



Gosfield School

Mobile Phone Policy

Whole School Policy, including EYFS

This policy relates to the use of mobile phones in the school setting with guidance for school trips and extracurricular activities including travel to and from fixtures, related competitions and other excursions. This policy prohibits the use of mobile phones and other smart technology with similar functionality to mobile phones throughout the school day, including during lessons, the time between lessons, breaktimes and lunchtime. (Smartwatches, for example, the Apple Watch, or other smart devices can be used to access the features of a smartphone, such as reading and replying to notifications, and as such, are subject to the same conditions of this policy).

This is essential in establishing and maintaining high standards of behaviour ensuring that the school is a calm and safe environment for all pupils and staff. This policy is developed in line with the new DFE Mobile Phones in Schools Guidance and came into effect in 2026

The decision by the Government to prohibit the use of mobile phones throughout the school day is to avoid a loss of focus in lessons, classroom disruption and reduce incidents of bullying. Such restrictions have proven to improve social interaction and wellbeing, reduce behaviour issues and conflict, and reduce cyber bullying.

SCOPE OF THE POLICY

This policy applies to all students, including Nursery, EYFS and Prep age pupils. It has implications for the use of mobile phones for staff with regard to minimal use of mobile phones in front of students, and never in the presence of EYFS and Nursery age pupils. There will be adjustments for the 6th form cohort, new restrictions will be implemented to reduce the time on phones, and access will be limited to the 6th form area. Employees, Parents/Carers, students and staff play an important role in supporting the whole school ethos in maintaining high standards of behaviour, and responsibility. It is essential that school and homes have consistent expectations of behaviour about this policy and that they cooperate closely together.

REASONABLE ADJUSTMENT

Students with identified medical conditions or other specific needs requiring reasonable adjustments will be considered on an individual basis.

STUDENT USE OF MOBILE PHONES AND OTHER ELECTRONIC DEVICES

Students will not be permitted to use a mobile phone or similar device (Smartwatch with the same functionality) during the school day or upon arrival to the school premises whichever is first. Whilst it is recognised that parents may wish to contact their children and vice versa, use of mobile phones during the school day is both disruptive and inappropriate. Students needing to make a call can do so from the main school office and should a parent need to get a message to a student during the day, the office will ensure it is delivered.

Students who bring a mobile phone to school must place it in the designated pouch upon arrival on site. This ensures the phone is kept secure throughout the school day and helps prevent distractions. Phones can be unlocked at 4:45pm at one of the designated stations. Should a parent need to send their child to school with the phone at short notice who has not purchased a pouch the student must hand the phone to the main school office for the duration of the day.

In the Prep School, any mobile phone brought to school must be handed to the class teacher upon arrival and will be stored securely in a locked drawer for the duration of the school day. Sixth form students are allowed to carry mobile phones and may use them discretely in the Sixth Form Centre at set times.

SANCTIONS

Should a mobile phone or other electronic device (for example Smartwatch) be seen in use or heard at any time other than when permission has been given, the device will be confiscated immediately. (DFE: The law protects staff from liability in any proceedings brought against them for any loss or damage to items they have confiscated as a sanction, providing they have acted lawfully).

In the first instance, this will be for a period of seven school days. The phone will be stored in a lockable cupboard in the main school office. It will be returned to the student at the end of this period.

- If a student has a phone confiscated a second time, it will be taken for two weeks, and the parent/ carer of the student will be asked to collect it. A meeting with the parent/ carer will take place to discuss further action should it happen again; this may result in the student being excluded for a set period.
- Parents should be aware the school does not accept any liability for loss or damage for a phone brought into school including during confiscation.
- Staff will consider whether the confiscation is proportionate and consider any special circumstances relevant to the case. The school has the right to take, examine and search any device that is suspected of unauthorised use, either technical or inappropriate.
- Where there may be a related behaviour issue for example bullying or safeguarding the school leaders will be allowed access to the mobile phone to proceed with an investigation, this is supported by the DFE guidance.

THE ROLE OF PARENTS

Parents have an important role in supporting the school's policy on prohibiting the use of mobile phones. Parents should also be encouraged to reinforce and discuss the policy at home as appropriate, including the risks associated with mobile phone use and the benefits of a mobile phone-free environment. Where parents need to contact their child during the school day, they should be directed to the school office, if students need to call home this should be facilitated through the front office.

INFORMATION SHARING

The school will not sanction a student in relation to sharing of information, students can access their mobile phone where necessary when raising concerns with teachers about issues which have occurred online. The school maintains a focus on protecting students from online harms and will not tolerate bullying, students must approach staff and share information feeling secure that their phone under these circumstances will not be confiscated.

The School is committed to providing a safe, respectful, and focused learning environment. The rapid advancement of digital technology brings new challenges, specifically regarding the misuse of mobile

phones to create harmful content. This statement outlines our strict stance on the unauthorised creation of digital material, including Artificial Intelligence (AI) generated deepfakes and unauthorised live streaming.

The following actions are strictly prohibited on school grounds, during school transport, and at all school-related events:

- **AI-Generated Deepfakes:** Using AI tools, apps, or software to alter, manipulate, or create realistic fake images, audio recordings, or videos of students, teachers, or staff members.
- **Unauthorised Live Streaming:** Broadcasting live video or audio from classrooms, hallways, locker rooms, or school grounds without explicit, prior written permission from the Principal.
- **Targeted Harassment:** Creating, sharing, or possessing any digital material that degrades, humiliates, bullies, or sexualises any member of the school community.

Sanctions

- **Severe Misconduct:** The school does not view these actions as minor pranks or jokes. Creating or sharing this material is classified as targeted psychological harassment and bullying.
- **Disruption of Education:** Capturing or broadcasting live footage compromises the privacy of the classroom environment. This directly disrupts the learning process for all students.
- **Breach of Consent:** Creating deepfakes uses a person's image or voice without their permission. This action directly violates the personal data rights and bodily autonomy of the victims.

Gosfield School takes a zero-tolerance approach to incidents of this type and after initial investigations have taken place to ascertain the facts, we will make a referral to external agencies. The school has the right to confiscate a mobile phone for Safeguarding related incidents, and we will contact the Police for further guidance and support. Any breach of this policy will lead to strict disciplinary measures, up to and including immediate expulsion. Students and parents should note that these actions can also be illegal, potentially resulting in criminal prosecution.

OFF-SITE TRIPS, VISITS, FIXTURES AND EXCURSIONS

Gosfield School is committed to providing a broad and enriching educational experience for all students. This includes opportunities to travel overseas, weekend sporting activities, cultural visits, curriculum-related day trips, and events or competitions where students represent the school.

For Fixtures, please see Appendix 1

The mobile phone policy will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis for each trip or excursion. All relevant factors will be carefully considered; however, the school will ensure that students' educational experiences are not disrupted by the presence of mobile phones. Where mobile phones are permitted, appropriate restrictions will apply in line with current DfE guidance and at the discretion of the Principal, or a member of staff delegated on his behalf.

If a student fails to comply with the specified guidance for a trip or excursion, their mobile phone will be confiscated. Any sanctions will be applied in accordance with the school's mobile phone policy upon return to school, and parents will be informed.

Appendix 1

Mobile Phone Policy for Sports Fixtures

Aligned with Updated UK Government Guidance (2026)

1. Purpose of the Policy

This policy sets out clear expectations for the use of mobile phones during school sports fixtures. It supports the Government's strengthened expectation that schools operate as phone-free environments, except by staff-approved exception, to maintain safeguarding, wellbeing, behaviour standards, and focus during school activities.

2. Policy Context – Government Guidance

The Department for Education's updated guidance (April 2026) states:

- All schools should be mobile-phone-free environments by default, with any usage permitted only by exception.
- Policies should be clear, enforceable, and consistently applied.
- Use of phones should be prevented throughout the school day unless a specific reason is approved by staff.

3. Scope

This policy applies to all:

- Pupils representing Gosfield School at home or away fixtures
- Teaching staff, coaching staff, and team managers
- Visiting teams and spectators when on Gosfield School grounds

4. Phone Policy for Fixtures

4.1 Home Fixtures

- Pupils must keep mobile phones switched off and stored in the pouch for the entire duration of the fixture.

Reinstating Government expectations, no phone use is permitted unless an exception is granted by staff.

- A pupil may only use their phone if a member of staff gives explicit permission to call or message a parent, for example regarding collection arrangements.
- Phones may not be used in changing rooms under any circumstances, in line with safeguarding practice.

4.2 Away Fixtures

Travel to the Fixture

- Mobile phones must be off and in bags during the entire journey to the venue.
- No messaging, photographing, or recording is permitted on the minibus or transport to the fixture
- This aligns with the expectation of preventing phone use during the structured parts of the school day and school-led activities.

During the Fixture

- Phones must remain off and stored away throughout warm-ups, team talks, gameplay, and post-match team debriefs.

Return Journey to School

- Staff will give pupils specific permission to turn on their mobile phones ONLY to contact parents with the confirmed return time to school.
- After sending the message/call, pupils must put phones away again immediately

5. Expectations for Staff

- Staff must model appropriate phone-free practice as reinforced in DfE expectations that staff avoid personal phone use in front of pupils during school activities.
- Staff may grant temporary permission for essential communication only (e.g., contacting parents).
- Staff are responsible for consistent enforcement of the policy.

6. Safeguarding and Data Protection

- The updated guidance emphasises pupil safety and the risks associated with unsupervised device use; therefore, phones are strictly prohibited in changing rooms, medical areas, or any private space during fixtures.
- Any inappropriate use must be reported immediately following school safeguarding procedures.

7. Sanctions for Misuse

Consistent with Government recommendations for enforceable policies, sanctions may include:

- Confiscation of the phone for the duration of the fixture or day
- Removal from the team for that fixture
- Communication with parents
- Additional sanctions according to the Gosfield School Behaviour Policy

8. Exceptions

Reasonable adjustments may be made for pupils with medical or exceptional needs—for example, medical monitoring devices—consistent with updated Government guidance endorsing appropriate accommodations.

9. Review and Compliance

This policy will be reviewed annually or earlier if further national guidance is issued. Ofsted now considers mobile phone policy implementation during inspections, so adherence and consistency remain essential.

Signed _____

Principal

Date _____

Date of next review: September 2027

