

Mobile Phone Policy

At Sands School we recognise that mobile phones and the internet are a big part of young people's lives. There are many benefits from mobile phones and the internet such as being able to keep in contact with family and friends, use as an organisational tool, as an aid for learning and for entertainment. However, there are also serious risks presented by young people having a mobile phone or going online. We also see that some young people struggle to maintain a healthy life balance between time spent online and the other important aspects of their life and that, when present in school, mobile phones can be a distraction from learning.

We aim for Sands School to be a calm, safe and supportive learning environment. Creating a phone-free environment is the best way for the school to:

- reduce the risks posed to our students,
- significantly reduce students' exposure to unwanted content and harmful contact,
- support students to develop a healthy relationship with technology and,
- prevent phones from being a distraction from learning.

We recognise that a successful mobile phone policy must be embraced by the school community and form part of its culture. It is also important that the school's mobile phone policy is proportionate and that it does not demonise technology or hinder learning. To achieve this aim, this policy was developed over the course of the 2025-26 academic year by a committee comprised of staff and students, taking into consideration [government guidance on mobile phones in schools](#), findings from our research into Sands students' usage of mobile phones in and outside of school and parents' views.

The school's responsibility to safeguard students and support them to use technology safely doesn't end at the school gate. Many students will have access to such devices and the internet at home and it is vital that they understand the risks of using phones and going online. Education about online safety is a key component of our PSHE programme, delivered through General Studies lessons and throughout the school's curriculum. Parents are encouraged to ask staff about this where they have questions and to let us know about any specific concerns.

Restrictions

Students are **not permitted to use or carry mobile phones** or similar devices during the school day.

This includes time during, before and after lessons, breaktimes, lunchtimes and while downtime. It does not apply while students are travelling to and from school including on school buses.

Where students come into school carrying a mobile phone or similar device, they **must be switched off and stored securely upon arrival** at school and collected at the end of the day.

Phones and devices are stored at student's own risk.

Staff are not permitted to use mobile phones or similar devices during the school day, except for work purposes where no reasonable alternative exists. Mobile phones should be kept out of sight while at work. Personal calls/messages may be made in a room away from students during breaks. Staff must follow the Online Safety Policy, including Acceptable Usage, when online and using technology.

Visitors are permitted to carry mobile phones but are asked not to use them while in the presence of students, exemptions may be made for specific work purposes, visitors should speak to the member of staff coordinating their visit if they need to request an exemption. Visitors are not allowed to take photos or videos or use any kind of recording equipment, unless by explicit prior permission.

Restricted devices

The following devices included in this rule include all personal devices which can be used for sending or receiving calls, notifications and that can record audio and/or video, including:

- All mobile phones
- Laptops
- Tablets
- Portable music players, where they can be used to browse the web
- Cameras and video cameras
- Smart watches

School owned devices are not subject to the restrictions but must still be used in line with the school's Online Safety Policy and Acceptable Usage of Technology Policy.

Bring Your Own Device Policy

Students may request permission to bring the following personal devices under the school's Bring Your Own Device Policy.

- Laptops
- Tablets
- Cameras

Exceptions

In addition to the Bring Your Own Device Policy, there are some cases where exceptions may be made to allow a student to use a restricted device. Exceptions are made on a case-by-case basis and would likely be agreed for:

- Medical needs

- SEND needs
- Specific school uses

Students should speak to the SEND Lead or their Teacher if they need an exception.

Managing breaches of the policy

It is our aim that this policy is embraced as a positive agreement among the whole school community. Everyone has a responsibility to help maintain the policy whilst also maintaining a culture of openness and respect. Staff and students should not assume infringements are intentional; students should not feel judged or shamed if they are found with a restricted device.

When a restricted device is seen or heard, the student will be asked to turn it off and store it in line with this policy.

Anyone taking or using another's device intentionally should expect to be called to Council.

Use of a mobile phone or other device regardless of whether the device was permitted - which raises a safeguarding concern (such as online bullying, viewing or storing inappropriate content or images, sending others unwanted or inappropriate images or other activity which breaches the Acceptable Use of Technology Policy) will be handled by the Safeguarding Team. Where harm is caused to others as a result it is likely to also be brought to Council and will be treated as serious breach of school rules.

Contacting Parents

Where students need to contact their parents during the school day, they can do so using the school phone in Reception or the Admin Office. Portable handsets are available for students to make a call to their parents in privacy.

Parents are similarly asked, where they need to contact their children during the school day, to do so by contacting the school rather than calling or messaging their child directly. School staff will be happy to pass on a message.

We hope this will be positive for students and enable them to further develop their independence. Where parents or students have concerns about this increasing student's anxieties, they should speak with their tutor so that we can offer support.

Going Downtown

Where students are going downtown during the school day, they do not need to carry a mobile phone for safety: the shops in town are very close to the school and the risk to students' safety is very low.

Where students wish to spend a longer period of time out of school, such as at the Rec, they must be in a group of three and take a school walkie-talkie with them to maintain contact with staff.

Students must sign out and follow the downtown rules.

Events, Trips and Offsite Activities

Events

An exception to the usual school policy may be made for certain events, such as school concerts, where parents are permitted to take photos or make video recordings of performances.

Parents and students are reminded not to share photos and videos of other students or post them online, as they do not have consent to do so.

Trips

Students are permitted to carry and use their mobile phones on school trips, including on residential, in order to maintain contact with parents and update them about expected return times, take photos of the trip and make notes.

Use of phones must not breach the Acceptable Usage of Technology Policy or distract from the purpose of the trip.

Alternatives to Mobile Phones

It is regrettable that as a result of the introduction of this policy positive uses of mobile phones and similar devices will also be restricted. The school will, as far as possible, seek to minimise the impact and make alternative tools and materials available for these uses. Staff and students are encouraged to raise any examples and work together with the School Meeting to source alternatives.