



King's College

TAUNTON

Mobile Phone Policy

Policy Date: September 2024

Responsibility

Individual: Deputy Head Pastoral

Review Cycle: (Annual)

Next scheduled review: September 2025

Last interim review: September 2024

1. Introduction and aims

1.1. Aims

At King's College we recognise that mobile phones, including smart phones, are an important part of everyday life for our pupils, parents and staff, as well as the wider school community. We also, however, recognise the problems that can be a part of smart phone use, especially for pupils and teenagers, and therefore understand that King's College, like all schools, has an important role to play in protecting our pupils from the problems of smart phones and social media, while also educating pupils in their use, and continuing to enable access to technologies which are educationally beneficial.

Our policy therefore aims to:

- Promote, and set an example for, safe and responsible phone use
- Set clear guidelines for the use of mobile phones for pupils, staff, parents and volunteers
- Support the school's other policies, including, but not limited to, the Safeguarding Policy, Behaviour Policy (which includes our Rewards and Sanctions Policy), and the School Rules.

1.2. Rationale

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.

In studies, three in ten pupils say that making and keeping friendships, and the state of their mental health are a cause of worry, anxiety or depression.

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

We have a responsibility to help children and young people develop these habits, which will in turn help them to thrive outside of school.

By the age of 12, 97% of pupils own a mobile phone, but the use of mobile phones in school can lead to distractions, disruption and can increase the risk of online bullying.

The government has introduced guidance ([Mobile phones in schools - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/mobile-phones-in-schools) (www.gov.uk)) which encourages all schools to introduce rules which prohibit the use of phones at school, to help pupils focus on their education, and the friends and staff around them.

The new guidance says that:

- Schools should prohibit the use of mobile phones, but they will have autonomy on how to do this
- Some may allow phones to be brought onto the premises but not to be used during school hours.

The government guidance sets out that there will be some limited cases where pupils should be exempt from the rules because they have special educational needs and/or disabilities. This will include situations where, for example, a diabetic pupil may need to use their phone as a monitoring device.

2. Roles and responsibilities

2.1. Staff

All staff (and volunteers) are responsible for enforcing this policy.

The Senior Management Team (SMT) is responsible for monitoring the policy, reviewing it, and holding staff and pupils accountable for its implementation.

3. Use of mobile phones by pupils

3.1. Pupil Phone Use

Pupils will be asked to provide the school with the make, model and serial number of their phone.

The School reserves the right to allow phones for selected pupils given individual circumstances, for example a medical condition.

Third-Fifth Form pupils (Lower School pupils):

The core elements of the school's mobile phone policy are as follows:

- Pupils are allowed to bring mobile phones to and from school
- Pupils must not use a mobile phone anywhere in school during the school day, except under the specific direction of a teacher
- If a pupil brings their phone to the school, then on arrival it must be switched off and kept out of sight before being handed in to the House Parent, or their representative, in House. It should not be carried around school
- For the purposes of this policy, the school day begins the moment the pupils enter the school site and ends once the pupils leave the school site. In practice, pupils will hand their phone in at morning registration and can collect it after 4.15pm Mondays to Fridays. On Saturdays, pupils will be able to collect their phones after Period 3
- Breaches of this policy will result in sanctions being applied to the relevant pupils.

Sixth Form Pupils

Pupils in the Sixth Form are encouraged to follow the same guidelines as pupils in the Lower School and be good role models for younger pupils, but will be allowed to carry their phone with them during the day at school providing that:

- They follow the school "invisibility" policy (i.e. phones are not seen around the school site)
- Phones are not used in common areas in House or any social events, unless expressly allowed.

During examination periods Sixth Form pupils will be strongly encouraged to hand in their phones overnight.

Trips and sports matches

- Phone use on a trip away from school or to a sports match will be at the discretion of the trip organiser and the Assistant Head Co-Curricular and/or Deputy Head Pastoral. Unless permission is expressly given, phones should not be used, and the 'invisibility' policy will apply.

3.2. Boarding Pupil Phone use

The Boarding House is a pupil's home overnight, therefore Lower School pupils who are boarding for that night, whether they be Full or Occasional Boarders, will be given the opportunity to use their phones at set times in the evenings and at weekends, under the direction of their House Parent, or their representatives. Lower School boarders will hand their phones in overnight to their House Parent, or their representative.

At weekends and in the evenings it is expected that the 'invisibility' rule will still apply in the Dining Hall and other public areas of the school.

3.3. Contacting Pupils and Parents/Carers

Parents/Carers of pupils in the Lower School who need to contact their child during the school day should ring the School Office. We have a well-established system for getting messages to pupils and pastoral support if it is needed.

Pupils who need to contact their parents/carers in an emergency should speak to the School Office, their House Parent, or House Matron/ House Supervisor, who will make a phone available.

3.4. Sanctions

If a phone is seen by a member of staff it will be confiscated by them. Once confiscated, this will be stored in the Common Room safe before being returned to the pupil.

School rules on online safety and acceptable use of mobile phones remain in full effect, and where appropriate will be sanctioned accordingly.

4. Use of mobile phones by staff

4.1. Personal mobile phones

Staff (including volunteers, contractors and anyone else otherwise involved/employed by the school) are expected to set an example and, *wherever possible*, adhere to the principle that they do not use their phone in front of pupils, unless for an expressly work purpose, such as:

- Taking a register in class
- Authentication Apps
- Emergency evacuations

- Supervising off-site trips
- Supervising residential visits.

In these circumstances, staff will use their mobile phones in an appropriate and professional manner and will adhere to the Staff Code of Conduct.

4.2. Work phones

Some members of staff are provided with a mobile phone by the school for work purposes. Only authorised staff are permitted to use school phones, and access to the phone must not be provided to anyone without authorisation.

Staff must ensure that communication or conduct linked to the device is appropriate and professional at all times, in line with our Staff Code of Conduct.

5. Use of mobile phones by parents, volunteers and visitors

Parents, visitors and volunteers (including governors and contractors) are asked to adhere to this policy as it relates to staff if they are on the school site during the school day. This means:

- Not taking pictures or recordings of pupils, unless it is a public event, or of their own child
- Only using any photographs or recordings for personal use
- Not posting photographs or recordings on social media without consent
- Not using phones in lessons, or when working with pupils.

Parents, visitors and volunteers will be informed of the rules for mobile phone use when they sign in at reception or attend a public event at school.

Parents of children in the Lower School are asked to use the School Office as the first point of contact if they need, in case of emergency, to get in touch with their child/ren during the school day. They should not try to contact their child/ren on their personal mobile during the school day.

6. Confiscated or lost phones

Confiscated phones will be stored in the Common Room safe.

Lost phones should be returned to Reception.

7. Monitoring and review

King's College is committed to ensuring that this policy has a positive impact on our pupils' education, behaviour and welfare. When reviewing the policy, the school will take into account relevant advice from the Department for Education, the local authority and other relevant organisations and external agencies.