Pocklington School Foundation

Mobile Phone Use in School: Rules for Students (including web-enabled devices)

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1. Aims of Policy

The School's approach to student mobile phone use is motivated by our concern for student wellbeing, our desire to create a school environment that promotes a focus on education over distraction and to foster healthy interpersonal skills. There is now considerable evidence to indicate that limiting screen time and restricting interference from mobile phone use in the school day can help in all these regards.

In line with Keeping Children Safe in Education (DFE), and the most recent Department of Education's guidance relating to mobile phone policy (Mobile Phones in Schools, DFE, April 2026), we have implemented the following policy and practices to ensure a 'phone-free' school environment.

We have decided against an outright ban on mobile phones (as is the case in some schools) so that those students who need to have them on their person travelling to and from school can do so.

We strongly recommend that expensive mobile phones / smart watches are not brought into school. The school is not responsible for loss or damage to personal devices.

At Pocklington School we're committed to creating a learning environment where every student can thrive. Our young people are growing up in an increasingly complex world, living their lives on and offline. This presents many exciting opportunities, but also academic, emotional and social challenges. Our goal is to promote a focused and distraction-free learning environment whilst encouraging responsible use of technology. To support this, we have introduced a mobile phone policy that incorporates the Yondr programme https://www.overyondr.com/ for pupils in 1st to 5th year.

We believe that every student deserves the chance to experience a phone-free education and phone pouches provide a simple, secure way of supporting this approach across our Senior School (note that phones are not permitted in the Prep School). This approach provides a balanced solution, ensuring young people retain possession of their phones while minimising distractions during school hours. This, in turn, helps foster social interaction, improves focus on learning, and can reduce stress associated with phone use, all while maintaining communication for families during travel to and from school.

2. Mobile Phones and Web-Enabled Devices: Rules for Students

Prep School

- Pupils are not permitted to bring mobiles, web enabled devices or gaming devices into school.
- Pupils who travel by bus or walk to school independently may be granted special permission to carry their mobile in their bag. In this case, parents should apply for written permission from the Prep School Deputy Head outlining the reasons for the request. Where permission is granted, pupils will **ONLY** be allowed to use their device to make contact with parents and they must **NOT** use them for any other reason.
- In some exceptional circumstances, such as when children are going between 2 houses during the week, parents of children who do not travel by bus may require their child to bring a mobile phone to school. Parents should apply for written permission from the Deputy Head, stating whether this is a one-off occurrence or long-term request.
- Children who have been granted written permission to bring their mobile into school, for the reasons outlined above, will be required to turn their device off and hand it in to the School Office immediately on arrival at school. They should collect their device on leaving the school building at the end of the day and must **NOT** use their device whilst on the school grounds.

- **Smart watches or watches with a remote listening facility are not permitted in school under the school rules.**
- Pupils may bring an e-reader to school, providing the device does not have the facility to browse the internet, take photographs or play games.

Children who do not have written permission to bring their mobile or web enabled device to school will have their device confiscated, switched off and kept securely (in an envelope with the name and form details of the pupil). The device will be returned at the end of the school day. Parents will be contacted to make them aware of the situation.

Senior School: 1st to 5th Year – Yondr Pouch Programme

Our school is a 'phone-free' community. Each pupil will be assigned a personal Yondr Pouch and they are responsible for bringing it to school daily and keeping it in good working condition. Phones and wearable tech will be secured in the pouch upon arrival and remain there until dismissal. Please note that the use of smart watches is not permitted in school hours.

Daily Process

Start of the day:

1) On arrival to school, pupils must ensure that their pouches are unlocked (unlocking stations will be open prior to registration) and phones are turned off and in bags ready to take to registration.
2) At registration, pupils will ensure their phones are turned off and lock them securely in their phone pouch. This is an established part of the morning routine and is overseen closely by the tutor.
3) We encourage pupils to keep their pouched phones securely in their lockers during the school day.

At the end of their day:

On leaving the school site, pupils will unlock their pouch, retrieve their phone and tech, **and re-close** the pouch to protect the locking mechanism from damage and to prevent anything being accidentally locked in the pouch.

Late Arrivals/ Early Departures

Pupils arriving late or leaving early must pouch/ unpouch their phones at reception.

Forgotten Pouches

It is a clear requirement that pupils bring their pouches with them each day.

If a pupil arrives to school without their pouch, The pupil's phone will be collected and securely stored in the office until the end of the day. This will be logged on Class Charts and a repeat offence is likely to result in a school detention.

If the pouch is repeatedly forgotten, their pouch will be treated as lost, and a full replacement fee will be charged (currently £30).

Unauthorised Phone Use During the School Day

If a student is found in possession of a phone outside their pouch on school site, the phone will be confiscated and stored in the main office. The phone will be returned once a parent/guardian collects it. Breaking mobile phone school rules is taken seriously and a first offence will result in a Head's Detention. Further breaches of mobile phone rules will result in an escalation of sanction, up to and including suspension.

Bag searches may be conducted if teachers have concerns that a student has a mobile device on them that hasn't been placed into their pouch.

Away Fixtures in the week

For away fixtures during the school day, phones will remain locked in pouches. Supervising staff will have portable unlocking devices with them so that, if necessary, pouches can be unlocked so contact can be made with home on the return journey (e.g. where there is a change to published return times etc.)

Saturday Fixtures / Events: The school remains a phone-free environment. On Saturdays. It is an expectation that phones brought onto site are switched off and out of sight.

For away fixtures on Saturdays, phones must be handed in enroute to the destination school, but may be returned to the pupil by the member of staff on return to Pocklington, should there be good reason to do so.

Damaged Pouches

Any attempt to tamper with the Yondr system, including use or possession of high-strength magnets will be treated as a serious offence, potentially resulting in a replacement fee, confiscation until a parent/guardian picks it up and suspension.

If accidental damage occurs, students must report it immediately. If damage is discovered during checks and has not been reported, it may be considered intentional.

The following examples may indicate intentional damage:

- Ripped or cut fabric
- Bent or cut pin
- Signs of force to the black locking mechanism
- Pen marks inside the pouch
- Pouch opening without a station
- Scuff marks on the black ball

The pouch should not be used as a replacement for a protective case and/or screen protector on a mobile device.

Emergencies and Safeguarding

Communications During the School Day

Parents/ carers who need to contact their child during the school day should do so via the school office on (01759321200). We will then pass this message onto your child.

Should a pupil wish to make contact with home, they are able to do so from the main school office, with access to a discreet environment if the call is of a personal nature.

Medical Conditions

Students who require access to their mobile devices for specific medical purposes will be provided with a medical pouch.

Emergency Procedures

In an emergency, the priority is for students to follow school safety procedures under staff guidance. Unauthorised phone use during such situations may:

- Delay emergency responses
- Spread misinformation
- Put students and staff at increased risk
- Disrupt coordinated safeguarding measures

Emergency communications will be managed through the school.

Opting out – the decision not to send pupils to school with a phone

Surveys of pupils and parents, and our experience at school, reflect that, currently, almost all pupils bring a mobile phone to school. That being said, we fully understand and support the decision made by parents not to purchase a phone for their child until they feel that it is the right time. If parents have made this choice and therefore do not require a mobile phone pouch, then they should email mainoffice@pocklingtonschool.com expressing this. A central list is kept by the school and tutors are made aware. Should this decision change at any time, it is important that the school is made aware so that a pouch can be issued.

6th Form

- Sixth Form pupils may, if they wish, request a pouch to use as a means of restricting screentime and distraction in the school day. Please contact the tutor if this is the case.
- Sixth Formers can use mobile phones in the sixth form centre, **but NOT** around the school site (except under the direction of teachers in lessons).
- Sixth formers may use tablets and laptops for independent study in the sixth form area and library.

- Earbuds (e.g. Apple Earpods) are not permitted for use during the school lessons or around the school campus. They may be used in the sixth form area.
- The wearing of Smart Watches is strongly prohibited in any examinations. In public examinations a pupil can be disqualified from exams for wearing a Smart Watch.

Library

- The library will be a mobile-free zone for all students at all times *(this currently includes sixth formers and for boarders' prep times).*

3. Exemptions

In line with DfE guidance, exceptions will be made only where necessary and on an individual basis, for example where a pupil:

- Requires access to a phone for medical reasons (e.g. Monitoring a health condition),
- Needs access as a reasonable adjustment related to special educational needs or disability,
- Has a safeguarding need, including caring responsibilities.

Any exception must be:

- Agreed in advance with the school,
- Clearly recorded,
- Regularly reviewed.

4. Additional Information

- Mobile phones are the responsibility of the pupils who own them. The school cannot be responsible for loss or damage to mobile phones.

- Mobile phones (or any web-enabled devices such as smart watches) are never to be brought into an examination room, even if switched off. Examination boards will disqualify candidates for breaking this rule.

- If a pupil is feeling ill, they must go to the Health and Wellbeing Centre before contacting home. In the case of the Prep School, pupils who feel ill will already be in the care of a teacher or Matron who will contact parents.

- In School, no pupil should ever use their phone (or any other device) to video, photograph or record another pupil or member of staff without their permission and the permission of a supervising teacher.

- Making abusive calls or sending abusive messages or images is a criminal offence. Permission is required to take, store and distribute photographs. The school may take police advice in such matters. Please refer to the school policy on ICT and Procedures to Counteract Cyberbullying.

Appendix 1: Staff Guidelines for Confiscation of a Mobile Phone (for Senior School staff)

1. The mobile must be **switched off** and taken to the Senior School main office. The member of staff confiscating the phone will place the mobile in an envelope with the following details clearly noted:

Pupil's Name:

Year Group:

Condition of phone (note if damaged):

Date and time confiscated:

Member of Staff:

- ***Once the details are completed, hand the mobile phone in the envelope to a member of the office team.***
- ***A member of the office team will record mobile phone infringement on ClassCharts***

2. The phone is then placed ***carefully*** in the safe**.** The code for the safe is **xxxx*** (3x wrongly inputted and an alarm goes off, so note down the code!)

Instructions for using the safe (*instructions will also be on the locker door***):**

- **To open:** Press **'ENTER'** Key, followed by **the code,** followed by the **'key' symbol**
- **To close: Hold door shut, press 'ENTER'** followed by the **key symbol.**

3. **Fill in the sign in/ sign out book found in Locker 'xx*'.**

4. **Make sure you notify the relevant Day (*and Boarding*) HoP by logging on Class Charts**

5. **There is a manual override key stored in the key safe by the staff room telephone (code ****). Please only use if absolutely necessary and return after use.**

*For all relevant codes / locker numbers please contact Deputy Head (Pastoral)