Plympton Academy

Mobile Phone Policy

Author: Mr Brennan Moore

Position: Assistant Principal

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Mobile Phones TEP

This document sets out the Thinking Schools Academy Trust's overarching expectations and principles for the use of mobile phones in schools. These principles establish the non-negotiable foundations that all schools must adhere to in order to ensure consistency, safety and a focused learning environment across the Trust.

Rationale

Mobile phones and similar devices (including smartwatches, earbuds and devices capable of communication or recording) present both opportunities and challenges for young people. However, their presence in school can lead to distraction, disruption to learning, safeguarding concerns and increased pastoral issues.

TSAT schools prioritise calm, purposeful environments where pupils can focus, engage and interact positively with others. Limiting access to mobile phones during the school day supports this aim.

In line with Department for Education guidance, TSAT schools operate as mobile phone-free environments by default from September 2026. This means that while students may bring a mobile phone for the journey to and from school, it must not be used, seen, heard or accessible at any point during the school day. The reference to mobile phones also applies to smartwatches, earbuds and devices capable of communication or recording.

Core Principles

Mobile phones are not required for learning and should not form part of routine classroom practice.

All schools will ensure that mobile phones and similar devices are not used at any point during the school day, including social times.

All schools will maintain an environment where mobile devices are not seen, heard or used on the school site unless with explicit consent from a member of staff.

Expectations will apply consistently across the entire school day and all areas of the school site. This includes all timetabled and social times, and any period where students are on site during the normal school day, unless directed otherwise by staff.

The approach to mobile phones will support high expectations of behaviour, focus and engagement.

Student Expectations

Students do not need to bring mobile phones to school.

Where phones are brought for safety on the journey to and from school, they must be switched off on arrival, secured in line with the school's agreed system, and kept inaccessible until the end of the school day. Mobile phones are brought onto site at the student's own risk.

Students must not use, display or access mobile phones or similar devices at any point on site.

Leadership and Implementation

Each school will establish a clear and consistent system for managing mobile phones (for example, pouches, lockers or storage).

Leaders will ensure that expectations are clearly communicated to staff, pupils and parents, consistently applied by all staff, and supported through training and guidance where necessary. Please refer to Communicating your policy for prohibiting the use of mobile phones in schools to parents - GOV.UK

Leaders will ensure that systems are robust, practical and minimise disruption to learning time.

Schools will ensure their approach reflects their context, site and phase, while remaining aligned with these principles.

Staff expectations

Staff play a critical role in establishing and maintaining a mobile phone-free environment.

Leaders will ensure that clear guidance is in place for staff regarding the use of personal mobile phones.

The expectation is that staff do not use mobile phones for personal purposes in front of students and do not have them on display during the school day.

Staff will model the expectations set for pupils and will consistently apply school systems, including challenging and addressing any breaches in line with the behaviour policy.

Staff understand that consistency in adult behaviour is essential in maintaining high standards, clarity and fairness.

Leaders will ensure that expectations for staff are clear, understood and applied consistently across the school.

Behaviour and Culture

The approach to mobile phones will be embedded within the school's behaviour culture and expectations.

Schools will apply clear, consistent consequences where expectations are not met, in line with their policy.

Any use, visibility or misuse of a mobile phone will be addressed in line with the school's behaviour system.

Any mobile phone that is seen, heard or used without explicit permission from a member of staff will be confiscated. Schools will implement an escalating approach to sanctions, where repeated breaches result in increasingly significant consequences.

Leaders will ensure that expectations are applied fairly and consistently across all groups of pupils.

Safeguarding and Communication

Schools will ensure there are clear systems for communication between home and school during the day.

Parents and carers will be expected to contact the school office, rather than pupils directly.

Schools will ensure that pupils can access support to contact home where necessary.

The approach will support the reduction of online bullying, peer conflict and risks associated with recording or sharing digital content during the school day.

Inclusion and Adaptation

Schools may make reasonable adaptations in exceptional circumstances, for example for medical needs, where this is clearly justified.

Any adaptations must be explicit, monitored, and must not undermine the core expectation that mobile phones are not routinely accessed during the school day.

Schools with a Sixth Form

Expectations apply to all pupils, including those in sixth form. Schools may define specific arrangements for post-16 students where appropriate; however, these must not undermine the core principle that mobile phones are not used, seen or accessed during the school day.

Monitoring and Review

Leaders will monitor the implementation and impact of their approach.

This will include consistency of application, behaviour and engagement, and feedback from staff and pupils.

Schools will review systems as needed to ensure they remain effective, proportionate and aligned with Trust principles.

Summary

TSAT schools operate as mobile phone-free environments. While students may carry a device for their journey, it must not be seen, heard or used on the school site.

These principles ensure a consistent approach that prioritises learning, wellbeing and safety across all schools.