



**Merchant Taylors' Schools, Crosby**

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**Mobile Phone Policy – Pupils**

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Policy Owner	Headteacher
Policy Author	Deputy Head (Pastoral)
Last reviewed by Date	Deputy and Assistant Heads Pastoral April 2026
Last approved by <u>Date</u>	Exec Team April 2026
Frequency of review	Annual
Next policy review by owner	April 2027
Next policy approved by Board of Governors (if applicable)	April 2027
Circulation:	All Staff Governors Pupil and Parents
Related Policies:	Safeguarding Policy AUP Behaviour Policy Anti-Bullying Policy Management of Educational Visits Policy Photography and Sharing Images Policy
Regulatory Body (if applicable)	Department for Education Independent Schools Inspectorate
Relevant legislation/guidelines	Education and Inspections Act 2006 Education Act 1996, including search and confiscation powers Education and Skills Act 2008 The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, as amended <i>DfE, The Independent School Standards: Guidance for Independent Schools, current version</i> Equality Act 2010 Children Act 1989 Children Act 2004 Children and Social Work Act 2017

	<p>Keeping Children Safe in Education, current statutory version Working Together to Safeguard Children, current statutory version Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework for group and school-based providers, current version DfE, <i>Mobile phones in schools: guidance for schools on prohibiting the use of mobile phones throughout the school day</i>, current version DfE, <i>Behaviour in Schools</i>, current version DfE, <i>Searching, Screening and Confiscation</i>, current version DfE, <i>Teaching Online Safety in Schools</i> UKCIS, <i>Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people</i> JCQ Instructions for Conducting Examinations and JCQ Suspected Malpractice Policies and Procedures, current academic year Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 DfE, <i>Health and Safety on Educational Visits</i> HSE guidance on sensible and proportionate health and safety management in schools</p>
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## Contents

**No table of contents entries found.**

## **1. Purpose**

The widespread ownership of mobile phones among young people requires that Merchant Taylors' as a whole school, teachers, pupils, and parents take steps to ensure that mobile phones are used responsibly, where use and possession are permitted, within School. This Policy is designed to ensure that potential issues involving mobile phones can be clearly identified and addressed, ensuring the benefits that mobile phones provide (such as increased safety) can continue to be enjoyed by our pupils. This Policy for mobile phones in conjunction with the ICT and Social Media Acceptable Use policy also applies to pupils on school buses, during school excursions, residential activities and extra-curricular activities.

For the purposes of this policy, "mobile phone" includes any personal device with communication, messaging, notification, internet access, camera, audio/video recording or similar smart functionality. This includes smartphones, smart watches, wearable technology, tablets used as personal communication devices, earbuds or headphones used for communication, and any other device which the School reasonably considers to have similar functionality. This policy should be read alongside the ICT and Social Media Acceptable Use Policy, Behaviour Policy, Safeguarding Policy, Anti-Bullying Policy, Photography and Sharing Images Policy, and Management of Educational Visits Policy. It applies during the school day, including lessons, transitions between lessons, breaktimes, lunchtime, assemblies, supervised activities, school buses, school excursions, residential activities, educational visits and extra-curricular activities, unless a specific exception has been agreed in advance.

## **2. Rationale**

- 2.1.** The School recognises that personal communication through mobile technologies is an accepted part of everyday life but that such technologies need to be used well.
- 2.2.** Merchant Taylors' accepts that parents give their children mobile phones to protect them from everyday risks involving personal security and safety. There is also increasing concern about older pupils travelling alone on public transport or commuting long distances to School. It is acknowledged that providing pupils with mobile phones gives parents reassurance that they can contact their children if they need to speak to them urgently outside of the school setting.
- 2.3.** Pupils are taught through the wider curriculum, PSHE and Relationships and Sex Education, how to stay safe, including staying safe online and the dangers of cyber-bullying.
- 2.4.** During the School day pupils should only make contact with parents and parents with pupils via the School Reception.

Parents and carers are reminded that, during the school day, urgent messages should be communicated through School Reception or the relevant school office. Pupils should not contact parents or carers directly during the school day without staff knowledge, as this may prevent the School from providing appropriate pastoral, safeguarding or medical support.

## **3. Responsibility**

It is the responsibility of pupils who bring mobile phones to School to abide by the guidelines outlined in this document. Parents should be aware if their child takes a mobile to School. Both parents and pupils need to recognise that the School does not take responsibility for the safety of the phone whilst on School property or is being used as part of a School excursion; Pupils bring mobile phones or smart devices to School at their own risk. The School will take reasonable care of devices that are handed in,

stored or confiscated in accordance with this policy, but accepts no responsibility for loss, theft or damage unless this is caused by the School's negligence. Pupils and parents are encouraged to ensure that devices are appropriately insured and secured with passcodes.

All staff are responsible for applying this policy consistently and proportionately. Staff should model the School's expectations by avoiding personal mobile phone use in front of pupils during the school day, unless there is a legitimate professional, operational, safeguarding, medical or emergency reason. Staff use of mobile phones is also governed by the Staff Code of Conduct, Safeguarding Policy and ICT Acceptable Use Policy.

### **Access to mobile phones within School during the normal school day on site:**

#### **3.1. Pupils in EYFS and Years 1-6**

Pupils in EYFS and Years 1–6 are not permitted to bring mobile phones or smart devices into School, unless prior permission has been granted for a specific safeguarding, medical, pastoral, travel, SEND or disability-related reason.

Where permission has been granted, the device must be handed into the School office immediately on arrival and collected from the School office at the end of the school day. Pupils must not keep the device on their person during the school day. Devices handed in will be stored securely.

The use of smart watches or similar wearable communication devices is not permitted unless a specific exception has been agreed under Section 5.1.

#### **3.2 Pupils in Years 7–11**

Pupils in Years 7–11 may bring a mobile phone to School only so that they have access to it when travelling to and from School. Mobile phones must not be used on the School site during the school day.

On arrival, pupils must switch off their phone or set it to silent and place it in their locker by 08:40. The phone must remain in the locker throughout the school day, including lessons, transitions between lessons, breaktime, lunchtime, assemblies and activities, and may only be collected at the end of the school day.

Pupils must not keep a mobile phone on their person during the school day unless a specific exception has been agreed in advance under Section 5.1, or unless a member of staff has authorised use for a specific educational, safeguarding, medical or operational reason. Owing to the availability of school-issued devices, such educational use should be exceptional, planned in advance and approved by the Deputy Head [Pastoral] or their delegate.

Smart watches and similar wearable communication devices are not permitted unless a specific exception has been agreed under Section 5.1.

### **3. Pupils in Years 12 and 13**

While pupils in Years 7–11 are not permitted to use mobile phones during the School day, Sixth Form pupils are trusted with greater freedom in recognition of their age, maturity, and increased responsibility for their learning. This policy reflects that trust, while setting clear expectations and boundaries.

Pupils are permitted to keep their mobile phone on their person.

Mobile phones may be used in the Sixth Form common room and designated study areas for appropriate purposes, such as checking emails, researching, or communicating with parents.

Phones must not be used in corridors, classrooms, or shared school spaces used by Years 7–11.

During lessons, phones must be switched off or set to silent and kept out of sight.

Other unacceptable use includes:

- Filming or photographing staff or pupils without permission.
- Using phones to access or share inappropriate content.
- Messaging or using social media during lessons or assemblies.
- Disrupting the learning environment or ignoring staff instructions regarding phone use.

The use of smart watches is not permitted.

## **4. Other Acceptable Uses**

### **4.1. Special individual pupil circumstances**

Exceptions to this policy may be permitted where there is a clear safeguarding, medical, pastoral, SEND or disability-related reason, including where access to a mobile phone or connected device is required as a reasonable adjustment or as part of an Individual Healthcare Plan. Such arrangements will be considered on a case-by-case basis by the Deputy Head [Pastoral], in consultation with the DSL, SENDCo and/or medical staff as appropriate. Any agreed arrangement will specify when, where and how the device may be used, and will be recorded so that relevant staff understand the agreed controls. Flexibility for an individual pupil does not create a general exemption from this policy.

### **5.2 Remote learning and the use of mobile devices**

Where a pupil accesses remote learning from home pupils should use their School-issued device at home to access lessons and will be expected to work within the MTS protocols for remote learning and the School's ICT Acceptable User Policy.

### **5.3 School trips and excursions**

Mobile phone arrangements for school trips, residential visits, overseas visits and extra-curricular activities will be determined by the trip leader in consultation with the EVC and, where appropriate, the DSL. These arrangements must be proportionate to the age and needs of pupils, the nature of the visit, travel arrangements, supervision model, safeguarding considerations and emergency communication requirements. The agreed approach must be recorded in the visit documentation and/or risk assessment and communicated to pupils and parents in advance where relevant. Sections 6.2–6.5 of this policy continue to apply during school trips and activities.

## **6. Unacceptable Uses**

The following are unacceptable unless specific permission has been granted by a member of staff:

- a) using a mobile phone or smart device during the school day;
- b) keeping a mobile phone on the pupil's person when it should have been handed in, stored or placed in a locker;
- c) using a device to call, message, photograph, film, record audio, access social media, browse the internet, use apps or share content;
- d) using a device in toilets, changing rooms, medical areas or any other private or sensitive location;
- e) using a device to bully, harass, intimidate, humiliate, threaten, coerce, exploit or discriminate against another person;
- f) accessing, creating, requesting, storing, forwarding or sharing harmful, sexual, violent, extremist, discriminatory or otherwise inappropriate content;
- g) photographing, filming or recording any pupil, member of staff, visitor or member of the School community without permission;

- 6.1 Unless express permission is granted, mobile phones belonging to pupils in Years 7 to 11, should not be used to make calls, send or post messages, surf the internet, take photos or use any other application during the school day.

Pupils in Years 7 to 11 should only use their mobile phones before or after School and not on the school premises.

- 6.2 It is forbidden for pupils to use their mobile phones to take videos and pictures of acts to denigrate and humiliate any member of the School Community, and/or to send the pictures to other pupils or upload it to a website for public viewing. This includes using mobile phones to photograph or film any member of the School Community without their consent. Using mobile phones to bully and threaten other members of the School Community is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. It can be a criminal offence to use a mobile phone to menace, harass or offend another person and almost all calls, text messages and emails can be traced. Pupils using mobile

phones to bully any member of the School Community will face disciplinary action and it may be appropriate for the School to consider involving the police.

- 6.3 Mobile phones are not to be used in any situation that may cause embarrassment or discomfort to fellow pupils, staff or visitors to the School. Pupils must not use photo or video capability on mobile phones which could bring the School's name into disrepute. Any mobile phone misuse which involves bullying, harassment, sexual harassment, upskirting, sharing or requesting nude or semi-nude images, harmful or inappropriate content, coercion, threats, hate content, extremism, exploitation, or suspected criminal behaviour will be treated as a potential safeguarding concern. Staff must report such concerns to the DSL or Deputy DSL without delay. The School will respond in line with KCSIE, the Safeguarding Policy, Anti-Bullying Policy, Behaviour Policy and ICT Acceptable Use Policy, including referral to external agencies where required.
- 6.4 Mobile phones must not be taken into any examination situation. Any pupil found to be in possession of a mobile phone during an examination could be prevented from completing that and other public examinations as a result following JCQ regulations on malpractice.
- 6.5 Where there are reasonable grounds to suspect that a mobile phone or smart device contains material which may place a pupil or another person at risk of harm, constitute evidence of an offence, or seriously undermine the safe and orderly environment of the School, the School will act in accordance with DfE guidance on Searching, Screening and Confiscation, KCSIE, the Safeguarding Policy and the Behaviour Policy.

Only the Headteacher or staff authorised by the Headteacher may carry out a search of a pupil or their possessions. Any search must be lawful, proportionate, respectful of the pupil's age and needs, and carried out with due regard to safeguarding, SEND, disability and privacy considerations.

Where an electronic device is confiscated and there is good reason to examine data or files, this will be done only in accordance with DfE guidance. Staff must not intentionally view, copy, print, share, store or save any image or video suspected to be an indecent image of a child. In such circumstances the device should be secured, the DSL or Deputy DSL informed immediately, and advice sought in line with the Safeguarding Policy, including police involvement where appropriate.

Searches and confiscations raising safeguarding concerns will be recorded on the School's safeguarding system and parents/carers will be informed as soon as is appropriate, unless doing so would place a child at greater risk of harm or compromise an investigation.

## **7. Theft or Damage**

- 7.1 Pupils are encouraged to ensure that mobile phones are clearly identifiable, secured with a passcode or biometric lock, and protected through appropriate tracking or locating services where available. Pupils should not share passwords, passcodes or access credentials with other pupils

- 7.2 The School encourages pupils who bring a mobile phone to School to ensure that asset tracking services are enabled.
- 7.3 To reduce the risk of theft during School hours, pupils who are permitted to carry mobile phones are advised to keep them well concealed and not advertise that they have them.
- 7.4 Mobile phones that are found in the School and whose owner cannot be located should be handed in to Reception.
- 7.5 The School accepts no responsibility for replacing lost, stolen or damaged mobile phones.
- 7.6 The School accepts no responsibility for pupils who lose or have their mobile phones stolen or damaged travelling to and from School, during School trips, on residential activities and in extra-curricular time.
- 7.7 It is strongly advised that pupils use passwords/pin numbers to ensure that unauthorised phone calls cannot be made on their phones (e.g. by other pupils, or if stolen). Pupils must keep their password/pin numbers confidential. Mobile phones and/or passwords may not be shared. Pupils and parents should consider installing phone tracking and locating software.

## **8. Escalating sanctions**

Sanctions will be applied fairly, consistently and proportionately, taking account of the pupil's age, stage of development, SEND, disability, medical needs, pastoral circumstances, previous conduct, intent, impact and any safeguarding considerations. Serious misuse may be escalated immediately under the Behaviour Policy, Safeguarding Policy, Anti-Bullying Policy or ICT Acceptable Use Policy and does not need to follow the staged confiscation process.

Breaches of the Mobile Phone Policy will lead to confiscation of the mobile phone by the member of staff. The confiscated item will be taken immediately to the reception/main School office by the member of staff for safe keeping. This will be recorded by the school office and shared with pastoral leads.

### **8.1 Confiscation (Stanfield) where a pupil has prior agreed permission to have possession of their phone**

#### **1st Confiscation:**

Parents will be notified that their child has had their mobile phone confiscated via an email. The confiscated item will be returned to the pupil at the end of the day. The pupil will be given a School detention.

#### **2nd Confiscation:**

Parents will be notified that their child has had their mobile phone confiscated for the second time via an email. The confiscated item will need to be collected by the pupil at the end of School on the following day. The pupil will be given a school detention. In the event that the pupil needs to call home, they/them can either ask to use the phone at reception.

**3<sup>rd</sup> Confiscation:**

Parents will be notified that their child has had their mobile phone confiscated for the third time via an email. The confiscated item will need to be collected by a parent at their earliest convenience. The pupil will be given a school detention and will be required to sign a mobile phone contract. The mobile phone contract stipulates that the pupil will leave their phone at home or hand it in daily to the class teacher and must be signed by the pupil and parent. Failure to do this, and then to subsequently be caught using it, will result in more severe sanctions.

**8.2 Confiscation (Senior School)**

**1st confiscation:** Parents/carers will be notified that their child has had their mobile phone or smart device confiscated. The confiscated item will normally be returned to the pupil at the end of the school day.

**2nd confiscation:** Parents/carers will be notified that their child has had their mobile phone or smart device confiscated for a second time. The confiscated item will normally be returned to the pupil at the end of the school day. The pupil will be given a School detention.

**3rd confiscation:** Parents/carers will be notified that their child has had their mobile phone or smart device confiscated for a third time. The confiscated item will normally be returned at the end of the school day. The pupil will be given a Saturday detention and the pupil and parents/carers will be required to meet with the Deputy Head [Pastoral] or their delegate.

Where a pupil accumulates three confiscations in an academic year, the School reserves the right to withdraw permission for the pupil to bring a mobile phone or smart device into School. Serious misuse may result in further sanctions and/or safeguarding action in line with the relevant School policies.

**8.3 Confiscation (Sixth Form)**

**1<sup>st</sup> Offence:**

Verbal warning and phone to be put away immediately.

**2<sup>nd</sup> Offence:**

Phone will be confiscated for the remainder of the School day. Parents will be notified that their child has had their mobile phone confiscated for the second time via an email. The confiscated item will need to be collected by the pupil at the end of School day.

**Repeated Offences:**

Phone will be confiscated for the remainder of the School day. Parents/carers will be contacted and a formal behaviour agreement may be implemented, including possible restrictions on phone use within school.

**Serious Misuse** (e.g. filming others, offensive content):

Immediate confiscation and referral to the Head of Sixth Form; further sanctions may be applied in line with the school's Behaviour Policy and Acceptable Use Policy.

#### **8.4 Additional Sanctions**

Sanctions in cases where it is proven that there has also been an online safety issue will be in line with those outlined in the School's ICT and Social Media Acceptable Use Policy, Behaviour Policy and Anti-Bullying Policy.

#### **Monitoring and review**

The Deputy Head [Pastoral], DSL and relevant pastoral leaders will monitor patterns of mobile phone misuse, confiscations, safeguarding concerns, online safety incidents and any repeated breaches. Themes will be reviewed through pastoral and safeguarding systems and, where appropriate, reported to SLT and governors through existing safeguarding, behaviour and welfare reporting routes. This policy will be reviewed annually, or sooner if statutory guidance changes or if monitoring identifies a need for amendment.