



HEATHFIELD SCHOOL

Mobile Phone and Portable Devices Policy

Policy Area:	General
Relevant Statutory Regulations:	Independent School Standards Regulations 2014 (ISSR) Part 3 General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) 2018 Data Protection Act 2018 Freedom of Information Act 2000 Human Rights Act 1998 DfE Mobile Phones in Schools 2024 Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2025
Key Contact Personnel in School	
Nominated Member of Leadership Staff Responsible for the policy:	Deputy Head
Version:	2025.02
Date updated:	01 June 2025
Date of next review:	01 September 2026

This policy will be reviewed at least annually, and/or following any concerns and/or updates to national and local guidance or procedures.

Introduction

The aim of Heathfield School ("the School") is to educate all the pupils in the safe and proper use of mobile phones and portable devices. The Department for Education guidance *Mobile Phones in Schools* outlines the impact that such devices can have on learning. https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/65cf5f2a4239310011b7b916/Mobile_phones_in_schools_guidance.pdf

Every school has a duty to create an environment that is calm, safe and free from distraction so all pupils, whatever their background, can learn and thrive. One of the greatest challenges facing schools is the presence of mobile phones. Today, by the age of 12, 97% of pupils own a mobile phone.¹ Mobile phones risk unnecessary distraction, disruption and diversion. One in three secondary school pupils report that mobile phones are used in most lessons without permission.

This not only distracts the single pupil using the phone, but disrupts the lesson for a whole class, and diverts teachers' efforts away from learning. We owe it to our children to do what we can to remove distractions and enable them to be fully present and engaged in the classroom. We also owe it to our pupils to keep them safe at school. One in five pupils have experienced bullying online.

By removing mobile phones from the school day, we can create a safe space where pupils are protected from the risks and dangers associated with social media and cyber-bullying, as well as the peer pressure and possible stigma associated with owning what are often expensive devices. This is why we are determined that all schools should prohibit the use of mobile phones throughout the school day – not only during lessons but break and lunchtimes as well. Three in ten pupils cite making and maintaining friendships and their mental health as a cause of worry, anxiety or depression.

By removing mobile phones, children and young people can spend more time staying active and socialising face to face with their peers, activities which have a positive impact on wellbeing.

Schools can help children and young people develop these habits, which will in turn help them thrive outside of school. During recent stakeholder engagement, headteachers and leaders reported that after removing mobile phones from the school day, the whole culture of the school changes for the better. The environment becomes safer, protecting pupils not only from the short-term distraction of a notification but also the background noise of their lives outside school. Without their mobile phone at school, pupils have the headspace and calm to focus on their lessons.

In accordance with this guidance, during the school day, the School operates a 'no phone policy for pupils in Form I – IV and an 'out of sight, out of mind' policy for pupils in Form V and above.

The term 'phone' in this policy denotes mobile phones and all other portable digital devices including iPads, which are not the users primary learning device, and wearable technology such as smartwatches.

Policy

If a pupil wishes to have a portable device in School, the following regulations must be adhered to:

1. All pupils are allowed mobile phones in the School, but the usage for Forms I-IV will occur according to specified timings as per the boarding house routine.
2. Day pupils in Form I – IV should hand their device in to the appropriate lockbox at the dining room (before 8am) or administration office (before 8.10am).
2. Mobile phones and other electronic music or games devices should not be used on school premises by pupils in school hours.
3. Form V pupils may use their phone in their common room or own bedroom during specified hours only.
4. VI Form pupils may use their phone in their common room, boarding house or with the expressed permission of a teacher.
5. Form V and VI Form must take care not to display their mobile phone in communal areas such as corridors, chapel or the dining room.
4. Headphones/earphones should not be used whilst moving around the school during the school day.
5. In the case of on-site extracurricular activities, off-site trips, visits and exchanges their use is not allowed unless specifically permitted by the teacher in charge.

6. In very unusual circumstances, such as a family emergency, pupils should seek staff permission to use their phone.
10. Pupils who ignore this policy and use a mobile or other unauthorised device on school premises without permission will be required to give their phone/device to a member of staff for safe storage in the administration office.
11. Parents are responsible for ensuring a teenage filter is enabled by the Service Provider on all portable devices. Furthermore, the use of any VPN or proxy app to bypass the School's wi-fi filtering when using the wi-fi system is strictly forbidden.
12. Pupils accessing the school WiFi are subject to filtering and monitoring through the Securly platform. This blocks harmful and inappropriate content and alerts the safeguarding team via email of the sites that a pupil has attempted to access.
15. Mobile phones with cameras and internet access are permitted within the School grounds, but great care must be taken with regard to their sensible use. Under no circumstances may photographs or videos be taken in boarding areas where there is a risk that pupils may be captured either accidentally or deliberately in a state of undress. If in doubt, do not use camera phones in the boarding areas at all. This also applies to portable devices.
16. No mobile phone or portable device may be used to photograph, video or audio record any pupil or member of staff without their knowledge or without their express permission. Should any video or audio recording or photographs be made, this may lead to a temporary or even permanent exclusion. This also applies if any photograph, video or audio recording is posted on any social media, file sharing site or in any printed media without the permission of those involved.
17. No mobile phone or portable device is to be used for bullying or unkindness such as sending unkind or inappropriate texts, voice messages or emails.
20. The use of School wi-fi on any device implies full agreement with the IT Acceptable Use Policy.
21. Staff may lawfully search electronic devices, without consent or parental permission, if there is a suspicion that the pupil has a device prohibited by school rules, or the staff member has good reason to suspect the device may be used to:
 - cause harm,
 - disrupt teaching,
 - break school rules,
 - commit an offence,
 - cause personal injury, or
 - damage property.
22. Any data, files or images that are believed to be illegal will be passed to the police as soon as practicable, including pornographic images of children, without deleting them.
23. Any data, files or images that are not believed to be unlawful, may be deleted or kept as evidence of a breach of the school's behaviour policy.

Staff

The School recognises that personal mobile phones personal devices are permitted; however, personal mobile phones should not generally be needed or used by staff, except as set out in the guidelines below:

- Best practice is that mobile phones, wherever possible, should not be used in the presence of pupils.
- Personal mobile phones should never be used to take photographs or videos of pupils.
- Mobile phones should not be used during lesson times either to make or receive calls, unless there is an emergency.

- Staff should never give their personal mobile phone number to any pupils. This also includes past pupils under the age of 25 years.
- Staff should exercise caution when giving their mobile number to parents as this could be misconstrued. The School is aware that some staff members are also parents at the School.
- Trips and Visits Offsite: The staff member in charge should take one of the School mobile phones when off site. This phone should be used when communicating with parents. Other staff members on the trip or offsite should carry their mobile phones so they can communicate with colleagues when necessary or in an emergency.
- Boarding House staff will need their work mobiles with them at all times when on duty.
- Visitors, including other professionals, contractors and parents/carers are made aware by the safeguarding visitor information leaflet and verbal reinforcement that they are not to use their mobile phone where children are present.
- Members of staff bringing personal devices into the School will ensure that there is not any inappropriate or illegal content on their device and must ensure that their devices are password protected, security marked and insured.
- Personal mobiles may be used in designated areas (staff work room, offices, common room, car park).
- Staff should not use mobile phones to engage in personal attacks, harass another person or post private information about another person using SMS messages, taking/sending photos or images or by making phone calls.
- Staff must ensure that files stored on their mobile phones do not contain indecent, degrading, racist or pornographic images. The transmission of such images is a criminal offence. Similarly, 'sexting' is also a criminal offence.
- Staff are advised to security protect access to functions of their phone.
- Any use of mobile phones for work-related purposes must be appropriate and professional.
- Any serious infringement of the Mobile Phone and Portable Device Policy will be subject to the School's disciplinary procedures.
- The School will not be held responsible for any loss, theft or damage of personal mobile phones.

School laptops and tablets

When a member of staff is provided with a laptop or tablet, they accept responsibility for safeguarding the device itself as well as the data stored on it. Staff must:

- Take appropriate steps to protect the device from theft.
- Not use devices in environments that might increase the likelihood of damage.
- Be accountable for all network and systems access under their individual user ID.
- Keep passwords secret.
- Avoid leaving devices unattended and logged on. All devices should be shut down, logged off or the screen locked before walking away from the machine.
- Report any security incidents (such as virus infections) to the IT helpdesk.
- Do not download, install or use unauthorised software programmes. No personal programmes are to be used.
- Comply with relevant laws, regulations and policies applying to the use of computers and information, e.g. licence, copyright, and privacy laws.
- The School will not tolerate inappropriate materials such as pornographic, racist, defamatory or harassing files, photographs, videos or e-mail messages that might cause offence or embarrassment. Never store, use, copy or circulate such material on the laptop.
- Any damage or loss must be reported to the IT Manager as soon as possible.

Theft or Damage

All phones and portable devices must be clearly marked with the pupils's name.

The School will not accept responsibility for loss, damage, misuse or possible health hazards resulting from the use of mobile phones or portable devices.

The School accepts no responsibility for pupils who lose or have their mobile phones stolen while travelling to and from School.

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 passwords/PIN numbers confidential and should not be shared.

It is strongly advised parents insure their daughter's mobile phone and portable devices.

Disclaimer

Pupils are not required to have a mobile phone and the School supports parents who make the decision that this is not necessary by ensuring that pupils are able to use the School landlines to contact parents. Parents can, of course, contact the School via the landline. This policy does, however, recognise that the majority of the School's pupils own a mobile phone. Any pupil who brings a mobile phone into School does so at their own risk and the School will not be held responsible for any loss or damage.

Parents should be aware that whilst there are obvious benefits to pupils having a mobile phone in terms of personal safety there are also some associated risks such as potential for theft, bullying and inappropriate contact, including grooming by unsuitable persons. Possession of a mobile phone can put vulnerable pupils at risk. Parents and pupils can find further safeguarding information related to mobile phones on the School website.

Related Policies

- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- IT Acceptable Use Policy
- Personal, Social and Health Education Policy
- Positive Behaviour Policy

Appendix A

The following timings will be followed:

At the discretion of the HOY and House Staff these can be adapted as the Academic year progresses in line with some of the other privileges afforded to pupils

FORM I & II	FORM III	FORM IV	FORM V	SIXTH FORM
•No phones during the School day. •FI Boarders will have their phone every day from 7.45-8pm to call home. FI from 7.30 - 8pm •The House staff will arrange phone times at the weekend around activities. •All electronic devices (iPads, laptops, phones) must be handed in at 8pm or at the House staff's discretion and kept in the charging docks overnight.	•No phones during the School day. •Boarders will have their phone every day from 7-8pm to call home or friends. •The House staff will arrange phone times at the weekend around activities. •All electronic devices must be handed in at 8pm and kept in the charging docks overnight.	•No phones during the School day. •Boarders will have their phone every day from 7-9pm to call home or friends. •Pupils will get their phones after breakfast at the weekends until 9pm. •All electronic devices must be handed in at 9pm and kept in the charging docks overnight.	•Pupils can have their phone during the day. The mobile phone must not be seen around School and on silent at all times •Recommended: One night a week digital detox from 10pm to coincide with an early night. •Any issues with sleep, behaviour or meeting study deadlines may result in electronics being restricted.	•Pupils can have their phone during the day. The mobile phone must not be seen around School and on silent at all times •Recommended: One night a week digital detox from 10pm to coincide with an early night. •Any issues with sleep, behaviour or meeting study deadlines may result in electronics being restricted.