# HCAT

# Mobile Phone and Devices Policy

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| Version Number | Version Description | Date of Revision |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Original – following revised DFE published guidance – 19th January 2026 | January 2026 |
| 2 | Updated to reflect KCSIE 2026 | July 2026 |
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# HCAT Mobile Phone and Devices Policy

## 1. Introduction

The purpose of this policy is to give the necessary opportunity for Trust leaders, teachers, pupils, and parents/ carers to take steps to ensure that the increased ownership of mobile phones/smart devices does not impact negatively on standards around the academy.

When referring to mobile phones throughout this policy, please note that we would also include the use of 'Smart' watches and headphones/earphones. The use of these devices is not allowed as they are effectively mobile phones and will be treated as such.

## 2. Rationale

This rationale is in line with the Department for Education guidance, Mobile phones in schools.

As per these guidelines, we are adopting a policy whereby pupils keep possession of their mobile phones, only on the strict condition that they are never used, seen or heard in school – with consequences for breaching this that are sufficient to act as an effective deterrent. The Government guidance stipulates that it is important that schools enforce this policy vigorously, consistently and visibly, to the effect that mobile phone use is prohibited throughout the school day.

## 3. Purpose

The Trust accepts that parents/ carers may give their children mobile phones to protect them from everyday risks involving personal security and safety on the way to and from school.

The decision to provide a mobile phone for their children is made by parents/ carers with a full understanding and acceptance of this policy.

It is the responsibility of students who choose to bring mobile phones/smart devices onto school premises to adhere to the guidelines outlined in this document.

Parents/ carers are reminded that in cases of emergency, the school office remains the appropriate point of contact and can ensure that your child is reached quickly and assisted in any appropriate way.

Parents/ carers should not contact their children during the school day via mobile phones. Similarly, it is not acceptable for students to contact parents/carers, or parents/ carers to contact students during the school day via mobile phones. The school office remains the first point of communication between school and home.

## 4. Aims

This policy aims to ensure a distraction-free learning environment, promote student engagement, and protect students from potential online risks during school hours.

- Distraction-Free Learning: Mobile phones can distract students from their lessons, reducing the effectiveness of teaching and learning.
- Promoting Social Interaction: Preventing phone use encourages face-to-face communication and the continued development of positive social skills.
- Online Safety: Eliminating phone use during the school day reduces exposure to online bullying and inappropriate content during school hours.
- Behaviour Management: Eliminating phones helps maintain positive behaviour standards and reduces incidents of phone-related bullying/misconduct.

- Physical and Mental health and Wellbeing: Eliminating phone use in the school day will promote physical activity and reduce low mood.
- Equity: A never used, seen or heard policy ensures all students have an equal learning environment without the pressure of having the latest technology.
- Safeguarding: Restricting access to mobile phones and personal devices during the school day helps reduce the risks associated with online abuse, cyberbullying, harmful content, AI-generated content, exploitation, grooming and other online safeguarding concerns.

## 5. Details

Storage: Upon arrival on to the school grounds, students must switch off their Mobile phones, earphones/airpods or electronic devices or turn them to silent and ***store them in the school office, their lockers, in a pocket or their bags.*** Phones must not be used, seen or heard before students enter the school grounds. (Secondary only - If a student is placed in Internal Suspension or Reflection they must hand in their mobile phone on entry; these are then placed in numbered pencil cases and kept on the teacher desk throughout the day.)

Emergencies: In case of emergencies, parents and carers should contact the school office. The school will relay the message to the student. Parents must not call or text their child. This encourages students to respond on their phone.

Enforcement: If a student is found using, or letting their mobile phone, earphones/airpods or electronic devices be heard or seen during school hours, the phone will be confiscated and returned at the end of the school day in the first instance. This applies regardless of whether the phone is being actively used or not. Repeated offences will result in further action.

The DFE Guidance states that "*Headteachers, or staff they authorise, have a statutory power to search a pupil or their possessions where they have reasonable grounds to suspect that the pupil is in possession of a prohibited item as set out in legislation or any item identified in the school rules as an item that may be searched for. Headteachers can and should identify mobile phones and similar devices as something that may be searched for. Staff should refer to the searching, screening and confiscation in schools guidance regarding searching a pupil".*

Mobile phones, earphones/airpods or electronic devices used, seen or heard onsite will be confiscated and stored safely.

Any phones seen or heard, even if not actively being used will be confiscated until the end of the School day. These will be taken to Reception, and a behaviour point will be applied to assist in monitoring repeat transgressions.

To help our students avoid these sanctions, parents and carers must not contact students during the school day.

Students who refuse to follow instructions to hand over their device to staff after a breach/persistent breaches of the school's Behaviour Policy will be fixed term suspended.

## 6. Exceptions

Any exceptions to this policy, such as for medical reasons, must be pre-approved by school administration and will be handled on a case-by-case basis. In some cases, staff may ask a student to contact a parent or carer using the students' own phone, for example to notify a parent or carer of where the student is, such as on a trip.