

Mobile Phone Free School FAQs for Parents

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Why has the school introduced a phone free policy?

We have two main objectives:

- A) To improve the mental health of our young people
- B) To ensure a calm and orderly, disruption-free environment is maintained.

There is a significant amount of national and international research that suggests there is a clear link between the ongoing teenage mental health crisis and mobile phones. Our students' mental health is really important to us, and we are passionate about doing all that we can to address this crisis.

There is also a range of research in place that suggests that learning and attention in the classroom is disrupted by the distraction of mobile phones. By removing this distraction, we believe that our students will benefit greatly, both inside and outside the classroom.

During what parts of the school day will the ban apply?

The ban applies throughout the entire school day, from the moment students arrive at their morning line – up, until they leave the academy building at the end of the day, including during lunchtime.

Can my child bring a mobile phone to school at all?

Yes, students can bring their phones for safety and travel reasons. However, they will be securely stored during the school day as part of the no mobile phone policy.

How will the school manage students' mobile phones?

At the start of the day, all students' mobile phones will be collected during Personal Tutor time and placed into a secure, locked box. Each student will be allocated a numbered compartment for their phone. The box will be securely stored during the day, and students will collect their phones from the same box during Personal Tutor time at the end of the day.

Personal Tutor time at the end of the day has been mentioned, how will this work?

We plan on making slight changes to the internal structure of the day to create a ten-minute Personal Tutor time at the end of each day. Students will still finish school at 3:10pm Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday and at 2:20pm on a Wednesday.

What happens if a student is caught using their phone during school hours?

If a student is caught with a phone during the school day, it will be confiscated, and the student will spend five hours in Isolation. Parents/Carers will need to come to the academy to collect the mobile phone. It will not be returned to the student.

If a child fails to hand their phone to a member of staff, this will be dealt with in line with the academy behaviour policy and could result in a suspension.

How will I contact my child in case of an emergency?

We understand that this will be the main concern for many of our families. In case of an emergency, you can contact the school office, and they will ensure the message is passed to your child promptly. The school will also contact you if there is an urgent need, as we currently do.

We have spent time training our administrative staff over recent months to ensure we can be as efficient and effective as possible.

What if my child needs to contact me during the school day?

If a student needs to contact you, they can do so via the school office, their Personal Tutor, Head of Year, Raising Standards Leader, or member of the Senior Leadership Team. We already do this on a daily basis when a student informs us that they need to make contact with home. This should only be happening if the student feels unwell or there is a significant concern from the student.

Will my child be disadvantaged by not having access to their phone during school hours?

No, the policy is designed to enhance the learning environment. The school will provide all necessary tools and resources for educational purposes, ensuring that students are not disadvantaged. For example, in subjects such as Photography where, in the past, some students have used their phones to take photographs, we have invested in new resources to support the students.

What if my child has a medical condition that requires phone access?

If your child needs access to their phone due to a medical condition, please contact the relevant Head of Year or RSL to discuss further. We will set up a meeting and discuss the

individual medical condition and reasonable adjustment will be applied for each individual case if needed.

Year 7:

Miss Betley DBetley@horizonoat.co.uk

Miss Smith csmith@horizonoat.co.uk

Year 8:

Mrs Milne KMilne@horizonoat.co.uk

Mr Rose arose@HorizonOAT.co.uk

Year 9:

Miss Harris kharris@HorizonOAT.co.uk

Mr Woodcock dwoodcock@HorizonOAT.co.uk

Year 10:

Miss Sheldon ksheldon@horizonoat.co.uk

Mr Maher mmaher@horizonoat.co.uk

Year 11:

Miss Richardson nrichardson@horizonoat.co.uk

Mr Williamson swilliamson@horizonoat.co.uk

How will this policy impact my child's social interactions?

The policy encourages face-to-face interaction among students, particularly during lunchtime. It helps foster better communication skills and reduces reliance on technology for socialising.

At the moment, the expectation is that mobile phones should be out of sight, however, we are aware that a number of students find it very difficult not to check their phones throughout the day, which often leads to confrontations with staff and sanctions in place for individual students.

Are there exceptions for special events or school activities?

Exceptions may be made for field trips or other school activities where phones are necessary. In such cases, the school will inform students and parents in advance. This is an area that will be carefully considered before each event.

How will the school ensure that the policy is enforced?

Staff members will monitor student behaviour throughout the day, ensuring that phones are collected and securely stored. Regular reminders will be provided during Personal tutor sessions

and assemblies. Staff will also receive training over the next half term and on our INSET day in January on how to support and monitor student effectively.

How can I support the school in implementing this policy?

You can support the policy by encouraging your child to follow the rules, discussing the importance of the policy with them, and only contacting them through the school reception in the case of emergency. If your son/daughter is caught with their phone in school, it will be confiscated, and you will need to come to the academy to collect it. It will not be returned to the student; we will need your support with this.

What if my child walks home alone and needs their phone for safety reasons?

Phones will be returned to students at the end of the day, and they are permitted to use them once they have left the academy building.

Is the school providing alternative technology for learning or communication?

Yes, the school is equipped with the necessary technology for educational purposes. In addition, we have put in place extra training for all our administrative staff to ensure communication will be as effective and efficient as possible.

Will my child's mobile phone be safe in school?

Phones will be stored in a purpose-built secure phone box, which will be locked and stored in a secure room. Only key staff will have access to this room throughout the day. Students will not have access to this room. Your son / daughter will be the only person who will physically touch the phone when they put it in and collect it from their phone box.

It should be noted that, as with any other personal property, the school cannot be liable for the loss or damage of mobile phones. However, we are confident in the robust security system that we have put in place to ensure the safety of your child's phone.

What is the school's policy on smart watches?

In the initial phase, we are going to ask for phones to be turned off so smart watches cannot connect to their phone, however, smart watches may still be worn.

If any student is seen using their smart watch inappropriately, it will be confiscated. We will review this after the first half term and update our policy if we feel it is needed.

What happens if I need to collect my son/daughter during the school day, will they be able to get access to their mobile phone?

Yes, a member of staff will take them to retrieve their phone before collection.

In order to ensure that this happens, all collections must be pre-arranged with the school. If your child is unwell during the school day, a member of staff must give them permission to go home, and that member of staff will make arrangements for their phone to be collected. If your child has a pre-booked appointment, reception should be informed on the morning of the appointment so that arrangements can be made for your child to be collected from lesson, retrieve their phone, and await you in reception.

Will staff be able to use their mobile phones?

Staff will use their mobile phones for emails, to take the registers or for internal communication within the academy. Staff are clear on the expectations of the academy and are fully aware on the importance of their role in the process.

Will the behaviour policy change?

Yes – we will update our behaviour policy to ensure the mobile phone system is carefully built into it.

Any detentions for late to the academy will also happen on the same day rather than the following day. This will also be updated on the policy.