



SCARBOROUGH COLLEGE PUPIL MOBILE PHONE POLICY

Introduction and Ethos

Scarborough College is a values-led, inclusive boarding and day school committed to nurturing confident, independent, kind and intellectually curious young people. Our educational philosophy places strong emphasis on focus, meaningful human interaction, wellbeing, and academic excellence.

We recognise that mobile phones and smart technology are an established part of modern life and play an important role in students' safety and communication, particularly when travelling to and from school. However, substantial national and international evidence demonstrates that unrestricted access to smartphones during the school day can be detrimental to learning, wellbeing and social development.

In line with our ethos, and with current government guidance, Scarborough College has adopted a **'not used, seen or heard' approach**, expressed in our language as **'mobile phones must be invisible at all times'**.

This policy is designed to:

- Protect learning time and academic focus
- Promote positive wellbeing and healthy digital habits
- Support safeguarding and child protection
- Encourage respectful face-to-face relationships
- Ensure consistency, clarity and fairness for students, staff and families

Evidence and Rationale

Academic research consistently shows that mobile phones harm learning and concentration. Young people often overestimate their ability to multitask, and evidence suggests that the mere presence of a smartphone — even when not in use — reduces memory recall, accuracy and sustained attention. Studies cited by UNESCO, the OECD (PISA 2022), and leading universities demonstrate:

- Reduced academic performance where phones are present in lessons
- Increased distraction to both the user and those around them
- Negative impacts on memory, focus and cognitive performance
- Adverse effects on wellbeing, anxiety and mental health

Scarborough College believes that students deserve an environment free from unnecessary digital distraction, where they can think deeply, learn well, and connect meaningfully with others.

Government Guidance and Legal Framework

This policy is informed by and aligned with current Department for Education (DfE) guidance, including:

- *Mobile phones in schools* (DfE non-statutory guidance)
- *Behaviour in Schools* (DfE)
- *Keeping Children Safe in Education*
- *Searching, Screening and Confiscation* (DfE)

Confiscation powers are exercised in accordance with Sections 91 and 94 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006.

Scope of the Policy

This policy applies to:

- All pupils in Years 7 – 13
- Staff, volunteers and contractors
- Parents, carers and visitors while on site
- School trips, visits and residential activities

For the purposes of this policy, **‘mobile phones’** includes smartphones, smartwatches and any device capable of communication, internet access, recording or messaging.

Expectations for Pupils

Years 7–11

- Mobile phones are **prohibited throughout the school premises**
- Phones must be **turned off** and kept **out of sight in school bags at all times**
- 'Invisible at all times' includes time immediately before and after the official school day (leaving lessons, walking in school corridors etc)
- Phones must not be seen, heard or used for any reason without explicit staff permission

Years 12–13

- Sixth Form students are expected to be **role models** for younger pupils
- Mobile phones are **prohibited throughout the school premises - apart from specific areas - the 6th form Study Centre and 6th form cafe.**
- Mobile phones must not be used when moving around the school site or in the presence of younger students - the 'invisible at all time' approach.
- Any use (either in 6th form Study Centre / 6th form cafe or when permitted by staff) must never interfere with learning, safeguarding or school routines

Sanctions and Procedures

If a mobile phone is seen, heard or used contrary to the expectations stated above:

- **First incident**
Phone confiscated, stored securely in the Senior Deputy Head's Office (or alternatively in Reception), collected at the end of the school day.
- **Second incident**
Phone confiscated, stored securely in the Senior Deputy Head's Office (or alternatively in Reception), collected at the end of the school day. Additional sanction applied following conversations with pupil, parent and Tutor / Head of Tier
- **Further incidents**
Phone confiscated, stored securely, collected from the Senior Deputy Head's Office at the end of the school day. Additional sanction applied following conversations with pupil, parent and Head of Tier / Senior Deputy Head

All confiscated devices will be stored securely.

Bringing a mobile phone to school is at the student's own risk; the College accepts no responsibility for loss or damage.

Smartwatches and Wireless Headphones

- Smartwatches (e.g. Apple Watch) if worn, must never interfere with learning, safeguarding or school routines
- Headphones used while travelling to school must be removed before entering the school site
- Wireless headphones and earbuds must be **invisible at all times** when moving around school premises (and only used when permitted by staff).

Exceptional Circumstances

Scarborough College recognises that there may be exceptional circumstances where temporary phone use is required, including:

- Monitoring a medical condition (e.g. blood sugar levels)

In such cases, staff will use professional discretion to allow limited, supervised use.

Digital Wallets / Mobile Payments

Using a mobile phone for payments at school is not compatible with this policy, or with government guidance. Students are not able to use their phones for payments during the school day (6th form students will be able to use mobile payments in the 6th form cafe).

Meal Times

The 'invisible at all times' approach applies to all meal times, including breakfast and supper.

School Trips and Visits

- During the school day: phones must remain switched off and stored unless staff direct otherwise
- Out-of-hours trips and residential visits: limited use may be permitted under staff guidance

Role of Parents and families

The College values the partnership between home and school. Parents and carers are asked to:

- Support and reinforce this policy at home
- Discuss the risks of excessive mobile phone use and the benefits of a phone-free school day
- Contact students via the School Office during the school day, not via personal mobile phones

Safeguarding, Searching and Data Protection

The College reserves the right to search or examine a device where there is a safeguarding or behavioural concern, in line with Department of Education guidance. Certain behaviours associated with phone use may constitute criminal conduct and will be referred to external agencies where appropriate.

Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed periodically to ensure:

- Its effectiveness in supporting learning and wellbeing
- Alignment with government guidance and legislation
- Responsiveness to emerging technology and educational practice

Feedback from students, staff and parents will inform future revisions.

Scarborough College believes that school is a place to learn, to think deeply, to build friendships and to grow as individuals — not a place to sit on a mobile phone. If students breach any of the principles outlined within this policy the following process will be imposed: The school will confiscate devices from pupils. This is permitted under sections 91 and 94 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006. When confiscated they will be turned off and stored securely by the school. They will be placed in an envelope clearly marked with the name of the student. Confiscation of phones is permitted according to the DfE's guidance on mobile phones in schools

The students Form Tutor, Head of Tier or Senior Leader (as appropriate to the level of breach) will contact parents / guardians and inform them of a breach of the policy.

They will be returned at the end of the school day.

The breach of the policy will be logged on the schools electronic behaviour system as a Stage 1, 'Failure to follow the Pupil Mobile Phone Policy'.

Repeated / continued breaches of this policy will see an escalation in accordance with the Behaviour for Learning Policy.

Policy prepared by:

Matthew Porter – Senior Deputy Head

Person Responsible for Updates	Date Last Reviewed	Next Review Due
Matthew Porter	September 2026	September 2027