or video recorders built into the spectacles' frames. Any form of meta spectacles or equivalent items found in students' possession at school will be removed, and students will be asked to provide evidence that they have not taken any images or recorded any footage at school, with or without others' knowledge or consent. If the student has been found to use the item to record or take images, the Headteacher will issue a fixed-term suspension in line with our behaviour policy.

Confiscation and Searches:

In addition, in line with our Anti-Bullying Policy, the school reserves the right to confiscate and search a device if concerns about cyber-bullying, online abuse, harmful behaviours, violence and/or sexual harassment, criminal or sexual exploitation, are reported to staff. While we do not take responsibility for inappropriate use of digital media outside of school hours or outside of the school premises, such issues which affect the running of the school and the well-being of staff and other students will result in sanctions in line with the 'Getting It Right' policy and the possible involvement of any appropriate agency (i.e. – Police, Children's Social Care). Therefore, the school reserves the right to issue a fixed-term suspension or permanent exclusion if a student's physical or online behaviour outside school brings the school into disrepute and/or poses a risk to the safety of other members of the school community.

As outlined in our Anti-Bullying Policy, the same principle applies to all forms of inappropriate online behaviour involving school technology and any devices loaned to a student for use at home (i.e., remote learning). All online activity is monitored by Smoothwall, and appropriate sanctions will be implemented, in line with the 'Getting It Right' policy, for any forms of bullying, discrimination, online abuse, threats of violence or harassment (including sexual), including AI-generated content and technology.

Mobile Phone and other Smart devices Education:

Pupils will be taught about the risks associated with mobile phone and other smart device use, both in school and more broadly, to ensure they understand the decision to prohibit their use throughout the school day. These risks can include a loss of focus in lessons, classroom disruption and an increase in bullying. Pupils will be encouraged to see a mobile-phone-free environment as desirable and valuable.

The school will also consider whether:

- There are any relevant special circumstances (for example, age, religious requirements, special educational needs (SEN), disability).
- The pupil's behaviour may indicate they may be suffering, or at risk of, harm. If this is suspected, staff will follow the appropriate procedure set out in [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#). This will include speaking with the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) or deputy, who will consider whether pastoral support, an early intervention, or a referral to children's social care is appropriate

6. Use of mobile phones by parents/carers, volunteers and visitors

Parents and carers are encouraged to reinforce and discuss this policy at home as appropriate, including the risks associated with mobile phone use and the benefits of a mobile phone-free environment.

Parents/carers, visitors and volunteers (including governors and contractors) must adhere to this policy as it relates to staff if they are on the school site during the school day.

This means:

- Not taking pictures or recordings of pupils, unless it's at a public event (such as a school fair), or of their own child
- Using any photographs or recordings for personal use only, and not posting on social media without consent
- Not using phones in lessons, when working with pupils or while children are present

Parents/carers, visitors and volunteers will be informed of the rules for mobile phone use when they sign in at reception or attend a public event at school.

Parents/carers must use the school office as the first point of contact if they need to get in touch with their child during the school day. They must not try to contact their child on their personal mobile during the school day.

7. Loss, theft or damage

Pupils must secure their mobile phones as much as possible, including using passwords or PIN codes to protect access to the phone's functions. Staff must also secure their personal phones and any work phones provided to them. Failure by staff to do so could result in data breaches.

The school accepts no responsibility for mobile phones that are lost, damaged, or stolen on school premises or on school transport, during school visits or trips, or while pupils are travelling to or from school.

8. Monitoring and review

The school is committed to making sure that this policy has a positive impact on pupils' education, behaviour and welfare. When reviewing the policy, the school will consider:

- Feedback from parents/carers and pupils
- Feedback from staff
- Records of behaviour and safeguarding incidents
- Relevant advice from the DfE, the local authority and any other relevant organisations

If there are any concerns regarding this policy, these should be brought to the attention of Mr D Gariff, Deputy Headteacher for Culture and Inclusion.

Links to Other Policies:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy