



CITY OF DERBY ACADEMY

MOBILE PHONE POLICY (and similar/associated devices)

Introduced	September 2025
Next Review Date	July 2026
Approved by	Governing Body

In 2024, the Department for Education (DfE) produced guidance relating to the use of mobile phones in schools. The then Secretary of State for Education stated:

“One of the greatest challenges facing schools is the presence of mobile phones. Mobile phones risk unnecessary distraction, disruption and diversion. We owe it to our children to do what we can to remove distractions and enable them to be fully present and engaged in the classroom. We also owe it to our pupils to keep them safe at school. By removing mobile phones from the school day, we can create a safe space where pupils are protected from the risks and dangers associated with social media and cyber-bullying, as well as the peer pressure and possible stigma associated with owning what are often expensive devices. This is why we are determined that all schools should prohibit the use of mobile phones throughout the school day – not only during lessons but break and lunchtimes as well.”

The guidance stated that there are four main options available to schools in England:

1. No mobile phones allowed on the school premises (must be left at home)
2. Mobile phones handed in on arrival and collected at the end of the day
3. Mobile phones kept in secure location, which pupils do not access throughout the school day
4. Pupils may keep their phones, but they are “never used, seen or heard”

Our policy relating to mobile phones (and similar/associated devices) has been developed following a parental consultation and to align with the following guidance from the DfE:

[DfE Behaviour in schools guidance](#)

[DfE Mobile phones in schools Guidance](#)

[DfE Searching, screening and confiscation in schools guidance](#)

We fully understand how important mobile phones are for safety and communication with home. Therefore, **we will NOT be imposing a full ban** (as some schools have done). Instead, we will be adopting a stricter approach to our current policy which is a combination of options 3 and 4. However, in exceptional circumstances, especially relating to safeguarding concerns and/or persistent breaches of the policy, we may impose options 1 or 2 for individual students.

EXPECTATIONS: “NEVER USED, SEEN OR HEARD”

All students will be allowed to carry mobile phones in school on the strict condition that they are never used, seen or heard anywhere on the school site between 08:35 and 15:10 (or until any after-school activity or detention has been completed). During this time students are expected to have their phones turned off and out of sight, and they **cannot**:

1. Use their phones for any reason e.g. to read and send messages, check the time, or listen to music
2. Have their mobile phones out/visible (this includes associated devices such as ear pods/headphones)
3. Play any music or have any audio or vibrate notifications turned on

Likewise, staff are not allowed to use a mobile phone for personal reasons in front of pupils during the school day. However, there may be occasions where mobile phone use is appropriate and legitimate, and flexible adaptations and reasonable adjustments to the policy will be made accordingly on a case-by-case basis. For example:

- Allowing teachers to check work emails, issue homework, issue rewards and sanctions or use multi-factor authentication to log into the school network
- Allowing students to use a mobile device to monitor or manage a medical condition such as diabetes or hearing
- Allowing students to use their mobile phone in exceptional circumstances at specific times and locations with staff permission and supervision (this also includes on school trips and allowing students to inform parents/carers about after-school activities and detentions)

CONSEQUENCES AND SANCTIONS FOR BREACHING THE POLICY

For the purposes of the policy, mobile phones that are used, seen or heard (and similar/associated devices) will be classed as ‘prohibited items’. CODA can and will adopt government guidance and use a range of appropriate sanctions including confiscation if a student does not meet our expectations. If, on the balance of probabilities, a member of staff believes that a student, however discretely, has used a mobile phone, or has not turned the phone off, they will confiscate the phone. Staff will consider any special circumstances relevant to any breach. Staff will always adhere to the DfE’s [Searching, screening and confiscation in schools guidance](#) when necessary. Students will start each half-term with a ‘clean slate’ (unless a ban is in place in which case the ban will be reviewed by the Headteacher).

Per half-term	Consequence and sanction
First incident	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Device(s) will be confiscated and stored securely. Text message home. • Students can collect the device(s) before they leave at the end of the school day.
Second incident	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Device(s) will be confiscated and stored securely. Text message home. • Students will receive an appropriate sanction e.g. loss of social time/detention and removal of Class Charts points. • Students can collect the device(s) before they leave at the end of the school day.
Third incident	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Device(s) will be confiscated and stored securely. Text message home. • Students will receive an appropriate sanction e.g. loss of social time/detention and removal of Class Charts points. • Students will <i>not</i> collect their device(s) at the end of the day. Instead, parents or nominated family members will be contacted to arrange collection.
Additional breaches, refusal to hand over a prohibited item, refusal to be searched, and negative online behaviour	<p>Persistent breaches and/or serious incidents such as defiance and refusal will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis. It is to be expected that these will result in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time in internal isolation, escalated to respite or formal suspension if necessary • A temporary or even permanent mobile phone ban for an individual with a hand over on arrival every day. Any student banned from bringing a mobile phone on site will be subjected to random searches.

Although we are not banning mobile phones from the school site, parents/carers are reminded that if their child does carry one it is entirely at their own risk, and the school does not accept responsibility for lost or damaged devices. The law also 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.

We encourage parents/carers to discuss the updated mobile phone policy with their child(ren) and ensure that they understand the expectations.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS / CONCERNS RAISED BY THE PARENT/CARER SURVEY

My child has a phone for safety reasons when travelling to and from school. Will the changes to the mobile phone policy affect this?	No. We are not banning mobile phones from the school site (as some schools have done). Students will still be able to use their phones until 08:35 and from 15:10 (or until any after-school activity or detention has been completed).
What if I need to contact my child in an emergency or to pass on an important message during school hours?	Parents and carers can contact the school on 01332 270450 . Messages will be passed on as quickly as possible, and in an emergency your child will be allowed to contact you if so requested.
What if my child needs to contact me urgently during school hours?	Students can ask teachers and/or the pastoral team for permission to contact home either using their own mobile phone (under supervision) or using a school telephone.
My child uses their mobile phone to manage medical conditions e.g. blood sugar levels, hearing aid volume. Will they get into trouble?	Absolutely not. We already have several students who do this. If you haven't already done so, please let us know the details about your child's condition and how we can support them.
My child uses their mobile phone to check the time. What will they do now?	There is no need to use a mobile phone to check the time. Doing so means the mobile phone is on and there is a high risk that they will see and be tempted to read messages. All classrooms and social areas have a clock and/or the time displayed on the screen. Being able to tell the time is a life skill. We encourage students to wear a watch if necessary.
My child uses their mobile phone to check their timetable. What will they do now?	Students are given a paper copy of their timetable at the start of the year which they are encouraged to carry. All student timetables are displayed in the Compass Area which can be checked between lessons. We will be creating more timetable displays around school. We can provide replacement copies of timetables and students can ask a member of staff if necessary.
Why can't my child use their phone during break times?	We are following government guidance to prohibit the use of mobile phones during the whole school day (including breaks and lunchtimes) to avoid access to messaging platforms and social media and any associated risks.
My child normally carries their phone in their hand. Is this breaking the rules?	Yes. To enforce the "never used, seen or heard" rule we must insist that students carry phones in pockets or bags. We expect students to have bags for stationery, PE kit, jumpers, coats, etc.
Mobile phones can be a useful tool to support learning. Will this opportunity be lost?	No. The policy allows appropriate and legitimate use of mobile phones during lessons at the teacher's discretion.
If confiscated, will my child's phone be stored safely?	Yes, phones will be stored in various secure locations around school e.g. pastoral offices and Student Services.
I do not agree to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • my child's mobile phone/earphones being confiscated • my child's mobile phone/earphones being retained by the school until they are collected by a parent/carer • my child or their belongings being searched 	<p>For the purposes of the policy, mobile phones that are used, seen or heard (and similar/associated devices) will be classed as 'prohibited items'.</p> <p>Headteachers and staff they authorise:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are backed by the DfE to confiscate and retain mobile phones and similar/associated devices as a disciplinary penalty for the length of time they deem proportionate. • Have a statutory power to search a student or their possessions where they have reasonable grounds to suspect that the student is in possession of a 'prohibited item'. <p>Searching may be required when, for example, a student has handed in one mobile phone but they may have another mobile phone in their possession. CODA staff will always adhere to the DfE's Searching, screening and confiscation in schools guidance.</p>
I do not agree to my child having an after-school detention in relation to mobile phone use (or any other breach of the rules).	Government guidance states that schools do not have to give notice to parents/carers for after-school detentions so long as the student can get home safely after (but we will always consider individual circumstances).
I do not agree to my child receiving a sanction (including detention or suspension or a mobile phone ban) for using their mobile phone outside of school hours.	Government guidance states that schools may sanction students if their online behaviour is threatening or causes harm to another student. They may also sanction a student if their behaviour online impacts the school environment.