

Aims

The term 'phone' in this policy denotes mobile phones, iPods, MP3, MP4 players, Smart Watches and any similar portable electronic devices with communication capabilities.

Bedale High School recognises that mobile phones, cameras and digital devices are now an integral part of our culture and can be of considerable value. However, balanced with this is the need to safeguard children and staff from cyber bullying, inappropriate use of the Internet and telecommunications, and the misuse of social media platforms such as X, Facebook, Snapchat and Instagram. It is also essential that phones do not become a distraction in classrooms where students are expected to be learning.

The Department for Education (DfE) is clear that schools should prohibit the use of mobile phones throughout the school day. The DfE's expectation (2026) is that mobile phones should not be seen, heard or used by students while on the school site. This expectation forms part of the Government's approach to improving behaviour, reducing disruption, supporting student wellbeing and creating distraction-free classrooms.

In line with this guidance, Bedale High School operates a strict no-use policy. Students must not use mobile phones or other personal electronic devices at any time during the school day, including before school, during lesson changeovers, at breaktime, lunchtime and after lessons whilst remaining on the school site. Devices brought onto the school site must be switched off and kept in the bottom of bags at all times.

This policy is intentionally clear and uncompromising. It is designed to ensure consistency, support effective safeguarding arrangements, minimise distractions to learning and meet the expectations set by the Department for Education. Students who choose not to follow these expectations will be subject to the sanctions outlined within the school's Positive Behaviour Policy & within this policy.

The policy at Bedale High School is that student phones are banned from any use on any part of the school site during the school day. This includes on all pathways leading to and from school buildings. The map below denotes the areas that are covered by the student no phone rules.



Journey to and from Home

Bedale High School understands that students may wish to have their mobile phone with them on the journey to and from school. As a result:

- Students are allowed to bring mobile phones to and from school if they wish to do so.
- If a student brings their phone to school, then on arrival at school their phone should be switched off and placed at the bottom of their bag.
- The phone can be turned back on at the end of the school day once the student has left school grounds.
- Parents / carers should not ask students to use personal mobile devices during the school day. All communication must take place through the school office unless an authorised exception has been granted by the Headteacher. Mobile phone use on the school site, even if authorised by a parent / carer will be treated as a breach of the school's mobile phone and behaviour policies.

Consequences of inappropriate use of the mobile phone:

If a mobile phone is seen or heard by any member of staff, it will be confiscated*. This includes the morning arrival before the first bell goes, and at the end of the day whilst a student remains on the school site. It applies to both indoor and outdoor locations, and it includes phones sticking out of pockets or seen in bags. See the table below for our confiscation actions.

*We understand the need to keep parents / carers informed where a phone is confiscated to allow alternative communication arrangements to be put in place where a parent / carer feels that this is necessary. As a result, where a phone is seen or heard before 2pm, it will be required to be handed in immediately and a text message will be sent home to advise the parent / carer of the confiscation. Where the phone is seen or heard after 2pm, it will be required to be handed in the next day (see deferred confiscation below). It will be expected that the student makes the parent / carer aware of the required confiscation.

	Scenario	Consequence	Failure to Comply
Variation 1	Where a mobile phone is seen or heard in general circulation.	Phone confiscated for 48 hours.	Failure to comply would lead to a fixed term suspension being issued and the phone required to be handed over upon return.
Violation 2	Where the mobile phone is seen or heard in Isolation.	Phone confiscated for 5 days.	Failure to comply would lead to a fixed term suspension being issued and the phone required to be handed over upon return.

Mobile Phone Confiscation

Where a phone is confiscated, it will be placed in a clear labelled bag in the school safe with the date that the phone can be returned written on the bag. The phone can be collected from the main office. If the confiscation falls on a Thursday or a Friday it cannot be collected until the following Monday after the school day has finished.

Whilst all efforts will be made to keep confiscated items free from damage, in line with the law (Education & Inspections Act 2006, 94 section 2), the school accepts no responsibility for damage to confiscated items that were confiscated lawfully, in line with this policy.

Deferred Confiscation

Where a mobile phone is seen or heard after 2.00pm the confiscation will be deferred to the next school day. In such cases, the student is required to hand the device to reception at the start of the following school day. This is the start of the 48-hour confiscation sanction.

The requirement to hand in the device applies regardless of whether the device is in the student's possession at home. Parents choosing to retain the device does not negate the school's authority to apply its published

sanctions following a breach of the policy during the school day. The sanction relates to compliance with school rules, not ownership of the device. Failure to comply with a reasonable instruction to hand over a device, including in cases of deferred confiscation, may be treated as defiance and may result in suspension.

Where a device is not handed in as required, the sanction for non-compliance will apply, following consideration of the individual circumstances, regardless of whether the decision not to comply has been taken by the student or parent. The school's authority to apply its published behaviour policy during the school day is not dependent upon parental agreement with an individual sanction.

The purpose of the 48-hour confiscation period is to reinforce the expectation that mobile phones are not to be used on site. Deferred confiscation ensures appropriate safeguarding remains in place alongside the need for consistent application of this expectation where incidents occur late in the school day.

Exceptions to Mobile Phone Usage

In very rare circumstances, a student may have specific medical conditions that require them to always have a mobile phone on their person as a safeguarding precaution. In such cases, a Phone Pass may be issued by the Headteacher, on the understanding that the phone will only be used at appropriate times and in line with their health plan.

Some students, (especially those from Service families or Young Carers) may need to contact home during the day. They will still be able to do this through the pastoral office, using a school phone.

Certain field trips or activities out of school may require students to have their phones with them. In such cases, this will be communicated to students and parents in advance. All such instances will be required to be approved by the Headteacher.

Use of Personal Mobile Phones for Staff

The school recognises that personal phones have the potential to be used inappropriately. Personal mobile phones should never be used to take photographs or videos of children. Only approved school owned electronic devices should be used for such purposes as directed by senior members of staff in line with consent.

Personal mobile phones should not generally be needed or used by staff, except as set out in the guidelines below:

- Should staff need to use their mobile phone, best practice is that mobile phones, wherever possible, should not be used in the presence of the children.
- Mobile phones must not be used during lesson times either to make or receive calls/texts/emails etc unless there is an emergency.
- Staff should not use their phone while on duty (except for emergencies), this includes the checking of work emails.
- Exceptions to the above may include certain key staff e.g. pastoral and SLT who need to access the Bromcom App on their mobile phone while on call, for example.
- Staff should never give their mobile phone number to any students or allow students to use their mobile phone. This also includes past students under the age of 18 years.
- Staff should exercise caution when giving their mobile number to parents as this could be misconstrued. The school is aware that some staff members are also parents at the school. If in doubt discuss this with a member of the SLT.
- PE staff may use their mobile phones during PE sessions and when responsible for children away from school, only to communicate arrangements to parents or colleagues or for emergency purposes.
- Trips and Visits Offsite: The staff member in charge should take one of the school mobile phones when off site. This phone should be used when communicating with parents. Other staff members on the trip or offsite should carry their mobile phones so they can communicate with colleagues when necessary or in an emergency.
- All mobile phones brought onto the premises (including personal mobile phones) should have a password locking system enabled to ensure that their contents remain secure in the case of loss.

Responsibility for lost phones and Disclaimer

The decision to bring a phone onto the school site by either a member of staff or a student is made by the individual with responsibility for that phone. The school retains no liability for any phone that is brought into school which is either lost, stolen or damaged or used in a manner which is against the owner's consent.