

UPPINGHAM

Mobile Phones and Smart Devices Policy

1. INTRODUCTION AND AIMS

At Uppingham School, we recognise that mobile phones and smart devices, including smartphones and smart watches, are now woven into daily life for pupils, parents, staff and the wider school community. We also appreciate that, when used appropriately, technology can enrich learning, and that helping young people develop responsible digital habits is an important part of their education.

This policy reflects the latest guidance from the Department for Education, including *Mobile Phones in Schools – Guidance for schools on prohibiting the use of mobile phones throughout the school day* (February 2024). The DfE states that:

“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.”

DfE, Mobile Phones in Schools, February 2024

It also incorporates the additional guidance issued in January 2026 which states **“all schools should be phone-free environments for the entire school day. That includes lessons, time between lessons, breaktimes and lunchtime.”**

In developing this policy, we have also taken into careful consideration Uppingham’s context as a boarding school, and the age and needs of our pupils. We recognise that maintaining connection with family and friends outside the school day is important for pupil wellbeing, and our approach seeks to balance these needs with the expectations set out by the DfE.

Our policy aims to:

- Promote, model and support safe and responsible use of mobile phones
- Provide clear expectations for pupils, parents, staff and visitors
- Strengthen, and align with, existing school policies and procedures
- Address challenges associated with mobile phone use in school, including safeguarding, lesson disruption, data protection, and the risk of theft, loss or damage

This policy should be read alongside:

- Behaviour and Discipline Policy
- Anti-bullying Policy
- Cyberbullying Policy
- Policy for Searching Pupils, Their Rooms, Belongings or Devices.
- Staff Code of Conduct

2. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

All staff, including both teaching and support staff, are responsible for upholding and consistently enforcing this policy.

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Visitors to the School are expected to alert a member of staff if they become aware of any breach of this policy.

The Senior Deputy Head is responsible for monitoring the effectiveness of this policy, reviewing it every year, and ensuring that pupils and staff understand and follow its requirements.

3. TERMINOLOGY

For this policy:

- Lower School refers to Years 7 and 8
- Middle School refers to Fourth Form, Lower Fifth and Upper Fifth
- Sixth Form refers to Lower Sixth and Upper Sixth

The formal school day is defined as:

- Monday to Friday: 08:00 – 18:00
- Saturday: 08:00 – 12:00, and during sport commitments.

4. USE OF MOBILE PHONES BY PUPILS

4.1 Lower School

We will maintain our current policy, whereby Lower School pupils are not permitted to bring a phone to School.

For pupils who board, they will follow the same mobile phone access arrangements as the Middle School.

4.2 Middle School

Monday to Friday:

Pupils in the Middle School will have their mobile phones kept by the School at all times, except for a single daily access window between 18:00 and 19:00.

Day pupils must hand their phones in to House staff at the start of the day, for storage in the designated secure space within each House. Day pupils' phones can be signed out when they leave School to return home.

Saturdays:

All phones will remain with the School until fixtures are completed or 16:00, whichever is latest, and pupils will have use of them until 19:00. Day pupils can sign their phones out when they leave School to return home.

Sundays:

Boarders will have limited and structured access to their phones on Sundays, with access to them after commitments (no earlier than 16:00) until 19:00.

Away fixtures:

Middle School pupils may take their phone to away fixtures if they are not returning to School after the fixture. In this situation, the phones must be kept out of sight at all times (unless

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express permission is granted by a member of staff), must not be visible during matches or post-match teas. Pupils who take their phones to away fixtures are responsible for any loss or damage to the phone.

4.3 Sixth Form

Monday to Friday, and Saturdays:

Sixth Form pupils are required to hand their phones in for storage in the designated secure space within each House, during the formal school day.

Outside of these times, Sixth Form pupils will be responsible for their phones unless parents of boarders choose to opt their children into the same overnight arrangements as there are for the Middle School. HsMs will be pleased to facilitate this additional control for any family that wishes to take up this option.

Sundays

Sixth Form pupils will have access to their phones throughout Sunday.

4.4 Additional guidance

Co-curricular activities:

Unless the supervising member of staff gives explicit permission, Middle School and Sixth Form pupils are not permitted to use their phones during co-curricular clubs or activities.

Overseas pupils:

Boarders who need to contact family or friends outside the designated access times should speak with their HsM. Requests will usually be granted, particularly where time-zone differences make communication challenging.

Additional phones:

To uphold our safeguarding and regulatory, we must make clear that any pupil found in possession of additional phones will receive an immediate suspension from School. This measure is essential to protect the integrity and consistency of the system, and we are grateful for your support in ensuring that pupils bring only one device to School

4.4 Internet access

The internet will switch off during the following times:

- Lower School boarders: 21:00 and 06:30
- Fourth Form: 21:00 and 06:30
- Lower Fifth: 21:30 and 06:30
- Upper Fifth: 22:00 and 06:30
- Lower Sixth: 23:00 and 06:30
- Upper Sixth: 23:00 and 06:30

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5. SMART DEVICES

5.1 Smart watches

- Smart watches must not be worn by pupils in the Lower or Middle School.
- Sixth Formers may wear a smart watch, but the device should be used discreetly and in a manner that does not disrupt learning or school routines.

5.2 Smart glasses

- Smart glasses must not be worn by pupils in the Lower School or Middle School.
- Sixth Form pupils may wear smart glasses, but only outside the formal school day.

6. SANCTIONS

Any pupil who uses a mobile phone or smart device outside the permitted hours will have the device immediately confiscated by the member of staff who identifies the misuse.

The device will be passed to the HsM or members of the Senior Pastoral Team and will remain in their care until the following evening.

Any pupil found to be handing in a 'dummy' phone or keeping an additional hidden phone will be suspended for 48 hours. In such cases:

- The dummy phone will be confiscated until it can be safely returned to parents.
- The pupil's main phone will also be confiscated for one week.
- Parents will be informed of this breach and the sanctions applied.

Repeat offenders may face more extensive restrictions on phone access and further sanctions, in line with the School's *Behaviour and Discipline Policy*.

Refusal to hand over a phone or device when instructed by a member of staff will result in a follow-up sanction, consistent with the School's *Behaviour and Discipline Policy*.

The School will also consider whether any incident of misuse indicates that a pupil may be at risk of harm. Where concerns arise, the matter will be referred to the Designated and/or Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead(s).

7. SEARCHES

Headteachers, or members of staff they formally authorise, have a statutory power to search a pupil or their possessions where there are reasonable grounds to suspect that the pupil is in possession of a prohibited item identified in legislation, or of any item specified in School Rules as one that may be searched for. Under this policy, a mobile phone or smart device (including smart watches) is considered an item that may be searched for.

All staff must follow the procedures outlined in the School's *Policy for searching pupils, their rooms/belongings/devices*, which sets out the authorised processes, safeguarding considerations, and recording requirements associated with conducting a search.

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8. ADAPTATIONS AND REASONABLE ADJUSTMENTS

Uppingham School has a duty under the Equality Act 2020 to take all reasonable steps to ensure that disabled pupils are not placed at substantial disadvantage as a result of the School's policies or practices. In line with this duty, disabled pupils may be granted controlled access to a mobile phone during the school day, where this is necessary to support their needs.

The School has a responsibility to support pupils with medical conditions or mental health needs. In some circumstances, access to a mobile phone may be essential, for example, for pupils with diabetes who rely on phone based technology to monitor blood sugar levels.

We also recognise that some pupils may have individual circumstances which make access to a phone essential or beneficial. In such cases, the School will take an individual and flexible approach, considering the pupil's needs and determining what adjustments are appropriate. This does not mean that a pupil will automatically be exempt from all restrictions; rather, reasonable adaptations will be made where clearly justified.

9. CONTACTING PUPILS AND PARENTS DURING THE SCHOOL DAY

Parents who need to contact their child during the school day should telephone the relevant House. A message will be passed on to the pupil at an appropriate time, along with any support they may require.

If a pupil needs to contact home during the school day, they should speak to a member of staff within their House team. A phone can be made available where appropriate, ensuring that communication is facilitated in a safe and supported way.

10. STAFF USE OF MOBILE PHONES

Staff are expected to model exemplary use of technology. Their conduct should set a positive example for pupils and ensure that pupils' safety, learning, and overall experience remain the priority at all times.

Staff, including volunteers and contractors, must not make or receive personal calls or send text messages during formal lessons or while supervising or interacting with pupils. Personal mobile phones should be used during breaks and lunchtime only.

Staff should also avoid using their mobile phones indiscreetly in the street or around the School site.

There may be exceptional circumstances in which it is appropriate for a member of staff to use their phone during pupil contact time, for example:

- Urgent communication from their child or child's school
- Situations involving acutely ill dependents or family members
- Urgent communication necessary for school-based safeguarding/pastoral matters

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11. USE OF MOBILE PHONES BY PARENTS, VOLUNTEERS AND VISITORS

Parents, volunteers, and visitors are expected to follow the same principles that apply to staff when on the School site while pupils are present. This helps ensure a safe, respectful, and distraction free environment for all pupils.

This means:

- Not taking photographs or recordings of children, except at public events or when capturing images of their own child.
- Using any photographs or recordings for personal use only and *not* sharing them on social media without appropriate consent.
- Not using mobile phones during lessons, activities, or when working directly with pupils.

If parents need to contact their child during the school day, they should telephone the child's House. A message will be passed on at an appropriate time.

12. SECURITY AND RESPONSIBILITY FOR DEVICES

Pupils and staff must ensure that their mobile phones are secured as effectively as possible. Devices should be protected with passwords, PIN codes, or equivalent security features to prevent unauthorised access to personal information or phone functions.

Where a mobile phone or smart device is brought into School, it is done so entirely at the pupil's and parents' own risk. Uppingham School cannot accept responsibility for the loss, theft, or damage of any phone or electronic device on the School site. This applies in all circumstances, including occasions where a device has been confiscated by a member of staff as part of a disciplinary measure.

Mobile Phone Policy Timings

Lower School

Pupils in the Lower School are not allowed mobile phones in school and therefore must not bring them into school. Lower School pupils who board are allowed their phones in line with the Middle School.

Middle School

MONDAY TO FRIDAY	
08:00 - 18:00	No
18:00 - 19:00	Yes
19:00 - 08:00	No
SATURDAY	
08:00 - 16:00/after sport	No
16:00/after sport - 19:00	Yes*
19:00 - 08:00	No
SUNDAY	
08:00 - 16:00/after commitments	No
16:00/after commitments - 19:00	Yes
19:00 - 08:00	No

* Pupils may take their phone to away fixtures if they are not returning to School after the fixture but must keep them out of sight.

Sixth Form

MONDAY TO FRIDAY	
08:00 - 18:00	No
18:00 - 08:00	Yes++
SATURDAY	
08:00 - 12:00	No
12:00 - 08:00 (Monday)	Yes++
SUNDAY	
00:00 - 08:00 (Monday)	Yes++

++ If a parent wishes for their child to have the same overnight arrangements as the Middle School pupils, please advise the relevant HsM who will be pleased to facilitate this additional control.