



Mary Hare Policy: ORG005

Mobile Phone Policy

Policy Owner: CEO/Principal

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Introduction

1. Mary Hare recognises that mobile phones and smart devices are an integral part of modern life for pupils, parents/carers and staff. However, recent data shows that 30% of students cite mental health as a cause of anxiety, and rates of depression in young people rose by 70% in the years leading up to 2024. Therefore, we want to ensure that all pupils, staff, parents/carers, visitors and volunteers have clear guidelines which promote safe and responsible phone and device use at all times.
2. Mary Hare operates as a mobile phone-free environment by default throughout the teaching day. Any permitted use of a mobile phone or smart device is by exception only and must be explicitly authorised by the School.
3. The School's approach to the use of mobile phones and other technology is an educational one. By setting clear boundaries and providing education through tutorial time, the PSHEE programme, and School-wide initiatives, pupils are empowered to make informed decisions, use technology positively and safely, and develop self-regulation skills. We aim for pupils to leave our school with the experience, skills and habits to enable them to make positive choices in their online lives beyond school. The school wishes to develop responsible digital citizens who can make positive choices about technology use.
4. We believe that our physical and online controls, combined with parental restrictions on data and screen/app time, help pupils develop into well-informed, responsible and self-regulating digital citizens.

Aims

5. This policy aims to:
 - Create a mobile phone-free environment by default during the teaching day to ensure students can learn and interact with peers without digital distraction;
 - Promote safe and responsible technology use and set clear guidelines for all stakeholders;
 - Support school policies related to child protection and safeguarding, behaviour and data protection;
 - Ensure compliance with JCQ regulations for public examinations;
 - Address some of the challenges posed by mobile phones in school, such as:
 - Risks to child protection
 - Data protection issues
 - Potential for lesson disruption
 - Risk of theft, loss, or damage
 - Appropriate use of technology in the classroom
 - Ensure students can learn without the disruption caused by use of devices
 - Ensure that students can learn and interact with peers in lessons and in unstructured time such as break and lunch time

Relevant Guidance

6. This policy is based upon:
 - Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026
 - DfE Mobile Phones in Schools Statutory Guidance (2026)
 - Behaviour in Schools guidance
 - Searching, Screening and Confiscation guidance
 - Equality Act 2010
 - UK GDPR and Data Protection legislation

- JCQ Instructions for Conducting Examinations [Mobile phones in schools - GOV.UK](#); [Searching, screening and confiscation in schools - GOV.UK](#)
- section 36 of the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act 2026

Definitions

7. The term "mobile phone" or "smart device" includes mobile phones, smartphones, smartwatches, tablets, smart glasses, AI-enabled wearable technology, earbuds with communication functionality, and any other device capable of communicating, recording audio or video, storing data, accessing the internet, or transmitting information electronically. The school reserves the right to determine whether emerging technologies fall within the scope of this policy
8. Smartwatches are wristwatches with smart technology in them. They can be used to tell the time, send and receive text and voice messages, make calls and listen to music. Some smart watches have wellness and health-related features.

Roles and responsibilities

9. All staff (including teachers, residential staff, support staff and supply staff) are responsible for enforcing this policy.
10. Volunteers, visitors or anyone else otherwise engaged by the school, must alert a member of staff if they witness, or are aware of, a breach of this policy.

Use of mobile phones by pupils

11. **Years 7-11:** The school is a mobile phone-free environment throughout the teaching day, including lessons, transitions, breaktimes and lunchtimes and prep for all pupils in Year 7-11.
12. **Day Pupils:** Must hand in their phones to designated staff at reception upon arrival. Devices can be collected from reception at the end of the school day.
13. **Residential Pupils:** Use is prohibited throughout the teaching day. Devices must be handed to designated residential staff in the pupils' house before the start of the school day. Devices can be returned to pupils from the residential staff in each house at the end of the school day.
14. **Sixth Form students:** The School recognises that Sixth Form students are preparing for higher education, employment and independent living. Accordingly, Sixth Form students are permitted limited access to mobile phones during the school day in designated Sixth Form areas.
 - Mobile phones may only be used:
 - a) In JC Hall during non-taught study periods;
 - b) In classrooms or learning environments only where expressly authorised by a member of staff for educational purposes.
15. **Mobile phones must not be used:**
 - During taught lessons unless authorised by staff
 - In corridors, dining areas, assembly spaces or areas used primarily by younger pupils
 - During meetings, tutorials, assemblies or other organised school activities unless authorised
 - In toilets, changing rooms or other areas where privacy may reasonably be expected

- When moving around the school site, mobile phones must be stored out of sight
- Headphones, earbuds and similar devices may only be used in designated Sixth Form areas or when authorised as part of a learning activity
- Sixth Form students must not photograph, film or record any pupil, member of staff or visitor without explicit permission
- Any misuse of a mobile phone or smart device will be dealt with in accordance with the Behaviour Policy and may result in restrictions being placed on a student's access to their device during the school day

16. Mealtimes

- Mobile phones must not be used during mealtimes in Blount Hall during the school day
- In the evening they must be put away when collecting food from the serving hatch. We encourage pupils to socialise during mealtimes, rather than use their mobile phones
- All pupils must sign a code of conduct agreeing to adhere to acceptable use of mobile phones and devices (Appendix 2). This can be found in the pupil Prep Book.

Consequences

17. Misuse of mobile phones/devices will be recorded in ClassCharts. Pupils seen using a mobile phone/device will be reminded of the policy in the first instance and will be asked to put the phone away or hand the phone into staff, depending on the year group of the pupil. Failure to comply, repeated breaches of the policy or a significant breach of policy may result in further consequences, which could include behaviour points and confiscation, detentions and letters home. Refer to the Behaviour Policy for more information.
18. Confiscated devices will be returned to reception for a day pupil or the appropriate residential boarding house for a residential pupil for collection at the end of the school day. For a continued breach mobile phones or devices may be returned home to parents for an agreed period.
19. Schools are permitted to confiscate phones from students under sections 91 and 94 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006. The school may confiscate, search, examine or require access to electronic devices where permitted by law and where there are safeguarding, behaviour, criminal or welfare concerns.
20. Staff have the power to confiscate, search, examine or require access to students' electronic devices, as set out in the Department for Education's (DfE) guidance on searching, screening and confiscation. The DfE guidance allows school staff to search a student's device where there are safeguarding, behaviour, criminal or welfare concerns.
21. Certain types of conduct, bullying or harassment can be classified as criminal conduct. The school takes such conduct extremely seriously and will involve the police or other agencies as appropriate.
22. Such conduct includes, but is not limited to:
 - Sexting (consensual and non-consensual sharing nude or semi-nude images or videos)
 - Upskirting
 - Threats of violence or assault
 - Abusive calls, emails, social media posts or texts directed at someone on the basis of someone's ethnicity, religious beliefs or sexual orientation
 - Creation, possession or sharing of AI-generated intimate images
 - Use of "nudification" applications
 - Deepfake images or videos intended to humiliate, intimidate or exploit others

23. All students are expected to model responsible digital behaviour. The creation, possession or sharing of inappropriate content, including AI-generated or digitally altered images, deepfakes, intimate images, abusive messages, or material designed to humiliate or harass others, will be treated as a safeguarding concern and may result in disciplinary action and/or referral to external agencies where appropriate

Smart Watches, Smart Glasses and Wearable Technology

24. In the term 'Mobile Phone', the DfE's guidance includes all devices with communications and smart technology that the school chooses to include in their policy.
25. Smartwatches, smart glasses and other wearable technologies are treated in the same manner as mobile phones under this policy.
26. Pupils must not wear or use smart glasses or similar devices during the school day unless authorised by the school as a reasonable adjustment or for a specific educational purpose.
27. Devices capable of recording audio, video, images or transmitting communications must not be used in classrooms, examinations, toilets, changing areas, dormitories or other locations where privacy may reasonably be expected.
28. Unauthorised use may result in confiscation and further sanctions in accordance with the Behaviour Policy.
29. JCQ guidance states that smart watches must not be worn in examinations and anyone caught with one may be disqualified from the exam.

Exceptions for special circumstances

30. The school will consider reasonable adjustments for pupils with SEND, disabilities, medical conditions or other exceptional circumstances. Decisions will be made on an individual basis in consultation with parents/carers and relevant professionals and are subject to prior agreement with the Vice Principal Pastoral or Principal.
31. This may include:
- Young carers who need to be contactable
 - Pupils with diabetes who use their phones to monitor their blood sugar
 - Pupils with other medical conditions or disability that require monitoring health through a mobile device

Physical and Digital Controls

32. All pupils who bring a smartphone and/or smart device must have the SchoolsMobile™ app always installed and keep the app fully operational and 'protected'. This allows pupils' smartphones, even when on 4G and 5G mobile data, to be protected from online threats, as well as enabling School rules on streaming and social media usage to be in place
33. Additional information and support regarding SchoolsMobile™ can be found at (INPUT OUR SCHOOL SITE ADDRESS HERE)
34. SchoolsMobile™ restrictions can be controlled by the Vice Principal Pastoral and Head of IT during the school term and parents at all other times. During the academic term, SchoolsMobile™ restrictions, in line with School policies, must always remain in place. During exeat weekends and holidays, parents may set SchoolsMobile™

software to “Holiday mode” if they wish, which removes time restrictions on social media and streaming services and content restrictions, but continues to protect all pupils from harmful online content.

35. We value our partnership with parents very highly and advise them to put in place effective restrictions, including applying content filters and placing limits on screen time and the amount of data available to their children. As part of this partnership, parents will have SchoolsMobile™ access for their child and be able to maintain School policies in holidays, if they wish. Parents are advised to ensure that they have parental controls in place with their child’s mobile phone network provider and home broadband provider to ensure content is age appropriate at home and devices are used responsibly.
36. Any smartphone which does not have SchoolsMobile™ installed will not be allowed on site. Pupils will have access to House phones to contact parents as required.
37. Ensuring pupils can get into healthy sleep habits is also crucial, and therefore boarders in the year groups from primary to Year 11 inclusive will not have access to mobile phones overnight.
38. If mobile phones are used inappropriately, for example a VPN is in operation or SchoolsMobile™ software has been tampered with, the School’s Behaviour Management Policy will apply.
39. Use of Mobile technology for each year group is outlined in Appendix 1 which will be updated from time to time as the school deems appropriate.
40. The school reserves the right to impose additional restrictions on device access within boarding houses where this is necessary for safeguarding, welfare or behavioural reasons.

Safeguarding responsibilities

41. The school recognises that mobile phones and smart devices present safeguarding risks including cyberbullying, online grooming, exposure to inappropriate content, sharing of indecent images, AI-generated harmful content, deepfakes, image-based abuse and exploitation. Mobile phone arrangements form part of the school's wider online safety, filtering and monitoring framework.

Use of mobile phones by Staff

Personal mobile phones

42. The DfE’s statutory mobile phone guidance says that staff should not use their own mobile phone for personal reasons in front of pupils throughout the school day.
43. Staff (including volunteers, contractors and anyone else otherwise engaged by the school) are not permitted to make or receive calls, or send texts, while children are present or during contact time. Use of personal mobile phones must be restricted to non-contact time, and to areas of the school where pupils are not present, such as in the staffroom, sleep-in rooms or offices.
44. Staff are required to store personal devices in an office, sleep-in rooms, classroom, or staffroom when working with children. Lockers are available in the School Staffroom to store personal belongings.
45. Staff are only permitted to use a personal device during contact time specifically in regard to access Mary Hare IT systems that require Multi-Factor Authentication (MFA).
46. There may be circumstances in which it’s appropriate for a member of staff to have use of their phone during contact time such as:

- For emergency contact by their child, or their child's school
- In the case of acutely ill dependents or family members

47. In these instances, the CEO/Principal will decide on a case-by-basis whether to allow for special arrangements and staff requiring permission must liaise with their line manager.

48. If special arrangements are not deemed necessary, school staff can use the following numbers as appropriate as a point of emergency contact:

- School office number - 01635 244201
- Adelaide – 01635 244274 or 07900 265247
- Bradbury House – 01635 244272/204353 or 07787 578914
- Mansell House – 01635 244239 or 07787 578912
- Murray House – 01635 244313 or 07876 824496
- Sixth Form – 01635 244253 or 07900 265251

Using personal mobiles for work purposes

49. In some circumstances, it may be appropriate for staff to use personal mobile phones for work. Such circumstances may include, but are not limited to:

- Access of Mary Hare IT systems that require Multi-Factor Authentication (MFA).
- Emergency evacuations
- Supervising off-site trips and visits (EVC and care process)
- For staff not in contact with pupils, e.g. Estates staff, housekeeping staff, office staff for liaising with colleagues, record or photograph areas of the estate requiring repair or maintenance.
- Access Satellite Navigation systems

50. In these circumstances, staff will:

- Use their mobile phones in an appropriate and professional manner, in line with our staff code of conduct
- Not use their phones to take photographs or recordings of pupils, their work, or anything else which could identify a pupil

51. Staff must refrain from using their personal phones to contact parents/carers. If contact with parents/carers is required, contact must be made via the school office, or using a Mary Hare phone, either landline or mobile device.

Work phones

Some members of staff are provided with a mobile phone by the school for work purposes.

Only authorised staff are permitted to use school phones, and access to the phone must not be provided to anyone without authorisation.

Staff must:

- 52. Only use phone functions for work purposes, including making/receiving calls, sending/receiving emails or other communications, or using the internet.
- 53. Any communication or conduct linked to the device must be appropriate and professional at all times, in line with our staff code of conduct.

54. If a school mobile device is lost, this must be reported immediately to the IT Team (helpdesk@maryhare.org.uk) and the Data Protection Officer (dpo@maryhare.org.uk).
55. Any photographs or recording permitted on personal devices by the school during school events or trips must only be used or distributed for personal use only and not shared more widely over social media.

Data Protection

56. Staff must not use their personal mobile phones to process staff or pupil personal data, or any other confidential school information, including entering such data into generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools such as chatbots (e.g. ChatGPT and Google Bard). More guidance in regard to personal data is available in the Data Protection Policy – SCH006.

Safeguarding

57. Staff must not give their personal contact details to parents/carers or pupils, including connecting through social media and messaging apps.
58. Staff must avoid publicising their contact details on any social media platform or website, to avoid unwanted contact by parents/carers or pupils.
59. Staff must not use their mobile phones to take photographs or recordings of pupils, their work, or anything else which could identify a pupil. If it's necessary to take photos or recordings of pupils as part of a lesson/school trip/activity, this must be done using school equipment.
60. Refer to the Safeguarding policy for further information.

Sanctions

61. Staff that fail to adhere to this policy may face disciplinary action. See Disciplinary Policy for more information.

Use of mobile phones by parents/carers, volunteers and visitors

62. Parents/carers, visitors and volunteers (including governors and contractors) must adhere to this policy as it relates to staff if they are on the school site during the school day.
63. This means:
- Not taking pictures or recordings of pupils, unless it's a public event (such as a school fair), or of their own child
 - Using any photographs or recordings for personal use only, and not posting on social media without consent
 - Not using phones in lessons, or when working with pupils
 - Not using phones in other pupil facing areas such as Blount Hall during the school day
64. Parents/carers, visitors and volunteers will be informed of the rules for mobile phone use when they sign in at reception using the 'Sign-In' system or attend a public event at school.
65. Parents/carers must use the school office as the first point of contact if they need to get in touch with their child during the school day. They must not try to contact their child on his/her personal mobile during the school day. Parents may also contact the residential house to leave a message or pass on information in respect of the child.
66. Parents can seek further guidance on keeping children safe online from the following organisations and websites:

- UK Safer Internet Centre: <https://saferinternet.org.uk/>
- Childnet: <https://www.childnet.com>

Loss, Theft or Damage

67. Pupils must secure their phones as much as possible, including using passwords or pin codes to protect access to the phone's functions. Staff must also secure their personal phones, as well as any work phone provided to them. Failure by staff to do so could result in data breaches.
68. The school accepts no responsibility for mobile phones that are lost, damaged or stolen on school premises or transport, during school visits or trips, or while pupils are travelling to and from school.
69. We will display posters in appropriate entranceways and offices and provide a copy of our policy and home-school agreement to all pupils and parents.

Monitoring and review

70. The school is committed to ensuring that this policy has a positive impact of pupils' education, behaviour and welfare. When reviewing the policy, the school will take into account:
 - Feedback from parents/carers and pupils
 - Feedback from teachers
 - Records of behaviour and safeguarding incidents
 - Relevant advice from the Department for Education, the local authority or other relevant organisations

Linked policies

- Behaviour Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Code of Conduct
- Disciplinary
- IT Policy

Appendices

Appendix 1

School's mobile profiles

[Mobile Phone Rules - Mary Hare School](#)

Appendix 2

Mobile Phone and Electronic Device Acceptable Use Agreement for Pupils

Why this matters?

At our school, we want everyone to feel safe, respected, and able to learn without distraction. Mobile phones and personal devices are part of everyday life, but they must be used responsibly to support, not disrupt, our community.

When can we use our phones

- Pupils in years 7-11 are not allowed mobile phones or other devices in school, including smart watches, unless there is an agreed reason.
- Sixth form are ONLY allowed to use phones in JC Hall or with a teacher's permission in class. At all other times they should be in their bags.
- Do not use your mobile phone or other devices in corridors between lessons, assemblies, outside or in Blount Hall.
- Any personal device must be linked to Schools Mobile. If you do not have the schools mobile app you are not allowed a phone or other device in school, including in residential.
- Your teachers may let you use school iPads or computers in lessons or prep time. The following rules apply to all device usage, including laptops and computers.

Photos, Videos & Recording

- You must not:
 - Take photos, videos, or recordings without permission
 - Share images or videos of other people without their consent
 - Recording is strictly banned in:
 - Toilets
 - Changing rooms
 - Any private space
 - Misuse in this area is taken very seriously and may lead to safeguarding action.

Online Behaviour

- Your behaviour online should always be:
 - Respectful
 - Safe
 - Kind
- Bullying, harassment, or inappropriate messaging will not be tolerated.
- You must not use AI to make pictures of other people, and you must not share pictures of other people.

- The school may act on issues that happen outside school if they affect members of our community.

Exams

Mobile phones and electronic devices (including Smart watches) are not permitted in any internal or external exam or test environment.

- All devices must be:
- Switched off and put away or handed in
- Having a phone during an exam (even if unused) can result in:
- Disqualification, in line with exam regulations

If Things Go Wrong (Consequences)

If you do not follow these rules:

- Your device may be confiscated
- You may receive a behaviour sanction (e.g. detention)
- A parent/carer may need to collect the device
- Repeated misuse may lead to a ban on bringing devices to school

Serious misuse (such as filming others or online bullying) may lead to:

- Safeguarding action
- Suspension or further disciplinary consequences

Support & Safety

- Do not share your contact details with people you don't know, and don't share other people's contact details without their consent.
- Don't share your phone or devices passwords or access codes with anyone else.
- If something happens online that worries you, tell a member of staff immediately.
- We are here to help you stay safe.

Remember

- Use your phone responsibly
- Respect others
- Follow staff instructions

Your choices help create a positive and safe school environment for everyone.

Signed (pupil): Date:

Policy Version Detail

Reviewed Date:	Version	Details of change:
Summer 2026	0.1	New Policy