

Mobile Phone Policy

Tring Park wants the school to be an environment that is calm, safe and free from distraction to help all pupils learn and thrive. Whilst mobile phones are an important tool in everyday life, they also increasingly cause unnecessary distraction, disruption and diversion in a school setting, which has a negative impact on learning.

Additionally, mobile phones can pose a risk to children with one in five pupils having experienced bullying online according to a DfE survey. Removing mobile phones from the school day helps to create a safe and studious space where pupils can concentrate, learn and be protected from the risks and dangers associated with social media and cyberbullying.

In line with the government guidance *Mobile Phones in Schools February 2024*, this policy relates to mobile phones and other smart technology with similar functionality to mobile phones, for example the ability to send and/or receive notifications or messages via mobile phone networks or the ability to record audio and/or video. This does not include devices that are permitted under the school's Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) policy or devices that are used for audio/visual recording for educational purposes as part of the school's vocational training and with the permission of school staff.

The school also recognises that mobile phones play an important role in today's society and that the school has an important role to play in helping young people learn how to use them safely and in an age appropriate manner. With this in mind, the following policy has been set out to prohibit the use of mobile phones and other similar devices in a way that reflects the needs of all pupils within the context of this school.

During the school day

Pupils in Year 11 and below will not have access to their mobile phones during the school day. Boarding houses will securely store boarders' phones during the school day. Day pupils will hand in their phones to day houseparents upon arrival in the morning. They will be held securely and can be picked up from the day housemistress at the end of the school day.

Sixth Form pupils may keep possession of their phones during the school day on the strict understanding that they are not to be used, seen or heard. Given that the Sixth Form is a period of education for developing increased independence and responsibility, Sixth Form pupils may access their phones during lunchtime in the Sixth Form common room or an allocated boarding common room. They should not use their phones elsewhere or at other times during the school day in front of younger pupils.

Use of mobile phones for boarders in the evenings and weekends

In the evenings and weekends, boarders need access to their phones so that they can contact their parents and families in private, at a time that is suitable for both parties, taking into account relevant time zones of international pupils.

On weekday evenings, boarding pupils may access their phones (*and other smart technology with similar functionality to mobile phones, for example the ability to send and/or receive notifications or messages via mobile phone networks or the ability to record audio and/or video*) at the following times:

Preps:	18:00 – 20:30
Year 7:	18:00 – 20:30
Year 8:	18:00 – 20:45
Year 9:	18:00 – 21:00
Year 10:	18:45 – 21:45
Year 11:	18:45 – 22:00

At the end of the allocated times, pupils will hand their devices in to their houseparents who will store them securely overnight. Sixth Form may keep possession of their devices on the strict understanding that they are not seen or heard after lights out.

On the weekends, pupils may have possession of their phones and other devices at the following times:

Preps:	Breakfast – 20:30
Year 7:	Breakfast – 20:30
Year 8:	Breakfast – 20:45
Year 9:	Breakfast – 21:00

Years 10 and 11 may keep their devices overnight on Friday and Saturday nights. This is on the strict understanding that they are not seen or heard after lights out. On Sunday nights, in preparation for the working week ahead, Years 10 and 11 hand their devices in at the same time as they do on week nights.

Sixth Form may keep possession of their mobile phones and devices throughout the weekend on the strict understanding that they are not seen or heard after lights out.

Reasonable adjustments

The school recognises that there may be exceptional circumstances where it may be necessary to make adjustments to this policy for specific pupils. This includes allowing a disabled pupil access to their mobile phone during the school day where it is necessary due to the nature of their disability, or allowing a pupil with a medical condition to have use of their phone during the school day if they use their phone to help them manage their 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.

Some pupils may also need access to their phone depending upon their individual circumstances, including at home. In these situations, the school will agree individual guidelines allowing them access to their mobile phones for a specific purpose at specific times and locations such as a boarding house, vocational director or Head of Year office.

Some overseas boarding pupils may also need access to their phones outside of normal boarding times because of different time zones at home. Again, specific times and locations within the boarding house will be agreed with these pupils so that they are able to contact home.

Use of mobile phones on educational and residential trips

The use of mobile phones on educational and residential trips will usually follow the same age-related guidelines as set out in this policy. This is to ensure that the pupils' educational experience on a school trip is not disrupted by the presence of mobile phones. However, there may be circumstances when it is necessary to allow the use of mobile phones on trips, for example, to help facilitate parents picking up their children at the end of the trip or to minimise risk if pupils need to be separated into different groups. Where the use of mobile phones is necessary on an educational or residential trip, the event organiser will clearly set out the parameters for this in advance.

The role of staff

All staff should consistently enforce the school's policy on the use of mobile phones. Staff should not use their own mobile phones at school for personal reasons in front of pupils throughout the school day. There may be occasions when it is appropriate for a teacher to use a mobile phone, for instance to take registers, issue prep, issue rewards and sanctions or use multi-factor authentication.

The role of parents

Parents have an important role in supporting the school's policy on prohibiting the use of mobile phones and are asked to reinforce and discuss the policy at home as appropriate, including the risks associated with mobile phone use and the benefits of a mobile-free environment.

Where parents need to contact their child during the school day, they should contact the relevant boarding or day houseparent or the school office.

The role of pupils

All pupils should be clear on the school's policy on prohibiting the use of mobile phones. Pupils should understand the risks that are associated with the use of mobile phones including a loss of focus in lessons, classroom disruption and an increase in bullying. Any breach of this policy will normally result in a pupil's phone being confiscated.