

The Avon Valley School

Mobile Phone Policy

Date of Policy: September 2026

Date of next review: September 2028

Who the review will involve: Headteacher, Governors, Senior Leadership team, Staff

Senior member of staff responsible for overseeing that this policy is implemented and regularly reviewed: Headteacher

PURPOSE & RATIONALE

The policy aligns with the school values of **Ambition - Respect - Care**. The Avon Valley School is committed to providing a focused, safe, and social learning environment. Modern smartphones and internet-enabled devices present significant risks regarding safeguarding, digital distraction, social isolation, and cyberbullying. We care about our students' academic and social development, so seek to provide an ambitious learning environment where all students feel respected and cared for.

To eliminate these dangers and distractions while allowing students the safety of a phone for their commute for contacting parents and carers in the event of an emergency, the school operates as a **smartphone free site**. This policy ensures that the school remains a place for learning and face to face interaction, where they can fully develop social skills that will enable them to best meet the demands of life beyond secondary school.

SCOPE OF THE POLICY

This policy is in effect at all times when a student is under the care of the school, including:

School Site: From the moment a student enters the school gates until they have fully exited the site.

Activities: All extra-curricular clubs, sports fixtures, and school trips/residentials (local, national and international).

Outside of school: The policy also applies to misuse of smartphones during travel to and from school where the student is in uniform, where misuse outside of school negatively impacts a member of our school community in school, or the school's reputation is brought into disrepute.

PROHIBITED DEVICES

The following items are strictly prohibited on the school site and during school activities:

Smart Phones and other mobile phones: Must be kept locked in a school approved lockable pouch.

Smartwatches & Wearables: Any watch or device with internet, messaging, or camera capabilities (e.g., Apple Watch, Fitbit with notifications). Kept at home, or locked in a school approved lockable pouch when in school.

Wireless Accessories: Bluetooth earbuds/headphones (e.g., AirPods) must be switched off and stored.

Tablets/Laptops: iPads, tablets, or personal gaming consoles.

THE LOCKABLE POUCH SYSTEM (PHONES & OTHER SMART DEVICES)

The school operates a mandatory "**Pouched for the Day**" system for all mobile phones and smart enabled devices.

Mandatory Pouching: All devices must be switched off and secured in a school-approved lockable pouch immediately upon arrival.

Zero-Exemption: There are no exceptions for educational use – we are a smart device free environment.

Decoy Devices: If a student is found with a second, un-pouched device, both the "decoy" and the active device will be confiscated. This will be treated as a Serious Infraction.

Medical Exemptions: Students requiring phone access for essential medical monitoring (e.g., Diabetes) must have a formal Medical Care Plan. Use of the device for any non-medical purpose will result in the removal of this privilege. Students with medical exemptions will be issued with a **medical device pouch** which looks the same as the lockable pouches, but has a Velcro fastening so the device can be accessed for medical purposes only and no signal blocking. It is the responsibility of the student to ensure that the smart device has enough charge to maintain its safety features during the school day.

EXAMPLES OF UNACCEPTABLE USES AND BREACHES

Not Securing Device: Having a smart device in school without being secured in a lockable or medical pouch.

Casual Use: Accessing or using a smart device whilst on the school site **for any reason**.

Cyberbullying: Using any device to harass, threaten, or humiliate others.

Unauthorised Media: Taking photos or videos of staff, students, or any other person in the school community, including "live-streaming" in school uniform.

Bypassing Staff: Phoning parents directly following an incident instead of using school communication protocols via student services, reception or a staff office phone. Note: This rule exists to ensure student safety and accurate communication, ensuring the school can support the family with facts during an ongoing incident.

Illegal Content: For example, the possession or distribution of violent, racist, or pornographic material.

Breach of School Values: Any other incident that violates the **respect and care** of someone in our school community.

CONFISCATION OF MOBILE DEVICE

Devices will be confiscated if seen or heard. **All confiscated devices must be collected by a parent or carer.**

Violation Type	Intervention*	Return Protocol
First minor infringement	24-Hour Confiscation**	Parent/Carer collection only.
Subsequent minor infringements	48-Hour Confiscation**	Parent/Carer collection only.
Serious Infringement	48 hour confiscation alongside other appropriate sanctions**	Parent/Carer collection only.
Refusal to adhere with the mobile phone policy	48 hour confiscation** Graduated sanctions in line with the school behaviour policy	Parent/Carer collection only.
Continued persistent refusal to adhere with mobile phone policy will be treated as “persistent defiance of school authority”.	Graduated sanctions in line with the school behaviour policy, with Permanent Exclusion as a last resort.	Parent/Carer collection only for any period of confiscation within the suite of available sanctions.

*Alternative interventions will be issued for students who have a medical exemption and require a smart device at all times (e.g. to monitor blood sugar levels).

** Phones will be returned for weekends but will need to be handed back if a confiscation spans over into the following week.

Minor infringement examples:

- Forgetting to secure a smart device in a lockable pouch.
- Forgetting to bring the lockable pouch to school.
- Being seen with other prohibited devices (these should ideally be kept at home, or switched off and out of sight at all times. The specific item found will be confiscated.
- Any other infringement deemed minor by school staff.

Serious infringements examples:

- **Pouch Tampering:** Damaging, attempting to damage, or trying to circumnavigate the pouch locking system (e.g. trying to or opening a locked pouch during the school day).
- **Intentional Deception:** Possession of a second "decoy" phone.
- **Cyberbullying:** Using any device to harass, threaten, or humiliate others.
- **Illegal Content:** Possession or distribution of violent, racist, or pornographic material.
- **Unauthorised Media:** Taking photos or videos of staff or students, including "live-streaming" in school uniform.
- **Other Serious Incidents:** Any other incident of misuse that is deemed serious by the Senior Leadership Team.

Note: If an incident is deemed serious and involves illegal activity; the matter will be referred to Warwickshire Police and any other relevant agencies.

Commute Safety & Search Rights:

Dumb Phone Provision: Students with confiscated phones will be issued a basic "School Dumb Phone" (pre-programmed with the priority 1 parent contact) for commute safety.

Search Rights: In line with DfE guidance, authorised staff reserve the right to search a student's person or possessions if they suspect an un-pouched or prohibited device is present.

Data Examination: The school reserves the right to examine data on a device if there is a good reason to suspect the safeguarding of students is involved (e.g., cyberbullying). Any examination of data will be done with the consent of the student and conducted by a member of the Senior Leadership Team or Pastoral Support team. This will be logged and parents informed. Where the school suspects a student is in possession of illegal content on a device, the matter will be referred to Warwickshire Police for investigation.

EXAMINATIONS

Mobile phones, smartwatches, and all internet-enabled devices are strictly prohibited in examination rooms. Possession leads to **immediate disqualification** from that paper and potentially all other qualifications.

LIABILITY AND COSTS

Loss/Damage: The school accepts no responsibility for the loss, theft, or damage of any personal device. Parents must ensure appropriate insurance cover.

Replacement Fees: The lockable pouch and "Dumb Phone" are school property. Parents/carers will be charged a replacement fee for any school-issued pouch or phone that is lost or intentionally damaged.

REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed bi-annually.