



CHATHAM & CLARENDON GRAMMAR SCHOOL

Use of Mobile Phones Policy

Agreed by Governors: October 2024

Introduction to Policy

To further enhance the school environment and to encourage productive communication between all members of our school community, we have reviewed the use of mobile phones in and around school. There is significant evidence to support the removal of mobile phone use and where this has happened in other schools, Headteachers report that student interaction with their peers increases, rates of cyber bullying decrease and focus in class improves. Some schools have also reported an increase in GCSE outcomes as result of removing the use of mobile phones by students.

The Government has also released statistics on the use of mobile phones:

- By the age of 12, 97% of children own a mobile phone. (Ofcom)
- The majority of 8-11-year-olds (63%) use social media and messaging apps. This rises to 93% for children between 12 and 15 years old. (Ofcom)
- 29% of secondary school students (rising to 40% for KS4 students) reported mobile phones being used without permission in most of their lessons. (The National Behaviour Survey (2021-2022))
- Mobile phones have already been prohibited or restricted in countries worldwide, such as France and The Netherlands.
- Screen time can displace positive activities. (Royal College Paediatrics and Child Health; 2019)
- One in five children have experienced bullying online. (Office of National Statistics; 2020)

Government guidance

The new government guidance states that schools should:

- Prohibit the use of mobile phones and other smart technology throughout the school day, this includes during lessons, between lessons, breaktimes and lunchtime.
- Consider whether students in the sixth form should be permitted access to their mobile phone at certain and limited times and locations.
- Prohibit the use of mobile phones by sixth-form students in front of younger students.

- Develop and implement a tailored policy on the use of mobile phones and other similar devices in school.

The guidance gives schools the following examples to illustrate different ways in which a mobile phone-free environment can be achieved:

- **No mobile phones on the school premises** – all phones to be kept at home
- **Mobile phone handed in on arrival** – phones will be returned to students at the end of the school day
- **Mobile phones kept in secure location** – for example, kept in lockers, or similar secure storage and not accessed throughout the school day
- **Never used, seen, or heard** – **students keep possession of their mobile phones only on the** strict condition that they are never used, seen, or heard

From 4 November 2024, Chatham & Clarendon Grammar School will invoke a use of mobile phones policy which will state:

1. Responsibilities

Students

Students should not use their mobile phone or other personal electronic devices during the school day.

It is important that all students are clear on the school's policy on prohibiting the use of mobile phones in the school, and the consequences and sanctions for not following it.

It is important that students feel safe to and from school and parents will want to be able to contact their child when they travel to and from the school site. For this reason, mobile phones can still be brought to school, but must be turned off at the school gates and put into their bag. The mobile device should remain there until they leave the premises at the end of the school day.

Students must follow the government and school's policy: **Never used, seen, or heard** – students keep possession of their mobile phones only on the strict condition that they are never used, seen, or heard during school time.

Parents

As partners in your child's education, parents have an important role in supporting the school's policy on prohibiting the use of mobile phones in school.

We would appreciate your support in discussing and reinforcing any policy changes at home, including the risks associated with mobile phone use and the benefits of a mobile phone-free environment.

If you need to contact your child during the school day, you should contact the school office, where staff will relay any messages and facilitate contact.

Staff

All staff are expected to enforce the school's policy on the use of mobile phones in school.

Staff will not be allowed to use their own mobile phone for personal reasons in front of students throughout the school day.

Staff will regularly inform and remind students of the school's policy on prohibiting the use of mobile phones in the school.

Students will be taught the risks that are associated with the use of mobile phones, both in school and more broadly, to ensure they understand the decision being taken by the school to prohibit the use of mobile phones throughout the school day. Whereas previously the use of phones in some lessons was allowed to do research etc, lessons and lesson plans will be altered to negate the use of phones.

2. Sanctions

The use of sanctions in school is always seen as a last resort; however, occasions may arise where students decide to breach the provisions set out in this school policy. In these circumstances, the guidance outlines a number of sanctions and powers available to schools when implementing the prohibition of mobile phones in school.

The guidance states that schools have the power to:

- Confiscate mobile phones or similar devices for a period of time deemed appropriate by the headteacher.
- Enforce sanctions and disciplinary measures, such as an after school P6 and the removal of certain privileges.

When applying sanctions, the school expects all its staff to act in a measured way, considering whether the confiscation or sanction is proportionate and taking into account any special circumstances relevant to the case.

It is important to note that the law protects staff from liability in any proceedings brought against them for any loss or damage to items they have confiscated as a sanction, providing they have acted lawfully.

3. Exceptions

There are exceptions to this total ban on the use of mobiles:

- 1) Where the student has a significant medical need where they must consult their mobile phone (diabetes, blood sugar levels, blood pressure, etc.) they may use their mobile phone in a controlled environment (e.g. an office or first aid room)
- 2) In the event of an emergency (a situation where there is a risk of harm or danger);
- 3) Where the student has been given expressed permission from a member of staff to make an emergency call;
- 4) If required, students may use phones after school to scan QR codes to register attendance at clubs;
- 5) Sixth Form Students will be allowed to use their mobile phones in their:
 - Sixth Form Common room
 - EPQ lessons
 - Supported Study lessons
(Above exemptions due to limited number of laptops/computers available)
 - and lessons with the approval of teachers/cover supervisors.

4. Review of Policy

We will ensure that parents, students and staff are consulted about this policy and that all viewpoints and opinions are taken into account before the school policy is further updated and finalised. We will seek feedback from parents, students and staff near the end of term 2 about this.

Staff will discuss the policy with students and discuss the use of mobile phones in school.

This policy to be reviewed by October 2025.