Pupil use of Mobile phones policy

Reviewed: Lloyd Dannatt August 2026
Approved by SMT August 2026

The College aims to encourage the responsible use of mobile phones and expects pupils to use their devices in a way that is appropriate not only to the school environment but also to the age of the pupil. As such, the rules below are adapted according to the year group, with older students receiving more flexibility to take responsibility for their mobile phone usage.

For the purposes of this policy, the term "mobile phone" and “phone” includes smartphones, smartwatches and any device capable of communication, messaging, internet access, photography, audio recording, video recording or receiving notifications.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Behaviour Policy, and this policy should be considered to form part of the Behaviour Policy. The College will make reasonable adjustments to the application of this policy where required to meet a pupil's medical, safeguarding or special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

This policy applies to all pupils, including day pupils and boarders, when on College premises, travelling on school transport, attending school trips, fixtures or activities, or otherwise representing the College.

Contact
If needed, pupils may request to use the College phone. Parents wishing to contact their children in an emergency should always telephone Reception and a message will be relayed promptly.

Devices connected to the College network
When connected to the College Wi-Fi, the use of mobile phones falls under the College’s IT Acceptable Use Policy to which all pupils must agree and with which they must comply. Mobile phones may not be used in such a way as to compromise the safety of others. Any unacceptable use of the internet via personal mobile phones will be dealt with in accordance with the College’s Behaviour Policy.

Junior Prep School Mobile Phone Policy
No pupil in the JPS is allowed to bring a mobile phone of any type into school. The only exception to this rule applies to the small number of pupils who travel on the school bus, who must follow the same practice as SPS pupils, i.e. it may only be a dumbphone and must be handed in at the start of the school day.

Senior Prep School Mobile Phone Policy
SPS pupils may not bring a phone into school at any time.

- SPS pupils who bring an authorised ‘dumbphone’ to school must switch them off before they leave the car / minibus. These are never on show.
- Phones are handed in to tutors immediately during registration and can be collected when pupils sign out at the end of the day.
- Phones are never taken into the changing rooms.
- Phones should not be used in the playground, or around school, unless in an emergency.
- No photos should be taken using a mobile device unless as part of the curriculum

Middle School Mobile Phone Policy

Middle School pupils are expected to hand their phone in on arrival at school. These will be stored by the HoM.

- Phones must be handed in immediately when they walk into House, and usage in any part of the House is not permitted.
- Day pupils can have their phone returned when they leave school at the end of the day (usually 6.00pm).
- Boarders have staggered phone times depending on year group. These times apply Monday to Friday:
  - Shell: 6.25pm - 6.55pm
  - Remove: 6.25pm - 6.55pm and 8.45pm - 9.15pm
  - Vth: 6.25pm - 6.55pm and 8.45pm - 9.30pm
- On Wednesday pupils do not have to hand their phone back in at 6.55pm and make keep them until the following times: Shell – 9.00pm, Remove – 9.15pm, Vth – 9.30pm.

- Outside of these times, pupils may contact parents using the House phone.
- No Middle School pupil should have their phone overnight.
- Pupils are not permitted to access their phone during the school day unless on the request of a member of staff.
- Phones will usually not be permitted on sports fixtures or trips unless they return to school after the end of the school day.
- Where phones are taken on trips or fixtures, their use should be limited to the bus/coach journey or for productive uses such as taking photos of the trip.
- We recognise that Middle School pupils will likely wish to use their phone on school buses to/from school. We would encourage pupils to talk to each other rather than only interact with their phone. Any phone use should be considerate to those around them (e.g. no music or sound played without headphones and no photos/videos of others taken).
- Pupils handing in a fake or secondary ("dummy") phone or failing to hand in their own phone should expect to receive a sanction as detailed in the behaviour policy.
- Housemasters/mistresses will perform regular spot checks to ensure that all phones handed in are real and match the phone number logged for that pupil.
- Pupils who do not hand in a phone to their Housemaster or Housemistress should expect to have their parents contacted to check that they haven't brought a phone to school.
- Pupils should abide by the College's rules on internet use (see Pupil Guide) – they shouldn't attempt to access any apps or websites that are inappropriate or that could cause harm to themselves or others. This includes pornography, gambling or any other inappropriate content.
- Large Snapchat or WhatsApp groups have the potential to cause harm through facilitating inappropriate content, online abuse or bullying. Therefore, we do not encourage their use in the Hurst community. In addition, we strongly recommend that parents have an active role in monitoring any Snapchat groups as part of an open phone policy at home. Snapchat or WhatsApp groups should never be used for the public adding/removing pupils from parties or other events.
- Social media accounts should be on private settings to keep the children safe from online predators. There should be no public posting of images or videos that make reference to themselves or others by their full name, or that allow strangers to identify them as being Hurst pupils.
- No pupil should take pictures of other pupils without their permission or share photos with others without their permission, regardless of content.

- Pupils are reminded that the College has the right to search any device that is brought onto the College campus.

Sixth Form Mobile Phone Policy
Sixth Form pupils must be aware that, for all pupils in younger year groups, the College is a "phone-free" school during the school day. Sixth Form pupils must not use mobile phones in areas accessed by younger pupils unless authorised by a member of staff. In practice, this means that Sixth Form pupils are restricted to using their phones when they are in Sixth Form only areas. This means when they are in St Johns House or when they are in their LVI common room area or in their own rooms in House, in accordance with House rules.

In line with the Department for Education's guidance on mobile phones in schools, pupils are only permitted access to their mobile phones at limited times and in designated Sixth Form areas. From 8.30am to 6.00pm, mobile phones and smartwatches must not be used in lessons, corridors, clinics, the Dining Hall, Chapel, breakfast and lunch queues, the school library, or any area accessed by younger pupils. At those times and places the abiding principle is that Sixth Formers' phones should be 'invisible, silent and motionless'.

Sixth Formers are encouraged to adopt mature, adult strategies for self-discipline while studying independently, by placing phones away or by using anti-distraction technology such as Bricks or focus apps. Some students may be compelled to participate in such strategies if there is notable evidence their academic focus needs significant support.

Staff will confiscate phones that are being used at the wrong time or place, until the end of the school day.

In line with the clear evidence regarding sleep, wellbeing and mental health, Lower Sixth boarders will not sleep in the same room as their phones but place them in a shared storage just before lights out. This arrangement will be extended to St John's as soon as facilities permit. Day pupils are encouraged to follow the same practice at home.

Sixth-form pupils remain subject to the College's Behaviour Policy and misuse of their phone will lead to sanctions. Sixth Formers should be aware that although we permit them to have limited access to their phones, they incur the risk of reputational damage if they misuse their device. They are reminded that broadcasting the College name, logo or facilities via social media risks breaching the Big 12 - "Bringing the school into disrepute."

Right to Examine or Erase
In accordance with the Department for Education's Searching, Screening and Confiscation guidance and any subsequent updates published by the DfE, the College reserves the right to confiscate and/or search a pupil's mobile phone for a specified period of time, if the pupil is found to be in breach of this policy or if there is 'good reason' to do so.

- In determining a **'good reason' to examine** the device, the data or files the staff member should reasonably suspect that the data or file on the device has been, or could be, used to cause harm, undermine the safe environment of the school and disrupt teaching or be used to commit an offence or break the school rules. The School may examine data or files on the device where it is reasonably necessary and proportionate to do so for safeguarding,

disciplinary or investigatory purposes, in accordance with Department for Education guidance.

- The school may also erase data or files if there is a **'good reason' to erase** any data or files, in line with the Department for Education's Searching, Screening and Confiscation guidance and any subsequent updates unless the School is going to give the device to the police. Under government guidelines there is no need to have parental consent to search through a young person's mobile phone if it has been seized in a lawful 'without consent' search and is prohibited by the school rules or is reasonably suspected of being, or being likely to be, used to commit an offence or cause personal injury or damage to property.
- Any material identified that raises safeguarding concerns will be managed in accordance with the College's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and may be referred to external agencies where appropriate.

The pupil may also be prevented from bringing a mobile phone into the School temporarily or permanently at the discretion of the Deputy Head of College, the Head of Middle School or the Head of Sixth Form.

The College does not accept any responsibility for the theft, loss of, or damage to, mobile phones brought onto college premises.