

Mobile Phone and Mobile Devices Policy



Westwood College

Implementation Date: 02.10.2026

Review Date: September 2027

V1

1. Purpose

Westwood College is committed to maintaining a calm, safe and purposeful college environment where students are ready to learn, respectful of others and safe throughout the college day.

Mobile phones and mobile devices can provide reassurance to families when students travel to and from college. During the college day, however, they can distract from learning, interrupt routines, increase safeguarding risk and make it harder for students to build positive relationships.

In line with the Department for Education's statutory guidance, *Mobile phones in schools*, updated 29 June 2026 and to be followed by schools from 1 September 2026, Westwood College operates as a mobile phone-free environment during the college day. Students must not use, access, check, display or have available for use any mobile phone or mobile device from arrival on the college site until the end of the college day, unless a specific authorised exception applies.

This policy supports Westwood College's values of Resilience, Ambition, Pride and Respect and should be read alongside the college's Behaviour Policy, Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, Anti-Bullying Policy, Online Safety Policy, SEND Policy, Supporting Students with Medical Conditions Policy, and Searching, Screening and Confiscation procedures.

2. Scope and definitions

For the purposes of this policy, "mobile phone" and "mobile device" include smartphones, standard mobile phones, data-enabled smartwatches, tablets or other personal devices with communication or internet capability, earbuds or headphones capable of receiving notifications or messages, and any other smart technology with similar functionality.

This includes any device capable of sending or receiving messages, accessing the internet, taking photographs, recording audio or video, receiving notifications, or otherwise allowing communication during the college day.

This policy applies throughout the college day, including:

- arrival on the college site;
- line-up and tutor time;
- lessons and assemblies;
- movement between lessons;
- breaktime and lunchtime;
- detention, internal reflection or supervised college provision;
- college trips, visits, fixtures and off-site activities where the college has stated that the policy applies.

3. Core expectation

Students must not use, access, check, display or have available for use any mobile phone or mobile device during the college day.

Where a student brings a phone or mobile device to college for travel or safety reasons, it must be handed in or stored in the manner directed by the college. The device must remain inaccessible to the student until the end of the college day unless an authorised exception applies.

Students are expected to:

- arrive on site with phones and mobile devices switched off and away;
- follow the college's mobile phone routine during line up calmly and promptly;
- hand in or store their phone or mobile device as directed by staff;
- not keep a second phone or mobile device;
- not use another student's device;
- not use a smartwatch, earbuds or other mobile device as an alternative to a phone;
- collect their device calmly at the end of the college day through the agreed process;
- follow staff instructions at all times.

4. Storage, access and liability during the college day

Students bring mobile phones and mobile devices to college at their own risk. The college strongly advises families to consider whether a device needs to be brought onto the college site at all.

The college will not accept responsibility for loss, theft or damage to a mobile phone or mobile device unless it is shown that the college, or a member of staff acting on behalf of the college, failed to take reasonable care.

The Head of College will determine the college's storage model and may amend the process where required to ensure safe and effective implementation.

Where students bring a phone or mobile device onto the college site, it must be stored only in the manner directed by the college and must remain inaccessible throughout the college day. Students must not access the device during the college day unless an authorised exception applies.

Where a device is handed in, stored or confiscated under this policy, the college will take reasonable steps to keep it secure and to return it through the agreed college process.

The college will maintain a proportionate record of any reported issue relating to collection, storage or return, including loss, damage, suspected tampering, incorrect collection, refusal or an uncollected device.

Families are responsible for ensuring that any device brought to college is appropriately insured, password protected and clearly identifiable where possible. Students must not bring high-value devices or unnecessary mobile devices onto the college site.

5. Contact between home and college

Parents and carers who need to contact a student during the college day must contact the college office.

Students must not use their own mobile phone or mobile device to contact home during the college day. If a student feels unwell or needs support, they must speak to a member of staff, who will follow the college's usual inclusion, medical or safeguarding procedures.

Where urgent contact is required, college staff will support communication between the student and home through the agreed college process.

6. Classroom use and college technology

Westwood College does not use students' personal mobile phones as a routine classroom learning resource.

Staff must not ask students to use personal mobile phones in lessons. Any Bring Your Own Device arrangement does not include mobile phones or personal mobile devices.

Where technology is required for learning, the college will use college-approved devices, systems or platforms.

7. Medical, SEND and exceptional circumstances

Westwood College recognises that some students may require access to a mobile phone or mobile device for a specific medical, SEND, disability-related, safeguarding or other exceptional reason.

The college will consider each case on its own merits and, where required, will make reasonable adjustments and/or agree a written exception. Examples may include phone-linked diabetes monitoring, an agreed medical management plan, a reasonable adjustment linked to disability or SEND, a specific safeguarding arrangement, a young carer arrangement, or another exceptional circumstance approved by the Head of College or a delegated senior leader.

Any exception must be:

- agreed in advance wherever possible;
- recorded in writing;

- limited to the agreed purpose;
- limited to agreed times and locations where appropriate;
- shared with relevant staff;
- reviewed regularly.
- supported by evidence from relevant professionals where appropriate.

An agreed exception does not give a student general permission to use a phone or mobile device freely during the college day. Use must remain directly linked to the agreed need.

Staff should not challenge agreed medical, SEND or safeguarding-related access publicly. If staff are unsure whether an exception applies, they should contact inclusion staff, SEND staff, medical staff or a senior leader.

8. Unacceptable use

The following are not permitted:

- using a phone or mobile device during the college day;
- keeping a phone or mobile device after the point at which it should have been handed in or stored;
- handing in one phone while keeping another;
- using another student's device;
- using a smartwatch, earbuds or mobile device to communicate, access media or receive notifications;
- using a device to contact home without staff permission;
- taking photographs, videos or audio recordings on the college site;
- photographing, filming or recording students, staff or visitors without permission;
- using a device to bully, threaten, harass, humiliate or intimidate another person;
- sharing, viewing, requesting or storing inappropriate, abusive, sexual, violent, discriminatory or degrading content;
- using a device in toilets, changing rooms or any area where privacy is expected;
- using a device during an examination, assessment or controlled condition;
- refusing to hand over a device when instructed by staff;
- refusing to co-operate with a reasonable search or screening process;
- damaging, interfering with or taking another person's device.

Serious misuse may be treated as a safeguarding, behaviour or criminal matter.

9. Toilets, changing rooms and privacy

Mobile phones and mobile devices must not be used in toilets, changing rooms or any other area where privacy is expected.

Any device seen, heard or suspected to have been used in these areas will be confiscated immediately where it is safe to do so. The incident will be referred to the inclusion team, safeguarding staff or senior leaders as appropriate.

Where there is any concern that a device has been used to record, photograph, share or store images or audio from a private area, the college will follow safeguarding procedures and may involve parents/carers, the police or other agencies.

10. Examinations and assessments

Mobile phones, smartwatches, earbuds and mobile devices are not permitted in examinations or formal assessments.

Students must follow examination rules and hand in any device as directed before entering an exam room or assessment setting.

Possession of a mobile phone or mobile device during an examination may result in the exam board being informed and could lead to disqualification from that paper or further consequences from the exam board.

11. Searching, screening and confiscation

Mobile phones and mobile devices are items that may be searched for under the college's rules where the school has reasonable grounds to believe there are lawful grounds to do so.

The college may carry out searches, screening or other checks where the school has reasonable grounds to believe this is necessary and in accordance with its published Searching, Screening and Confiscation procedures and the relevant [Department for Education Searching, Screening and Confiscation](#) guidance in force at the time. Any search will be carried out only where the school has reasonable grounds to believe there are lawful grounds and will be reasonable, proportionate and respectful.

Before a search, screening or other check takes place, and where the school has reasonable grounds to believe it is necessary, staff will explain why it is taking place, what they are looking for, how and where it will take place, and what will happen if the student refuses to co-operate.

Where a student is searched, this will ordinarily be carried out by a member of staff of the same sex, with another member of staff present as a witness, and will be limited to outer clothing and possessions. College staff do not conduct strip searches. If urgent circumstances give rise to a serious risk of harm, the college will act in accordance with the limited exceptions set out in DfE guidance.

Reasonable force will not be used simply to search for a mobile phone or mobile device where the device is searchable only because it is identified in college rules. If there is a wider safeguarding, criminal or prohibited-item concern, staff will follow the relevant statutory guidance and college procedures.

Where a student refuses to co-operate with a lawful and reasonable search, screening or other check, where the school has reasonable grounds to believe it is necessary, this may be treated as a behaviour matter and escalated in line with the Behaviour Policy.

12. Confiscation and retention of devices

Where this policy is breached, a mobile phone or mobile device may be confiscated as part of the college's behaviour policy.

In deciding how long to retain a confiscated device, the college will consider the disciplinary outcome sought, the student's age, SEND, disability, medical needs and any safeguarding concerns.

The college will keep a proportionate record where a device is confiscated, retained for parent/carer collection, reported as damaged, or not collected at the end of the college day.

Depending on the nature of the breach, the device may be:

- returned to the student at the end of the college day;
- retained for parent/carer collection;
- retained for a longer proportionate period where authorised by a senior leader;
- handed to the police where required.

Confiscated devices will be stored securely and returned in accordance with college procedure.

Staff acting lawfully and reasonably when confiscating a device are protected in law from liability for loss of, or damage to, that device.

13. Device content and safeguarding

Staff will not routinely search through or inspect the contents of a student's device.

Where there is good reason to believe that a device contains evidence of bullying, abuse, a safeguarding concern or a criminal offence, the matter must be referred immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead, deputy DSL or a senior leader.

If staff suspect that a device may contain an indecent image or semi-nude image of a child, they must not intentionally view, copy, print, share, store, forward, save or delete the image, and must not ask a student to share, download or delete it. The device should be secured and the matter referred immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or deputy DSL.

Where any image, data or file may constitute evidence of an offence, the device must be secured and handed to the police as soon as reasonably practicable. The college may also involve parents/carers, children's social care or other agencies where appropriate.

14. Consequences

Breaches of this policy will be dealt with in line with the Behaviour Policy. Consequences will be reasonable and proportionate, and the college will consider individual circumstances, including age, SEND, disability, medical need and safeguarding context.

Consequences may include:

- reminder and reteaching of the routine;
- confiscation of the device;
- behaviour log entry;
- detention;
- internal reset;
- parent/carer contact;
- parent/carer collection of the device;
- meeting with parents/carers;
- loss of permission to bring a phone or mobile device to college;
- suspension, where the breach is serious or persistent;
- referral to safeguarding staff, the police or external agencies where required.

First breach: device confiscated, incident recorded and student reminded of the policy. The device is usually returned at the end of the college day.

Second breach: device confiscated, parent/carer informed, and a further behaviour sanction may be issued.

Repeated breach: device confiscated, parent/carer required to collect, meeting arranged where appropriate, and further consequence issued in line with the Behaviour Policy. Suspension may be considered where the breach is serious or persistent.

Serious breach: immediate referral to the inclusion team, safeguarding staff or senior leaders. Serious breaches include filming, photographing, bullying, harassment, use in toilets or changing rooms, refusing to hand over a device, keeping a second device, suspected indecent imagery, exam misconduct or any behaviour that places another person at risk. Suspension or police involvement may be considered where appropriate.

15. Refusal to hand in a device

If a student refuses to hand in a phone or mobile device, staff will remain calm and follow the college's behaviour procedures.

The student may be reminded of the expectation, directed to hand in the device, referred to the inclusion team or senior leaders, placed in internal reflection or supervised provision, subject to a reasonable search or screening process where the school has reasonable grounds to believe this is necessary, issued with a consequence in line with the Behaviour Policy, and/or required to have parent/carer involvement before the matter is resolved.

Continued refusal may be treated as defiance of a reasonable instruction and may lead to further consequences.

16. Student states they do not have a phone

Where a student states that they do not have a phone or mobile device, staff will accept the response calmly.

The college may still use reasonable screening or checks as part of the routine to ensure fairness and consistency where the school has reasonable grounds to believe this is necessary. If a phone or mobile device is later found, this may be treated as deliberate non-compliance and consequences set in line with the Behaviour Policy.

17. Staff expectations

Staff are expected to enforce this policy consistently and calmly.

Staff should not use their own mobile phone for personal reasons in front of students during the college day. Legitimate work-related use may be necessary, for example for college systems, rewards and consequences, homework platforms, safeguarding processes or multi-factor authentication.

Staff must model the expectations they are asking students to follow.

18. Parents and carers

Parents and carers are asked to support the college by:

- encouraging their child to follow the policy;
- discussing the benefits of a phone-free college day;
- contacting the college office if they need to pass on an urgent message;
- not contacting their child directly on their mobile phone during the college day;
- ensuring any medical, SEND or exceptional need is discussed with college in advance;
- supporting the college's consequences where the policy is breached;
- ensuring that any phone or mobile device brought to college is clearly identifiable, password protected and, where appropriate, insured.

If a parent or carer has a concern about the policy or its implementation, they should contact the college through the usual support or complaints routes.

19. Safeguarding and online safety

This policy forms part of Westwood College's wider approach to safeguarding, behaviour and online safety. The college will teach students about safe and responsible technology use and the benefits of a mobile phone-free college environment.

Students will be taught about online bullying and harassment, consent and image sharing, harmful online content, the impact of mobile phones on learning, relationships and wellbeing, and how to report concerns.

Where a mobile phone incident raises a safeguarding concern, staff will follow the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

20. Trips, visits and off-site activities

The college will decide how this policy applies to trips, visits, residential, fixtures, enrichment activities and off-site provision.

Where phones are permitted for travel or emergency reasons, students must follow the rules set by the trip leader or supervising staff. Misuse of a phone or mobile device during a trip or off-site activity may result in confiscation, parent/carer contact, removal from the activity or further consequences.

21. Post-16

Where Post-16 provision forms part of Westwood College, Post-16 students remain subject to the expectations within this policy. As Westwood College operates a whole-school mobile phone-free culture, any Post-16 arrangements must support, and not undermine, the college's wider mobile phone-free environment.

Where Post-16 students are permitted limited access to mobile phones or mobile devices, this must be restricted to specified times and locations determined by the college. Post-16 students must not use, display, check or have available for use a mobile phone or mobile device in front of younger students, or in any area where this could weaken the consistency of the whole-school routine.

Misuse remains subject to the Behaviour Policy and may lead to consequences.

22. Communication and review

This policy will be published on the college website, communicated to families and students, included in staff induction, reinforced regularly and reviewed annually or following any change in Department for Education requirements. The college will monitor implementation, including incidents, confiscations, safeguarding concerns, medical/SEND exceptions and feedback from staff, students and families.