



WANSTEAD HIGH SCHOOL

Mobile Phone Policy 2026-2027

Person Responsible	Mrs H Martin
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1. Introduction

At Wanstead High School, we are committed to creating a calm, focused and supportive learning environment where all pupils can thrive. To achieve this, mobile phones are not permitted during school days and school-related trips and visits. Research and experience show that mobile devices can be a significant source of distraction, reducing pupils' ability to concentrate, engage in lessons and achieve their full academic potential. This extends to other electronic devices (see Section 13) which includes Smart Watches.

By removing this distraction, we aim to improve attention, participation and overall attainment. In addition, a mobile-free environment supports pupils' wellbeing by reducing exposure to social media pressures, cyberbullying and screen overuse, while encouraging face-to-face interaction, stronger relationships, and a greater sense of belonging within the school community.

This policy ensures that school remains a safe and focused space dedicated to learning, personal development and positive social connection.

2. Rationale

We have had a policy of mobile phone collection since 2023. More recently the DfE has issued guidance mandating that *"All schools across England should be mobile phone-free environments by default"*. There are several important reasons why this is necessary:

- **Mental health**

Since around 2010, when smartphones and social media became widely used, there has been a notable rise in youth mental health concerns, including anxiety, self-harm and depression. Emerging research suggests that this correlation is significant, with constant connectivity and social media pressures playing a major contributing role.

- **Risk of crime locally**

In London, young people carrying high-value smartphones are increasingly being targeted for theft. This unfortunately has happened to a number of young people from our school and others in the Local Authority. These incidents can be distressing and, in many cases, preventable. Reducing the presence and visibility of such devices helps to minimise this risk.

- **Screen addiction and dependency**

Many social media platforms are intentionally designed to encourage prolonged use. It is now common for children to spend several hours each day on their devices, often seeking validation through likes and shares. This level of dependency can have a negative impact on academic focus, sleep and self-esteem.

- **Exposure to inappropriate and harmful content**

Unrestricted internet access can expose young people to harmful or age-inappropriate content, including pornography and graphic material. They may also encounter risks such as cyberbullying, online grooming and peer pressure to engage in behaviours they would not consider offline.

- **Reduced attention and focus**

Excessive smartphone use can negatively affect attention span, memory, and the ability to engage in sustained learning. By reducing distractions, we aim to strengthen pupils' capacity for concentration and support their cognitive development.

3. Mobile phone expectations and daily procedures Key Stage 3 - Key Stage 4 (Years 7-11)

- Pupils are not permitted to have a mobile phone on their person at any time during the school day, including during school trips and visits (unless explicitly authorised as part of the trip or visit arrangements).
- All pupils in Years 7 to 11 are required to hand in their mobile phones during morning registration (8:40am–9:00am), or immediately upon arrival if they arrive after this time. They are not permitted to use their mobile phone on the school site prior to handing in their mobile phone.
- Mobile phones will be returned to pupils at the end of the school day during afternoon registration (3:05pm–3:15pm), or at the end of detention if one has been issued. They are not permitted to use their mobile phone until they have left the school site.
- This policy applies to all types of mobile phones, regardless of make or model, including smartphones and basic phones designed solely for calls and texts (often referred to as “brick phones”).
- Standard Operating Procedures will be shared with staff to ensure this is a consistent routine in every classroom. This is critical to the success of the policy.

Arrival and Collection Expectations

On arrival at school, pupils must ensure that their mobile phones are:

- Switched off
- Stored securely in their bags

until they are collected during registration.

Following redistribution, phones must again be:

- Switched off
- Kept in their bags

until they leave the school site.

Mobile phones must not be used, seen, or heard on the school site at any point outside of the designated hand-in and redistribution times. Expectations, along with associated consequences and sanctions, apply as soon as pupils enter the school site and until they leave.

Late Arrival Procedure

If a pupil arrives late to school, they will be:

- Collected by a member of staff from the main reception
- Escorted to pupil reception
- Required to hand in their mobile phone
- Issued with their school ID lanyard

4. Sixth Form (Years 12 and 13) mobile phone expectations

Pupils in Years 12 and 13 are permitted to carry mobile phones on their person during the school day. However, devices must always remain out of sight except when pupils are in designated Sixth Form areas, such as the Sixth Form building or supervised study spaces.

When in these permitted areas, mobile phones may only be used responsibly and for educational purposes related to study. Any misuse of mobile devices will result in sanctions in line with the school's Behaviour Policy.

Future Review of Mobile Technology – Sixth Form

The school will review the use of mobile technology as a study aid during the 2026–2027 academic year. This review will explore whether more appropriate and accessible devices can be introduced for all Sixth Form pupils. The intention is to determine whether mobile phones can be made unnecessary for all pupils throughout the school day.

5. Consequences of non-compliance

In line with our Behaviour Policy, if a pupil fails to hand in their mobile phone and they are found to be using it on the school site or on an external school activity for any reason except for handing it in and packing it away at redistribution, then the following consequences will apply:

- **Mobile phone confiscation**

- If a mobile phone is seen or discovered on a pupil during the school day, staff will confiscate the device immediately.
- The phone will be held in school for a period of **two weeks**, with no exception.
- Parents/carers are responsible for making suitable alternative arrangements if they rely on the device for communication or tracking purposes before and after school.
- Parents/carers will be required to collect the phone at the end of the two-week period.
- If a phone is confiscated shortly before the start of a school holiday, the device will be retained by the school for the duration of the holiday period.

- **Centralised detention**

Pupils will also be required to attend a centralised detention. During this time, they will complete a reflective booklet designed to help them understand:

- ✓ The reasons why mobile phones are banned in school.
- ✓ The benefits of the policy for both the individual and the wider school community.

- **Refusal to hand over devices**

If a pupil refuses to hand over their mobile phone, or attempts to avoid detection by (for example) hiding it on school premises or passing it to another pupil, the following sanctions will apply:

- A meeting with parents/carers and phone to be handed in following the meeting.
- Refusal to hand in – suspension from school.

- **Repeated behaviour**

Where there is a repeated pattern of behaviour, the school reserves the right to:

- Ban the pupil from bringing a mobile phone onto the premises entirely.
- Require, as part of a risk assessment, that the pupil undergo bag checks and screening upon entry.

- **Handling mobile phones for others**

Pupils found handling or holding mobile phones on behalf of others will be subject to the following sanctions:

- A meeting with parents/carers and phone to be handed in following the meeting.
- Refusal to hand in – suspension from school.

6. Recording, sharing, and harmful conduct

The use of mobile phones or any electronic device to photograph, record or film pupils, staff or visitors is strictly forbidden. This includes if pupils use their mobile phones on school grounds or during their commute to take photographs or recordings without permission, their phone will be confiscated for a period of **two weeks**.

They will also receive a sanction in line with the school's Behaviour Policy, which recognises such behaviour as antisocial and, in some cases, potentially harmful depending on the circumstances.

Sanctions may include:

- A period of internal exclusion
- Fixed-term suspension
- Off-site direction

If a pupil shares images or recordings of incidents that bring the school into disrepute, or that cause harm to members of the public, other pupils or staff, their phone will be confiscated for a period of **two weeks**. In addition, the school reserves the right to determine whether further sanctions are appropriate. This may include:

- Fixed-term suspension
- A longer period of off-site direction
- Permanent exclusion, where deemed proportionate and appropriate

- **Misuse of social media and messaging platforms**

It is important to note that the school's behaviour expectations apply not only on site, but also to pupils' conduct to and from school, within the wider school community, and to online behaviour.

As such, if pupils engage in harmful or antisocial social media interactions or publish content that causes upset within the school community or brings the school into disrepute, the school will take appropriate action.

In such cases, the school may request to review relevant content on mobile devices. Depending on the nature and severity of social media misuse, further sanctions may be applied. This may include, for example, fixed-term suspension where behaviour causes harm to others, damages relationships within the school community, or undermines the school's values and expectations.

These expectations apply even where the behaviour takes place outside of the school day or during holiday periods. Online conduct at these times can still have a significant impact on relationships between pupils and on the wider culture of the school community when they return. Staff time spent investigating online incidents of antisocial behaviour can be considerable, and it is important that this time is focused as much as possible on supporting pupils to achieve positive outcomes across all areas of school life.

In more serious cases, where content involves harassment, threats, intimidation, or other forms of severe misconduct, the school will consider whether it is appropriate to involve the police, and this may result in more serious sanctions.

7. Screening and review of mobile devices

The school reserves the right to request to screen and view a pupil's mobile phone, including their camera roll, where there is a reasonable suspicion that any of the above behaviours have occurred.

If a pupil or their parents/carers refuse this reasonable request, the school will decide what conduct has taken place based on the available evidence, applying the standard of proof of the *'balance of probabilities'*, which means that it is more likely than not that the conduct took place. The school will also take into account any obstruction to safeguarding when determining appropriate consequences and sanctions.

8. Mobile phones on school trips and visits

For school trips and visits that are directly linked to the curriculum, the standard mobile phone policy will apply unless otherwise stated. Trip leaders must work with the Senior Leader responsible for educational visits to determine appropriate arrangements for the collection and redistribution of mobile phones.

These arrangements must be clearly outlined in the trip or visit planning documentation and communicated effectively to all stakeholders, including staff, pupils and parents/carers.

9. Reward trips, visits and residentials

On reward trips, visits and residentials, pupils may be permitted to access their mobile phones if deemed appropriate by the staff member leading the visit or trip. In these cases, access and responsible use must be carefully considered and planned.

Expectations must be clearly communicated to all stakeholders in advance. Trip leaders should consider whether phone use should be restricted to specific times or periods during the trip or visit.

Sanctions and consequences for non-compliance must also be clearly outlined and communicated. Expectations relating to the taking and sharing of images or recordings of other pupils, members of the public, and staff remain in place at all times.

10. Staff use of mobile phones

The school recognises that staff may occasionally need access to their mobile phones during the working day. However, to maintain a strong focus on teaching, learning, and pupil wellbeing, personal use should be limited to break times and non-contact periods, and confined to offices, the staff room or other adult-only spaces, unless use is directly related to school business.

Staff are not expected to use their phones for internet browsing, social media, or leisure activities (such as shopping) outside of designated break or lunch times.

We acknowledge that staff may need to use their phones for purposes such as multi-factor authentication (MFA). Wherever possible, this should be completed outside of teaching or supervision time.

The following expectations are also outlined in the Staff Code of Conduct:

- **Break and lunch duties:** Staff should not use mobile phones while on duty. During these times, full attention should be given to supervising pupils and maintaining a safe, calm, and supportive environment.
- **In the classroom:** Mobile phones should not be used while teaching or when pupils are present. MFA and any essential phone use should be completed beforehand. Staff should remain fully focused on delivering high-quality teaching and maintaining a purposeful learning environment.
- **Corridors and wider school site:** Staff should not use mobile phones in corridors or open areas of the school site. These are important, shared spaces where staff are expected to model expected behaviour and reinforce the importance of minimising screen time.

If there are exceptional or personal circumstances that may require a member of staff to access their phone during teaching time, they are encouraged to discuss this with their Line Manager or HR so that appropriate support and arrangements can be considered.

11. Pupils with medical needs and exemptions

If a pupil has a medical condition that requires the use of a smartphone for health monitoring—such as diabetes—parents/carers are kindly asked to inform the school in advance. This enables us to put appropriate arrangements in place to support the pupil's health needs, while maintaining the expectations of the school's mobile phone policy.

If the school is not informed in a timely way, this may delay the implementation of reasonable adjustments and provision within an appropriate care plan. It may also result in staff understandably challenging the use of a mobile phone, which we would seek to avoid in order to ensure the pupil's care, wellbeing, and safeguarding needs are fully supported.

The school highlights this requirement to parents/carers during Year 6 transition and mid-term admission communications.

12. Responsible use of social media and mobile phone technology

We recognise that social media plays a significant role in young people's lives today. However, many children (particularly those aged 11 to 13) are still developing the awareness and judgement needed to navigate these platforms safely and responsibly. In addition, many social media services have minimum age requirements that they do not yet meet.

For these reasons, we strongly encourage parents/carers to carefully consider and, where appropriate, restrict their child's access to platforms and apps such as WhatsApp and Snapchat. Setting and maintaining clear boundaries is an important part of safeguarding their wellbeing and supporting healthy digital development.

As a school, we take our responsibility to educate pupils about the safe and appropriate use of digital technologies very seriously. Through our PSHE curriculum and assemblies, we provide age-appropriate guidance to help pupils understand both the risks and responsibilities associated with social media. Our aim is to equip them with the knowledge and skills they need to engage thoughtfully and safely as they grow older.

13. iPads, Smart Watches, BYOD, Earphones

All electronic devices are prohibited for use or access on the school site, including iPads and smartwatches. Earphones and earbuds must not be worn in school unless explicit permission has been given by a member of staff for supervised use in connection with a school device or approved software.

The school does operate a **Bring Your Own Device (BYOD)** provision for some pupils as part of targeted or specialist support. Pupils who have submitted an application which has been approved may use their device in school, provided they do so responsibly and in line with the expectations outlined in the BYOD agreement. If a pupil is found to be misusing their device, this agreement may be withdrawn and appropriate sanctions, as outlined above and in the school behaviour policy, will apply.

14. Parental contact during the school day

We kindly ask that parents/carers do not contact pupils directly on their mobile phones during the school day. If you need to reach your child, please contact the school office on 020 8989 2791.

If a pupil needs to pass on a message during the school day, they should speak to a member of staff, who will support them in contacting parents/carers via pupil reception.

15. Support and guidance for parents/carers

We recognise that many families value guidance when making decisions about children's access to mobile technology and social media. The school is committed to working in partnership with parents/carers to promote the safe, healthy, and balanced use of technology. Parents/carers who wish to support their child in developing positive digital habits may find the following trusted organisations helpful:

- **UK Safer Internet Centre**
www.saferinternet.org.uk

Advice for parents/carers on online safety, social media use, and digital wellbeing.

- **Internet Matters**

www.internetmatters.org

Practical guidance on parental controls, managing screen time, and protecting children online.

- **NSPCC Online Safety**

www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/online-safety

Support for parents/carers on protecting children from online harm and managing social media risks.

- **Childnet**

www.childnet.com/parents-and-carers

Resources to help families understand apps, games, and online behaviour.

- **Parent Zone**

www.parentzone.org.uk

Expert advice on raising children in a digital age, including guidance on mobile phones and social media.

These resources offer practical steps to help families guide children towards responsible and healthy use of technology, both in school and at home. They are also signposted in our Parent Handbook.

16. Responsibility for devices

Although mobile phones that are collected each morning or confiscated by staff are stored securely, the school does not accept responsibility for the loss, damage or theft of any device brought onto the school site. Pupils bring mobile phones to school at their own risk. Pupils and their parents/carers must consider this if they choose to bring their phones into school.