



Phone-Free Policy

“Be the best you can be”.



Rooted in Scripture of Matthew 22:39

BELONGING | **EMPATHY** | **SERVICE** | **THRIVE**

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Review Dates: (to be reviewed yearly)	Next: July 28
Version 1:	Created: July 17

Vision: Be the **BEST** you can be

School values: **BELONGING** **EMPATHY** **SERVICE** **THRIVE**

Christian Ethos: Love Thy Neighbour as Thyself

Questions about the content of this document:

If you are a member of staff – speak with your line manager or a member of the SLT.

If you are a parent / carer – contact the school office on 01747 854498

If you are another interested party – contact the school office on 01747 854498

If you would like a paper copy of this policy printing for you, please contact the school office who can arrange this.

Applies from	Applies to	Core expectation
September 2026	Students in Years 7-11	Phone-free throughout the school day

This policy makes explicit links to current DfE guidance on mobile phones in schools, safeguarding expectations, reasonable adjustments, proportionality, and online safety.

1. Introduction and Principles

This policy supports the school's vision of '**be the best you can be**'. Inclusive in our vision is the common good of the whole community and its environment. Our values are **BELONGING, EMPATHY, SERVICE** and **THRIVE** sit within our vision of '**being the BEST you can be**'. It applies to all students in Years 7-11, with guidance for our Sixth Form Centre. It also provides guidelines and procedures for creating and maintaining a phone-free school environment. All members of our school community are expected to follow this policy from the start of the school year 2026-2027. The Department for Education (DfE) expects schools to implement a policy whereby pupils do not have access to their mobile phone throughout the school day, including during lessons, the time between lessons, breaktimes and lunchtime. Shaftesbury School supports the national agenda that all schools should be a mobile-phone free environment by default. We are committed to increasing focus and academic performance, improving social interaction and engagement, and reducing the pressure associated with social media and smartphone use. We believe that it is essential to establish and maintain high standards of behaviour ensuring that the school is a calm and safe environment for all pupils and staff. We prohibit the use of mobile phones and other smart technology with similar functionality to mobile phones, (for example, the ability to send and/or receive notifications or messages via mobile phone networks or the ability to record audio and/or video) throughout the school day, including during lessons, the time between lessons, breaktimes and lunchtime. This policy is rooted in our school values and aims to create an environment where students can achieve their best without distraction and benefit their mental health and welfare.

Policy position

Students in Years 7-11 are not permitted to access mobile phones or other smart devices throughout the school day, including during lessons, lesson changeovers, morning registration, tutor time, breaktime and lunchtime.

2. Linked guidance and school policies

This policy should be read alongside the school's Climate for Learning Policy (26-27), DfE Behaviour in Schools advice and guidance (Feb 2024), the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy (26-27), the Searching, Screening and Confiscation advice for schools (July 2022) and most recently, the DfE's Mobile Phones in Schools Statutory Guidance (June 2026). This policy has also been created with the DfE's guidance on RSE being considered. The school has also considered the Equality Act (2010) to take steps as is reasonable to avoid substantial disadvantage students with Special Educational Needs and/or a Disability. In line with the Children

and Families Act (2014), the school has arrangements in place to support students with medical conditions. Supporting a pupil with their medical condition can involve the use of a mobile phone. For example, students (and staff) with diabetes might use continuous glucose monitoring with a sensor linked to their mobile phone to monitor blood sugar levels. Where mobile phone use allows students/staff to manage their medical condition effectively, it would not be reasonable for a school to prevent this.

Where a phone-related incident raises a safeguarding concern, including concerns linked to online harm, bullying, abuse, exploitation, coercion, image-sharing or the recording/distribution of inappropriate material, staff must follow the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and report the concern to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or a deputy DSL.

The policy will be supported through assemblies, tutor time and the curriculum, including online safety education, so that students understand the risks linked to mobile phone use and the benefits of a phone-free school environment.

3. Overview: Years 7-11

- Phones are not accessed by students in Years 7-11 throughout the school day.
- Smart watches, earbuds, headphones and other smart devices with similar functionality must also be placed in the pouch and may not be accessed during the school day.
- Students have two options:
 - Leave phones at home
 - Purchase a pouch through school. Store the phone (and any other smart devices) securely during the school day in the pouch – students keep the pouch
- Unlocking stations will be provided on entry and exit to the school site. These will be locked during the school day. They will be open and fully accessible from 08.15am. They will be locked again at 08.30am. They will be unlocked again at 15:00 (end of school day).
- A static, open unlocking station will be available outside Main Reception for students arriving late or leaving early. This can also be used if students leave forgetting to unlock their phones.
- Handheld magnets will be available and on staff across the school for use on school trips and for conducting random checks.
- All parents/carers must complete the online form, which serves as a home-school agreement.
- The form will record whether a student **will use a pouch or will choose to not bring a phone to school instead.**
- Parents/carers must provide details of the phone their child will bring into school and must update the school if this changes.
- Students who do not bring a phone to school must carry an exemption card and show it during phone checks.
- Daily tutor checks, regular year group checks, and random checks by senior staff will take place throughout the terms.
- It is the student's responsibility to bring their pouch or exemption card every day and to keep it in good working order.
- Parents/carers who need to contact their child during the school day should call the main school office on 01747 854498.

Reasonable adjustments, medical needs and exceptional circumstances

Reasonable adjustments and individual arrangements will be considered on a case-by-case basis for students with medical conditions, disabilities, special educational needs, or other exceptional circumstances. We recognise that a need for mobile phone access for some students or staff may depend on their individual circumstances, including at home. We will allow reasonable adjustments for Young Carers. Allowing flexibility/reasonable adjustments for individual students/staff does not mean that these they are exempt from all restrictions on the use of their mobile phone. Students who are identified as requiring these reasonable adjustments will be able to use their mobile phone for a specific purpose at specific times at Main Reception only, or with a supervised adult.

Medical Need to access phone: If a student has a documented medical need that requires access to their phone during the day, health monitoring, then parents/carers should provide this information through the online form. The Medical Officer will contact these families directly and will 'pin' a note to the student's Arbor profile stating this. Where appropriate, a medical pouch that allows Bluetooth signal and is closed using Velcro can be provided.

3a. Overview: Sixth Form

Students in the sixth form are permitted access to their mobile phones at limited times and in limited locations. These locations are only, the Sixth Form Cafe at break time or lunch time or in the Study Centre at break time or lunch time. Being a Sixth Form student undertaking studies at Shaftesbury School means you have an increased level of independence and responsibility. Our Sixth Form Centre should not compromise the school's policy on the use of mobile phones for other pupils, and Sixth Form students are prohibited in the use of mobile phones around the school site and in front of Year 7-11 students. Sixth-form students will remain subject to the school's Climate for Learning Policy and misuse of their phone in areas outside of the Sixth Form Study Centre and Cafe will lead to the same consequences.

Students are allowed to use their phone in the following areas:

- Study Centre
- Cafe
- Free Classrooms when used for study for Sixth Form students only
- Sixth Form Area of library

Students may be allowed to use phones in classes at the discretion and express permission of the class teacher at that time

Students may wear headphones around school, but may not take out their phones to change music etc

Students may not use their phones in any area, corridor, classroom, outside space, or toilet where they could be seen by lower school students.

If a student is seen with a phone in a prohibited areas, staff to send student to Sixth Form Office (or Student/Main Reception if office is empty) to collect a pouch.

Staff must also email SHA-SixthFormOffice@shaftesburyschool.co.uk to inform the name of the student and time they were sent to office.

Incident	Consequence	Parents
Phone seen in any prohibited area - to include lesson where teacher has not given permission First instance	Student issued with a pouch for the remainder of the day	Informed by email or phone
Phone seen in any prohibited area - to include lesson where teacher has not given permission Second instance	Issued with a pouch for a week Spot checks by tutor and HoS	Informed by email of phone
Phone seen in any prohibited area - to include lesson where teacher has not given permission Repeated Instances	Student required to purchase a pouch Spot checks by tutor and HoS	Invited in to school. Need to buy a pouch or sign agreement that phone will not be bought into school at all
Failure to go to Sixth Form Office (Student or Main Reception) with phone when directed to by a member of staff. (Within a reasonable time frame)	This is considered a serious refusal and parents will be invited in to speak with HoS or SLT Link. Issued with a pouch for a week.	

4. Preparation and first day in September 2026

Prior to September 2026

Year group assemblies will explain the purpose of the policy, the benefits of a phone-free school day, expectations, checks, and consequences. Students will be shown how to use the pouches – locking and unlocking the pouch correctly. Parents/carers will be asked to complete the online form and, where applicable, purchase the pouch through school.

First day of school

Tutors will distribute pouches and exemption cards to students, checking that the phones are placed in the pouch and that the phone matches the phone recorded on the parental form. Students must label their pouch with their name, year group, tutor group, and timetable using a pen. Tutors will remind students that random pouch checks will take place. Any student who has a phone in school yet has not ordered a pouch or exemption card will have their phone confiscated by their tutor and stored securely in the safe at Main Reception.

No pouch? No problem: Heads of Year will work with their tutor teams during the first week to ensure contact is made with parents/carers of any student with no pouch or those with exemption cards. Parents/carers must sign up to one option by Monday 14 September 2026.

From Monday 14 September 2026

For a first-time confiscation, the incident will be logged on Arbor. Parents/carers will receive communication from the school, and the phone will be available for **collection by a parent/carer** at Main Reception between 15.00-16.00 or 08.00-08.30 (the next day). If collection is not possible, the phone will remain securely stored in a safe at Main Reception until parents/carers can arrange collection.

For a repeated, second-time confiscation, parents/carers must contact the Head of Year to arrange a meeting and re-sign the phone agreement. The phone will only be returned to a parent/carer once this meeting has taken place. Additional consequences will be issued in line with the school's Climate for Learning Policy.

5. The daily process

Beginning of the day

Students must bring their pouch or exemption card to school every day. If they forget their pouch or exemption card, they will be asked to hand in their phone to Student Reception for the day.

Student entrance / Student Reception

1. Students open their pouch by tapping it against the unlocking base under the Canopy or outside the Main Reception if they arrive after 08.30.
2. Students demonstrate to Main Reception staff and senior duty staff on the door that their phone, smartwatch and earbuds are turned off and placed into the pouch.
3. Students then lock the pouch in the presence of the staff member.
4. If a student's pouch is already locked, they may be asked to return to the unlocking station so the process can be demonstrated properly.
5. Students who do not bring a phone will show their exemption card. Please note that a random check may be conducted.
6. If a pouch is forgotten, the phone and any other smart devices must be handed in to Student Reception (Main Reception if late) before they enter further into the school building. The student will receive a temporary card and may collect the phone at the end of the day.
7. If the pouch is forgotten, the student states they do not have their phone, yet is found on their phone; the above phone consequences will apply.

During the school day

There may be random unlocking checks to ensure that the phone in the pouch is the one detailed on the parental form. The school has the right to ask for pouches to be opened at any time as part of compliance checks. Where there are reasonable grounds to suspect that a student is in possession of a mobile phone or smart device in breach of this policy, authorised staff may conduct a search in line with the school's Searching, Screening and Confiscation procedures and the Climate for Learning Policy. Mobile phones, smart watches, earbuds, headphones, and similar devices are identified as items which may be searched for under this policy.

Students arriving late or leaving early

If a student arrives late, (gates close at 08.30), they must enter via Main Reception. A magnet will be available outside Main Reception, and staff will check that the pouch is locked before the student enters school. If students leave school early, they may unlock their pouch using the open magnet at the front of Main Reception.

Phone confiscation

If a member of staff confiscates a phone or smart device during the school day, it should be taken to Main Reception or Student Reception. It will be stored securely. The incident will be recorded on Arbor, and parents/carers will be contacted in line with the procedures in this policy.

Consequences will be applied in line with the Climate for Learning Policy and will be proportionate, taking account of the circumstances of the incident and any relevant SEND, medical or safeguarding information.

End of the day

Students open their pouch using one of the unlocking bases under the canopy or at the front of Main Reception. Students are asked to close the pouch carefully to stop the pin bending in their bag and keep the pouch in their school bag overnight ready for use the next day.

Lost, forgotten or damaged pouches

If a student has lost or forgotten their pouch, they must go to Student Reception before 08.30 to hand in their phone and any other smart devices for the school day. The student will be given a temporary exemption card, and their name will be recorded. They will be able to collect their phone at 15:00 and must hand back the card. If they do not hand in their phone at the start of the day, the phone confiscation procedure applies.

If a student consistently forgets their pouch, it will be considered lost. Parents/carers will be notified, and a replacement pouch will need to be paid for, unless parents/carers sign an agreement that the student will not bring a phone to school. If a pouch is damaged, it must be handed into Student Reception along with any phone

or smart devices before 08.30, (Main Reception if arriving later than 08.30). The student may collect them at the end of the day until a new pouch is purchased, or an agreement is signed that the phone will be left at home.

6. Regular checking routines

Compliance with the policy is key to its success. Regular checks will be carried out by staff. Students will be reminded of the reasons for the policy in assemblies, and tutors will reinforce these messages. Random spot checks will be carried out throughout the year. Headteachers, or staff they authorise, have a statutory power to search a student 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. The school has identified and listed mobile phones and similar devices as something that may be searched for in their school Climate for Learning Policy and is 'prohibited'.

7. Consequences

Students must either have their phone/smart devices secured in a pouch from entry to the school building until the end of the school day or carry an exemption card confirming that they do not bring a phone to school. As the policy is designed to create a phone-free environment, phones in school that are not secured in line with this policy will be confiscated. Pouches will be checked to ensure they have not been damaged. Any attempt to open, tamper or affect the operation of the pouch will be seen as a violation of the policy. Parents/carers agree to the consequences through the online form.

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.

Policy Breach: Years 7-11	Consequence
No pouch or exemption at start of term	7-11 September: phone confiscated and returned to student at end of day; parents/carers contacted to select pouch or exemption. From 14 September: phone confiscation policy applies.
Unreported damage to pouch but pouch still operational	Phone confiscation policy applies. Outcome depends on whether this is a first or repeat offence.
In possession of a magnet to open the pouch, but pouch not open	Phone confiscation policy applies. Planned RESET.
Unreported damage preventing pouch from operating	Phone confiscation policy applies. Planned RESET. New pouch required at £15, or parents/carers sign agreement that the student will not bring a phone to school and an exemption card will be issued. Persistent offenders: RESET/suspension.
Phone, headphones, smart watch or smart device seen in school	Phone confiscation policy applies - first or repeat offence. RESET. Persistent offenders: RESET/suspension.
Phone in pouch but pouch open/not locked	Phone confiscation policy applies - first or repeat offence. RESET. Persistent offenders: RESET/suspension.
Forgotten pouch and phone not handed in before school starts	Phone confiscation policy applies - first or repeat offence. RESET. Persistent offenders: RESET/suspension.
Pouch frequently forgotten	Considered lost. New pouch required at £15, or parents/carers sign agreement that the student will not bring a phone to school, and an exemption card will be issued. Phone confiscation policy applies and is treated as a repeat offence. RESET. Persistent offenders: RESET/suspension.
Pouch lost and reported to school by student or parent/carers	Phone should be left at home until a new pouch is purchased for £15 or parents/carers sign an agreement that the student will not bring a phone to school. If the student has a phone in school, the confiscation policy applies. RESET. Persistent offenders: RESET/suspension.
Pouch lost and not reported in school	New pouch required at £15, or parents/carers sign agreement that the student will not bring a phone to school. If the student has a phone in school, phone confiscation policy applies. RESET. Persistent offenders: RESET/suspension.
Student claims to have left phone and pouch at home	Tutor contacts parents/carers to check. Parents/carers may opt for exemption if they do not want the phone in school. A search may be completed in line with school procedures where there are reasonable grounds.
Student phone check identifies a “dummy” phone	Serious offence. Phone confiscation treated as a repeat offence. RESET/suspension.
Student found in possession of an unlocking station or magnet strong enough to unlock a pouch	Serious offence. Phone confiscation treated as a repeat offence. RESET/suspension.
Refusal to hand over phone for confiscation	Serious offence. Parents/carers contacted for a meeting with Head of Year or SLT link. Suspension may be considered.

8. School trips

The trip leader will decide the appropriate use of pouches in line with the nature of the visit, safeguarding considerations, risk assessment, and communication arrangements. Mobile magnets are available for trip staff to use. These must be carefully supervised and returned after the trip.

9. Purchasing food in the canteen

In line with this policy, it is re-enforced that students do not use their mobile devices to pay for food. Students should be using a physical bank card or have money added to their school account via WisePay.

10. The role of staff and staff expectations

All staff should consistently enforce the school's policy on the use of mobile phones. Staff are expected to model the school's phone-free culture and should not use personal mobile phones in front of students during the school day. This will empower staff to better challenge pupils to meet the school expectations and effectively enforce the prohibition of mobile phones throughout the school day. There may be occasions where it is appropriate for a teacher or staff member to use their mobile device for an agreed operational, educational, or safeguarding purpose. At times, radio signal and emails can go down, and in cases of emergencies, staff may need to contact each other, such as during Lockdown procedures. Where parents/carers have questions or concerns, staff should address these in a timely manner and clearly communicate the reasons for prohibiting the use of mobile phones.

11. Conclusion

We believe this policy will make a meaningful difference to the daily experience of students at Shaftesbury School. By creating a phone-free environment, we are giving students more opportunity to focus, connect with one another, take part fully in school life and develop healthy habits around technology. We know this change will take time to embed, but with the support of students, families and staff, we are confident it will help us build a calmer, more focused and more positive school community where every student can thrive.



As students enter school, they place their phone in their assigned Yondr Pouch.



Students close and secure their Pouch, keeping it on them throughout the day.



When leaving school, students tap their Pouch on a Base to retrieve their phone.



Just as Jesus used the parable of the good Samaritan as an example of 'loving others', we too have this at the root of our ethos.

BELONGING | EMPATHY | SERVICE | THRIVE