

Merchant Taylors' School



Mobile Phone Policy

Policy Custodian: Deputy Head (Pastoral)

Approving Body: MTS Senior Leadership Team

Approved:

This policy should be read in conjunction with the School Rules and Regulations; the E-Safety Policy; the IT Acceptable Use Policy; the Safeguarding Policy; the Promoting Good Behaviour Policy; the Serious Disciplinary Incidents Policy; the Anti-Bullying Policy and all regulations governing external examinations.

The term “mobile phone” refers to all smart devices throughout the policy.

Introduction

Merchant Taylors' School is a mobile phone-free environment: the potential use of mobile phones and all smart technology with similar functionality to mobile phones (e.g. smart watches and tablets) by pupils is prohibited on the school site at all times, with the exception of the Sixth Form Common Room and where reasonable adjustments have been granted to an individual pupil (see below for further explanation).

Parents and carers should consider the risks and benefits of purchasing mobile phones and smart technology for children. Where it is felt there are benefits to a pupil both owning a phone and bringing it with them to school (for example, where parents use a phone to ensure safety during the journey to and from school) the phone must be stored in a locked Yondr pouch whilst on the school site.

The Use of Yondr Pouches

Any pupil wishing to bring a mobile phone onto the school site must purchase a Yondr pouch.

Upon entering the school site through any of the external gates, the coach park or car parks, mobile phones and any other smart technology must be switched off and placed in the pouch, which must then be magnetically sealed.

Upon leaving the school site, the pouch can be unlocked using one of the magnetic devices, which are available at all exit points.

It is the responsibility of those bringing phones to school to keep the pouch in a safe place at all times, either on the person or locked away in a book or games locker. Pouches and phones should be clearly marked with the owner's name and, like any other valuable items brought to School, insured as part of an “All Risks” policy.

If a pouch is mislaid by a pupil, the pupil cannot bring a phone into the school site until the pouch has been replaced.

If a pupil arrives to school and discovers that they have forgotten their pouch, they must leave their phone in the school office and collect it at the end of the day. This will be demerited and repeated demerits will be followed up by the Pastoral Team, as per standard school procedures. The School cannot accept liability for the loss of, theft of, or damage to a mobile phone or pouch containing a phone.

Confiscation of Mobile Phones

Staff will confiscate any mobile phone which has not been secured in a Yondr pouch, or which is heard to ring within a sealed pouch. Confiscated phones will be taken to the School Office, where they will be held until a parent, carer or designated adult collects them in person. Parents and carers will be notified of a confiscation within 24 hours (working days only) of the phone being handed in to the School Office by a member of staff.

The school is not liable for the loss or damage of any items confiscated as a sanction, provided it has acted lawfully.¹

The Head Master and authorised staff have a statutory power to search a pupil or their possessions where they have reasonable grounds to suspect that a pupil is in possession of a mobile phone or similar item not in a Yondr pouch, as items prohibited by the School Rules. See [Searching, Screening and Confiscation](#) for guidance regarding searching a pupil.

Repeated confiscation of a phone may result in additional sanctions for the pupil, as described in the Promoting Good Behaviour Policy.

Where a mobile phone has been misused on the school site, the pupil may be subject to further sanctions, as described in the Promoting Good Behaviour and Serious Disciplinary Incidents Policy.

Staff will also consider whether behaviour involving mobile phones gives cause to suspect that a pupil is suffering, or may be at risk of, harm. Where this may be the case, as set out in [Keeping Children Safe in Education Part One \(2025\)](#), staff should follow the Safeguarding Policy.

Adaptations and Reasonable Adjustments

In line with the school's duty under the [Equality Act 2010](#), the school will allow pupils with unusually complex needs access to their mobile phone during the school day, where it is necessary due to the nature of their disability, illness or sensory impairment and has been agreed as part of their support plan.

Mobile phone access will also be allowed where it allows pupils to manage a medical condition effectively. For example, pupils with diabetes might use continuous glucose monitoring with a sensor linked to their mobile phone to monitor blood sugar levels.

Pupils who have been assessed as Young Carers may be allowed access to their mobile phone depending on their individual circumstances.

Permission to access a mobile phone during the school day can be given by a member of the School Leadership Team, the SENDCO or School Nurse. All pupils who are allowed to access

¹ www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/40/section/94

a mobile phone whilst on site (long-term) will be given a Mobile Phone Permission Card. Pupils with permission to use mobile phones may not be exempt from all restrictions, and are expected to follow all school policies

If a pupil without permission to use a mobile phone needs to access their phone as an emergency measure, they must ask permission from a Head of Section, the Deputy Heads' Office or School Office, and will use their phone under supervision. Staff should ensure that pupils are able to access their mobile phone where necessary when raising concerns with teachers about issues which have occurred online.

Visiting Pupils

Pupils visiting Merchant Taylors' School should not have access to mobile phones whilst on the school site. Access will be restricted by use of Yondr pouches, if the pupils belong to a school which also uses this technology, or by pupils handing in mobile phones to staff. The member of staff hosting the visit will liaise with staff at the visiting school to decide on the most effective method to ensure all pupils understand and meet the expectations of behaviour relating to mobile phones.

Use of Mobile Phones by Sixth Formers

Sixth Formers are allowed to use mobile phones in the Sixth Form Common Room only, at any time of day. Upper School pupils are prohibited from using mobile phones in all other parts of the school site and will be subject to the sanctions described in this policy if found using a phone outside the Common Room: their phones must be turned off and out of sight at all times.

The Role of Parents and Carers

Parents and carers have an important role in supporting the school's mobile phone policy and reinforcing the benefits of a mobile-free environment at home. The views of parents, pupils and staff have been consulted in the drafting of this policy, and the school encourages parents to contact their child's tutor, Head of House, Head of Section or the Deputy Head (Pastoral) if they have questions or concerns about this policy or their child's use of smart technology.

Where parents need to contact their child during the school day, they should email or telephone the School Office, where staff will relay messages and facilitate contact.

The Use of Mobile Phones Outside the School Day

The use of mobile phones on school trips (day and residential) is covered in Appendix One: Acceptable Use of Mobile Phones on School Trips and Off-Site Activities.

Pupils are subject to the school's Rules and Regulations whenever their activities impact upon the reputation of the school or upon other pupils. Actions involving mobile phones undertaken outside school which have an impact upon the school, or other pupils, such as cyber-bullying or misuse of social media to bring the school into disrepute, will be subject to the School's Promoting Good Behaviour and Serious Disciplinary Incidents Policies.

Appendix One: Acceptable Use of Mobile Phones on School Trips and Off-Site Activities.

This code of use applies to all “smart” communication devices, including laptops, tablets and smartwatches.

Whilst mobile phones can be used to enhance pupil experience, excessive use can impact on the development of resilience and communication skills, which many off-site activities are intending to promote. Staff should also be mindful that allowing pupils to use mobile phones in communal areas can present a particular safeguarding risk to other pupils.

With this in mind, mobile phone use should be limited as much as possible and should generally only be allowed when:

Phones increase the safety of pupils, for instance, when pupils may need to contact staff or use the map function on their phones.

Phones are being used to photograph tourist attractions or other activities, as a record.

Phones are being used to complete quizzes or academic work, for instance during field trips.

Phones are being used for entertainment on long journeys.

When taking part in any school activity off site, pupils should be reminded that they are expected to operate within the IT Acceptable Use Policy for Pupils (https://www.mtsn.org.uk/fileadmin/user_upload/IT_Acceptable_Use_Policy_for_Pupils.pdf)

Trip leaders should adhere to the above guidelines but the specific mobile phone policy for each trip is at their discretion and based on the context of the trip; the year group travelling and the place they are travelling to. Some suggestions of appropriate policies may be found below. Trip leaders are expected to communicate the mobile phone policy in writing to parents and pupils in advance of the trip. All staff supporting the trip should be aware of and enforce the policy.

If staff on the trip believe that a breach of school rules has occurred using the mobile phone, they may examine the phone with the pupil and another member of staff present. The pupil must give account of any relevant logon names and passwords when these are requested. Sanctions for inappropriate behaviour and communication shall be governed by the school’s normal disciplinary procedures and the phone may be taken from the pupil for the remainder of the trip and returned to parents upon arrival home.

If pupils and parents refuse to cooperate with a school investigation whilst on trip, the phone may be retained and handed in to the Deputy Head (Pastoral) upon return to MTS. If staff have reason to believe there is evidence of criminal activity on the phone, the phone must be retained and handed in to the Deputy Head (Pastoral) upon return to MTS. Members of staff should never intentionally view any nude or semi-nude images of a child. Staff must never copy, print, share, store or save such images.

Suggested Mobile Phone Policies

Year 7 & Lower School

In the Lower School, it is recommended that phones are not taken on trips or are handed to staff every day and only given to pupils when they are specially required for activities. Phones should not be available for use in communal areas such as hotels or swimming pools.

Middle School

In the Middle School it is reasonable to allow pupils access to their phones, but there should be an evening embargo when phones are handed to staff and returned the next morning. Pupils should not be using phones during meals or in 'high-risk' areas such as swimming pools, bathrooms or changing rooms.

Upper School

In the Upper School, pupils are allowed mobile phones, but it is recommended to agree to a policy of reasonable use with them, e.g. to turn off phones in the evening and not during mealtimes.