

Mobile Phone Policy Update: Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Thank you to the parents and carers who provided feedback on the final draft of our new mobile phone policy. We understand that transitioning to a phone-free school environment raises practical questions, particularly regarding student safety during the commute, logistics, and accountability.

With over 1000 students in our school community, consistency is vital for this policy to successfully improve focus, reduce distractions, and enhance learning. Below, we address your specific concerns and outline how the school will manage them operationally without compromising on the policy's standards.

Safeguarding & Travel Safety

Q: Why is the school keeping phones overnight (24/48 hours) if my child needs it for safety or tracking on their commute?

Response: We completely understand that a mobile phone can serve as a tracking and communication asset for journeys to and from school. However, for the policy to be an effective deterrent against classroom distraction and keeping children safe in school, infractions must carry meaningful consequences.

To ensure safety during overnight confiscations, the school will provide a basic, functional phone ("dumb phone") for the duration of the confiscation period if this is required. This ensures your child can still make and receive emergency calls during their commute.

Q: How can I track my child's journey home if their smartphone is confiscated overnight?

Response: While a basic replacement phone does not support GPS tracking apps like "Find My", it ensures your child has immediate, voice-and-text communication. We ask parents to reinforce the rules at home so students understand that keeping their smartphone and its tracking capabilities depends entirely on using their pouch correctly during the day.

Q: What happens on school trips or during extracurricular clubs?

Response: The phone free policy applies to all school related activities both on and off site at all times. In emergency scenarios, staff are always equipped with school communication devices to keep parents fully updated.

Logistics & School Dismissal

Q: The school bus leaves very quickly after the final bell. Will the pouch unlocking process cause my child to miss their transport?

Response: No student will miss their bus due to this policy. We are implementing a rapid, decentralised unlocking process at dismissal with multiple unlocking stations positioned across the school site. Staff will also be deployed at the bus turning circle with hand held unlocking devices, allowing students ample time to reach their buses.

Q: As a working parent, how can I collect a confiscated phone if I work long hours or have a heavy commute?

Response: We understand that parents have demanding work schedules. If your child's phone is confiscated and requires parent collection, we do not expect you to take unpaid leave. The school will offer flexible collection windows (including mornings and afternoons) to help accommodate working families. We ask parents to reinforce the rules at home so students understand the inconvenience this would cause you.

Fairness, Discipline, & Inclusivity

Q: What if my child makes an honest mistake and forgets their pouch? Will they still face 24-hour confiscation?

Response: Responsibility is a key life skill we aim to foster. Just as students are expected to remember their uniform, PE kit, equipment and homework; they must remember their phone pouch. To prevent immediate escalation, a clear warning system or a temporary day-loan pouch may be utilised for a verified first-time, genuine mistake. However, subsequent instances will be treated as non-compliance and will follow standard policy consequences.

Q: How will this policy support neurodivergent students who may struggle with the new routine?

Response: We are an inclusive school. While the policy rules apply to all students uniformly to maintain fairness, our pastoral and SEND teams will work closely with specific students during the transition. We will provide targeted support, structured reminders, and visual prompts to help students build the pouch routine into their daily habits. Students have now known about this change for many months in advance.

Q: If my child cannot access their phone, how will I know if they are ill or experiencing an issue like bullying?

Response: The school has robust internal systems to handle student well-being. If a child is unwell or requires medical attention, our medical team will contact you directly. Likewise, our pastoral team is fully equipped to handle and communicate any peer issues.

Legal, Liability, & Privacy Questions

Q: What right does the school have to confiscate a phone overnight? Is the school liable for loss or damage?

Response: Under UK educational legislation, schools have the legal authority to confiscate personal property as a disciplinary measure, provided it is proportionate. Any confiscated phone will be stored in a highly secure, locked location. The school takes its duty of care seriously and will ensure items are handled responsibly while in our possession.

Q: Who will oversee the searching of a phone if suspicious content is suspected?

Response: Digital privacy is handled with the utmost seriousness. In the rare event that a safeguarding concern requires a phone to be searched, the policy strictly mandates that **at least two staff members must be present**. This ensures complete transparency, accountability, and protection for both the student and the staff involved.

Moving Forward Together

Eliminating the distraction of mobile phones is proven to significantly boost academic focus, improve face-to-face social interaction, and protect student mental health and wellbeing. We appreciate your cooperation and support in enforcing these standards consistently across our entire school community.