Chigwell School

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Pupil Use of Mobile Phones

1. PURPOSE AND RATIONALE

This policy has been developed to support pupils' learning, wellbeing, and positive social interaction throughout the school day. It has been developed in accordance with the Department for Education's statutory guidance *Mobile Phones in Schools* (June 2026), which states that schools should be "mobile phone-free environments by default" and should prohibit the use of mobile phones throughout the school day, except in limited and clearly defined circumstances.

The School believes that reducing access to mobile devices during the school day promotes attention, learning, face-to-face interaction, emotional wellbeing and healthy habits around technology use.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the School's Behaviour Policy, Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, Acceptable Use of Technology Policy, Anti-Bullying Policy and relevant Department for Education guidance.

The School recognises that mobile phones and personal digital devices are an important means of communication for families; however, we are committed to ensuring that the school day is free from unnecessary distraction, supports positive social interaction, and safeguards all members of the community.

This policy therefore sets clear expectations for the use of mobile devices, balancing their place in modern life with the need for a safe, focused, and purposeful learning environment. It has been developed following extensive consultation with staff, parents, and pupils.

This policy applies to all pupils and requires consistent enforcement by staff, support from parents, and clear understanding from pupils. The policy will be reviewed annually in light of emerging technology and guidance, as well as feedback from stakeholders.

2. GENERAL PRINCIPLES

Pupils may bring a mobile phone to school where required for travel or communication with parents.

The School operates a gate-to-4pm mobile phone policy for pupils in Years 7-11. Separate arrangements apply to Sixth Form pupils. This means that mobile phones, smartwatches and other personal smart devices must be kept out of sight from the moment a pupil enters the school site until 4.00pm, or until the end of an organised co-curricular activity. Any device that is seen, heard, accessed or handled during this time will be considered to be in breach of the policy.

Parents who need to contact their child during the school day should do so via the School Office.

The School will make reasonable adjustments for pupils with specific medical, safeguarding, or educational needs where access to a device is deemed necessary.

Whilst the principles of this policy apply to all pupils, members of the Sixth Form are subject to separate arrangements regarding the possession and use of personal devices. These arrangements are set out in the Sixth Form section of this policy and, where applicable, take precedence over the provisions below.

3. DEFINITION OF DEVICES

In this policy, “mobile devices” include mobile phones, smartphones, smartwatches, smart glasses, tablets and any personal electronic device capable of communication, internet access, photography, audio or video recording.

Devices covered by this policy, including smart glasses and smartwatches, must be stored in accordance with Section 10.

Smartwatches and other wearable smart devices with communication, internet, or recording functionality are subject to the same restrictions as mobile phones and must be stored in a locker (Years 7-8) or in the pupil's locked pouch (Years 9-11) throughout the school day. They may not be worn during this period.

4. CORE EXPECTATION

We operate a ‘gate to 4pm/end of co-curricular activity’ policy. Mobile devices must be stored in accordance with this policy from the moment a pupil enters the School site until 4.00pm or the end of an organised co-curricular activity.

During this period, mobile devices must not be seen, heard, accessed or handled, unless expressly permitted under this policy.

5. USE OF DEVICES

The following provisions apply to all mobile devices as defined in Section 3, including smartphones and smartwatches.

5.1 PERMITTED USE

Mobile devices may be used only in the following circumstances:

- Before entering the School site and after 4.00pm, or after the conclusion of an organised co-curricular activity;
- On educational visits, residential trips and sports fixtures, only for a specific purpose, in a specific location and for a specific period of time as authorised by the member of staff in charge.

- For medical purposes, where required (e.g. diabetes monitoring)
- In lessons, only where expressly authorised by a teacher for a specific educational purpose and period of time.

5.2 NOT PERMITTED

Mobile devices must not be seen, heard, accessed, handled or used at any time during the school day unless expressly permitted under Section 5.1.

This includes:

- During lessons without explicit permission
- In corridors, playgrounds, House rooms, or between lessons
- In the Dining Hall at breakfast or at breaktime
- In toilets, changing rooms, or any private space
- As a substitute for school equipment (e.g. for research, photography, or note-taking) unless directed by a teacher
- Earbuds, headphones and similar personal audio devices may not be used during the school day except where expressly authorised by a member of staff.

6. EDUCATIONAL VISITS, FIXTURES, AND RESIDENTIAL TRIPS

Mobile phone arrangements on educational visits, sports fixtures, residential visits and overseas tours will be determined by the member of staff in charge and communicated to pupils and parents in advance. Expectations may differ from normal school routines depending on the nature, location, and purpose of the activity. Pupils are expected to follow any instructions given by staff regarding the use, storage, or surrender of mobile devices during such activities.

7. SIXTH FORM

Sixth Form pupils are permitted to use mobile phones and other personal smart devices in the Sixth Form Centre and at other times expressly authorised by a member of staff for a specific purpose, location, and period of time.

However, devices must not be used whilst moving around the School site, in teaching areas unless authorised by a member of staff, or in public areas of the School where younger pupils are present.

Public areas of the school site include, but are not limited to, corridors, Reception areas, dining spaces, the Chapel quad, the fields, and other shared spaces.

Sixth Form pupils are expected to model responsible digital habits and may be subject to sanctions if these expectations are not met.

8. COMMUNICATION WITH HOME AND EMERGENCIES

Pupils must not contact parents directly during the school day using personal devices. If a pupil needs to contact home, they should do so via Reception or a member of staff

Similarly, parents are asked not to contact pupils directly during school hours; contact Reception instead. In the event of an emergency, pupils will always be able to contact parents via Reception and vice versa.

9. SAFEGUARDING AND APPROPRIATE USE

The use of mobile devices raises important safeguarding considerations. Pupils must not:

- Take photographs, videos, or audio recordings of others unless expressly authorised by a member of staff;
- Share content that could cause harm or distress;
- Use mobile devices in a way that compromises the privacy or dignity of others.

Any such misuse will be treated as a serious disciplinary matter. Where there is reason to believe that a mobile device contains material that may pose a safeguarding risk, constitute a breach of School rules, or involve unlawful activity, the school reserves the right to examine the device in accordance with relevant legislation, Department for Education guidance and the School's safeguarding procedures.

10. STORAGE AND RESPONSIBILITY

All pupils are responsible for ensuring that their mobile devices are stored appropriately and in accordance with this policy throughout the school day.

Lower School (Years 7&8)

- Pupils must place all devices covered by this policy in their lockers at the start of the school day. Devices must remain secured in lockers until 4.00pm or the end of an organised co-curricular activity.

Middle School (Years 9-11)

- Pupils must secure all devices covered by this policy, including mobile phones and smartwatches, in a school-approved, lockable pouch for the duration of the school day and any timetabled co-curricular activities. Pouches must remain locked and unopened until pupils are permitted to use their devices at the end of the school day.
- A mobile device found in an unlocked pouch during the school day will normally be treated as a breach of this policy, regardless of whether there is evidence that the device was being used.
- The pouch remains the property of the School. Pupils are responsible for its safekeeping, and the cost of replacing a lost or deliberately damaged pouch will be charged to parents.
- Pupils are responsible for keeping the pouch in their school bag throughout the day.

Sixth Form (Years 12&13)

- Sixth Form pupils may use mobile phones only within designated Sixth Form areas.
- Mobile phones may not be used elsewhere on the School site during the school day unless specifically authorised by a member of staff.
- Sixth Form pupils are expected to model responsible and appropriate use of technology at all times.

The School reserves the right to inspect that approved pouches remain locked and that devices are stored in accordance with this policy. Failure to comply with storage requirements will be treated as a breach of this policy. The school does not accept responsibility for the loss or damage of mobile devices brought onto the school site. Any device brought to school is done so at the pupil’s own risk.

11. BREACHES OF THE POLICY

Any mobile phone or smart device found in breach of this policy will normally be confiscated and a Head's Detention issued. This reflects the School's view that compliance with the mobile phone policy is a significant behavioural expectation and is essential to maintaining a mobile phone-free environment.

A mobile phone or smart device may be confiscated by a member of staff if:

- It is seen, heard, accessed, handled or used during the school day in breach of this policy.
- It audibly interrupts a lesson, assembly or school activity.
- It is visible when it should be stored in a locker or locked pouch.
- It is used in a manner that is inconsistent with the School's Behaviour Policy, Acceptable Use of Technology Policy or Safeguarding procedures.

Refusal to surrender a device when instructed by a member of staff will be treated as a serious disciplinary matter and may result in additional sanctions.

Confiscated devices will normally be taken to Reception and may be collected at 4.00pm, or at signing-out time for Middle Sixth pupils where appropriate. Alternative collection arrangements may be determined by the Deputyor Assistant Head (Pastoral) where appropriate.

Where a pupil states that they have not brought a mobile device to school, the School reserves the right to verify this with parents. Any pupil found to have deliberately misled the School about the possession of a mobile device, or to have taken steps to circumvent this policy, will be subject to a significant sanction. Repeated incidents may result in further disciplinary action.

Deliberate attempts to circumvent this policy, including concealing devices, using a secondary device, or presenting a different device for storage, will be treated as a serious breach.

Repeated or persistent breaches of this policy may result in:

- Parents being contacted.
- A requirement for the pupil to hand in their phone to Reception at the start of each day and collect it after school.
- Temporary confiscation of the device beyond the end of the school day.
- Further sanctions in accordance with the School's Behaviour Policy.

Breaches of this policy will normally be dealt with under the School's Behaviour Policy. Repeated or persistent breaches may result in escalating sanctions in accordance with the School's Behaviour Policy and associated sanction framework.

For and on behalf of the Governors
D.A.P. King