



# BROMSGROVE SCHOOL

## PUPIL MOBILE PHONE POLICY

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| Author:          | Deputy Head (Pastoral) |
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| Scope:           | Senior School          |

## PUPIL MOBILE PHONE POLICY

Following recent updated guidance from the UK Department for Education on mobile phones in schools, the School is clarifying how we are looking to implement some necessary changes to our policy at Bromsgrove Senior School, which will take effect from the start of the summer term on 20th April 2026.

In light of continuing national debate on the effect of mobile phones and social media on children of school age, the latest DfE guidance has now strengthened its expectation to 'all schools should be mobile phone-free environments by default'. In setting out this position, the government is keen to point out that restrictions on the use of mobile phones are not unique to schools in England, with data suggesting that one in four countries worldwide (including France, Netherlands, Denmark, Italy, Saudi Arabia and Singapore) have already prohibited or restricted them in schools. Indeed, research from the Children's Commissioner shows that the overwhelming majority (90%) of secondary schools in England already have policies in place to limit or restrict the use of mobile phones during the school day, as has been the case at Bromsgrove since April 2024. As the Headmaster outlined to parents in his letter at that time, and now in support of the latest published guidance, we will continue to promote the benefits of non-reliance on mobile phones, while minimising the potential for loss of focus in lessons, disruption to classroom teaching and cyber-bullying.

To be clear, the new guidelines relate not only to mobile phones, but also to 'other smart technology with similar functionality to mobile phones (for example the ability to send and/or receive notifications or messages via mobile phone networks or the ability to record audio and/or video)'. This does mean that smart-watches will now come under the same restrictions as mobile phones and we ask for parental support in guiding pupils to meet these expectations during the working School day by not bringing such items into School.

While this amended policy does not relate to any laptops or tablets used by pupils as part of the Bring Your Own Device programme, such devices should only be used for educational purposes, as outlined in the School's Acceptable Use Policy, to which each pupil has agreed earlier in the year. We do remind parents that it is their responsibility rather than the School's to check and block any social media and messaging apps or notifications that may be accessed on pupils' own devices and, likewise, any iPad used as a personal device cannot now contain a SIM card since this effectively would enable it to be used as a mobile phone.

Pupils in the Lower Fourth, Upper Fourth and Fifth Forms will continue to follow the current School policy on mobile phones, but there will be changes for Sixth Form pupils, not least in them not being allowed to use their phones for educational purposes in lessons. The latest guidelines acknowledge that pupils in the Sixth Form may be permitted access to their mobile phone at certain and limited times and locations to reflect their increased independence and responsibility, but are equally clear that schools should prohibit the use of mobile phones by Sixth Form pupils in front of younger pupils throughout the School day, including during lessons, the time between lessons, break and lunch times.

Therefore, the Senior School Code of Conduct has been amended to reflect the changes to policy, as outlined in the following sections:

### SIXTH FORM PUPILS

- Any Sixth Form pupil with a mobile phone is responsible for keeping it out of sight for the duration of the working School day until 5.15pm. Mobile phones cannot be visible, heard or used (including with ear-buds or headphones) around the campus, in lessons or in any communal areas where younger pupils may be present.
- Our School etiquette remains **mobile phones should be out of sight and not in use**, and that includes them not sticking out of suit jacket pockets or being carried as an accessory.
- Sixth Form pupils may only use a mobile phone during independent study time in a Sixth Form only area of their House. They may not, for example, use them in their House common room area (with the exception of Housman Hall) or in the LRC or Café area.

- After 5.15 pm, day pupils may use their mobile phones discreetly by the car parks to clarify their transport arrangements with parents.
- In the event of a mobile phone being confiscated for any breach of the above, it will be handed by the member of staff either to the relevant Houseparent or to the Senior School Reception, to be picked up by the pupil at the end of the School day after 5.15pm. Arrangements for a mobile phone being handed in to Reception daily for a longer period of time can be made for any persistent cases of misuse of the above.

#### **FOURTH AND FIFTH FORM PUPILS**

- Any pupil with a mobile phone must hand it into a member of House staff either on arrival at School in the morning or, in the case of boarders, before morning registration. Pupils may collect their mobile phone from the House at the end of the School day after 5.15pm.
- A day pupil arriving at School late for any reason must hand any mobile phone in at the main School Reception when signing in. They may collect it from Reception after 5.15pm.
- A day pupil who knows they are due to leave School early, either with agreed permission (e.g. for a medical appointment) or for something like a midweek fixture, should hand their mobile phone into Reception (rather than in House) on that morning so that they can pick it up from Reception when signing out/leaving School.
- Any pupil who has a mobile phone confiscated during the School day should only pick it up from Reception after 5.15pm.
- Boarders will still have access to mobile phones during free time outside of the working School day, although Fourth and Fifth Form boarders will all hand them in overnight with other devices.
- Pupils in these year groups are still allowed to have mobile phones on trips and fixtures, as well as on Saturdays, although they should not be visible when walking around the campus.
- In the event of a mobile phone being confiscated for any breach of the above, it will be handed by the member of staff either to the relevant Houseparent or to the Senior School Reception, to be picked up by the pupil at the end of the School day after 5.15pm. Arrangements for a mobile phone being handed in to Reception daily for a longer period of time can be made for any persistent cases of misuse of the above.

Ultimately, we have found over the last couple of years that some day pupils make a decision not to bring a mobile phone into School – there is certainly no requirement for them to do so, although we recognise that they can also provide an element of contact security for parents at either end of the School day, which is why our policy is not to implement an outright ban on mobile phones. However, we ask parents to take note that, even for Sixth Form pupils who may have a mobile phone in School, the basis of these new guidelines is to prohibit their use during the School day, and so parental communication should now only operate through School channels. If a pupil needs to contact home during the School day, they will be able to do so using a School phone extension either in their House or in Reception. Likewise, if a parent needs to get a message to their child, they can contact the relevant Houseparent by phone/email as now or, in urgent matters, phone the School Reception directly.

As a boarding school acting in loco parentis for 500 boarding pupils, we are mindful of the latest guidelines' prompt to develop appropriate arrangements for mobile phone use that safeguards and promotes the welfare of pupils outside of the working school day. Boarding pupils will still have access to their mobile phones in their free time, as they do currently, enabling them to contact home as and when required. However, both day and boarding families may be interested to note that, in order to protect screen time and encourage good sleep patterns, the School has decided to extend the collection of all mobile phones and devices overnight to include our Fifth Form (as well as Fourth Form) boarders. We are open to any parental requests (via Houseparents) to do the same for individual Sixth Form pupils who may benefit from such an arrangement.

Undoubtedly, some pupils (and perhaps families) may find adapting to these changes more challenging than others, and there may well be some amendments required when putting such changes into practice. At a very basic level, for example, some may consider reverting to payment cards or cash, not to mention life before WhatsApp and QR codes (for all their benefits), but I trust that this has provided some of the rationale behind this new policy for the summer term. Should you have any queries about an individual

pupil's circumstances relating to these measures, please do contact your child's Houseparent in the first instance, albeit the DfE guidelines are clear that schools should be mobile-free environments by default; anything other than this should be by exception only.