WREKIN
LOVE THE JOURNEY

WREKIN COLLEGE

MOBILE PHONE (AND OTHER PERSONAL ELECTRONIC DEVICES) POLICY

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Document Updates

Date	By	Comments	Location of saved file
April 2026	DBM	Routine update to Student Guide and device rules.	Google Drive and Website
September 2026	DBM	Comprehensive statutory update in line with DfE Mobile Phones in Schools statutory guidance (effective 1 Sept. 2026), Keeping Children Safe in Education (Sept. 2026),	Google Drive and Website

		Boarding Schools: National Minimum Standards (May 2026), Equality Act 2010 reasonable adjustments, smartwatch/AI rules, and unified Staff Summary & Student Guide.	

Policies and procedures relating to pupils' use of mobile phones and personal electronic devices are regularly monitored by the **Deputy Head (Pastoral) / Supervising Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)**, in consultation with the **Deputy Head (Academic)**, the **Head of IT / Online Safety Lead**, and **Housemasters/Housemistresses (HsMs)**.

The persons responsible for this policy, in consultation with key personnel, are the **Deputy Head (Pastoral) / Supervising Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)** and the **Deputy Head (Academic)**.

This policy and guidelines need to be read alongside other school documentation including:

- Anti-Bullying and Child-on-Child Abuse Policies
- Behaviour, Rewards and Sanctions Policy
- Conducting Interviews, Searches and Confiscation Procedures (Pupils)
- Data Protection Policy – Confidentiality of Information
- E-Safety and Online Safety Policies (including Acceptable Use Policies)
- Equality and Diversity Policy
- Guidance for Staff on the Use of Photographs and Videos
- Health and Wellbeing Centre and First Aid Policy and Guidelines
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Guidelines
- Staff and Governors' Code of Conduct

Other relevant documentation:

- Assistant Housemasters'/Housemistresses' Job Description
- Boarding Mission Statement (available on the school's website and in the Parents' Handbook and Pupils' Handbook)
- Boarding Schools: National Minimum Standards (DfE, updated May 2026)
- DfE Behaviour in Schools: Advice for Headteachers and School Staff
- DfE Generative AI: Product Safety Expectations (January 2026)
- DfE Mobile Phones in Schools: Statutory Guidance (updated June 2026, effective 1 September 2026)
- DfE Searching, Screening and Confiscation: Advice for Schools
- Equality Act 2010
- Housemasters'/Housemistresses' Job Description
- Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) Instructions for Conducting Examinations
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE, September 2026)
- Parents' Handbook
- Pupil Handbook (accessible via the Pupil Homepage / eLearning Hub)

- Sharing Nudes and Semi-Nudes: Advice for Education Settings Working with Children and Young People (UKCIS)
- The School's Aims and Code of Conduct

PART 1: PURPOSE, SCOPE AND STATUTORY FRAMEWORK

Purpose and Rationale

Wrekin College operates a mobile phone-free school day by default. The guiding principle is that pupils' mobile phones and personal electronic devices must be **"OFF AND AWAY"** throughout the school day.

This policy is intended to:

- support a calm, focused, and purposeful learning and social environment;
- reduce classroom distraction, cognitive overload, and disruption;
- safeguard pupils from online harm, cyberbullying, harmful sexual behaviour, and technology-facilitated abuse, while promoting face-to-face relationships and mental wellbeing; and
- ensure the safe, appropriate, and responsible use of digital technology across our day and boarding community.

Scope and Definition of the School Day

- **Devices Covered:** This policy applies to mobile phones and all other personal electronic and smart devices with communication, internet, messaging, gaming, or audio/video recording functionality—including smartwatches, fitness trackers with messaging/cellular capability, personal tablets/iPads (outside approved academic BYOD arrangements), headphones/earbuds, and handheld gaming consoles.
- **Definition of the School Day:** For the purposes of this policy, the school day includes the entire period from arrival on the school site until the end of the final scheduled school activity (including lessons, movement between lessons, breaktimes, lunchtime, Chapel, meals, prep/supervised study, and afternoon games/co-curricular commitments), unless explicitly authorised by staff.

Statutory and Regulatory Framework

This policy aligns with:

1. DfE Statutory Guidance – Mobile Phones in Schools (effective 1 September 2026): Applies to independent schools in England and establishes that schools should be mobile phone-free environments by default across the teaching day, with clear rules on Sixth Form spaces, boarding arrangements, staff modelling, sanctions/confiscation, and reasonable adjustments.

2. Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE, September 2026): Addresses online safety across the '4 Cs' (Content, Contact, Conduct, and Commerce), filtering and monitoring (including risks of pupils bypassing school Wi-Fi via 4G/5G mobile data or VPNs), generative AI, and child-on-child abuse including nudes, semi-nudes, and AI-generated/deepfake imagery.

3. Boarding Schools: National Minimum Standards (DfE, updated May 2026): Ensures boarders' welfare, online safety, privacy, and appropriate opportunities to contact parents and families in private outside the teaching day (Standard 7, Standard 8, and Standard 11).

4. Equality Act 2010 and Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 (April 2026 Guidance): Ensures reasonable adjustments are made for disabled pupils and those with medical conditions, while maintaining consistent behavioural and safeguarding standards.

PART 2: CORE RULE, YEAR GROUP EXPECTATIONS AND STORAGE ARRANGEMENTS

Core Rule

Mobile phones and personal smart devices must be switched off and kept out of sight unless their use has been explicitly authorised under this policy. Devices must never be seen, heard, or worn (in the case of cellular/smartwatches) during the school day except where specifically permitted below.

First to Fifth Form (Years 7–11)

- Pupils in First to Fifth Form (Years 7–11) are not permitted to have access to their mobile phones or smartwatches at any point during the school day.
- On arrival at school each morning, pupils must switch off their mobile phones and hand them in to their Housemaster/Housemistress (HsM) (or designated House staff) for secure storage in locked House phone lockers.
- Phones may be collected at the end of the school day following the final scheduled activity.
- If a mobile phone or smartwatch is seen or heard during the school day, it will be **confiscated immediately**.

Sixth Form (Years 12–13)

In recognition of their greater independence and preparation for higher education, Sixth Form pupils are permitted limited, strictly bounded access under the following conditions:

- During lesson times, supervised study periods, and in the Library, mobile phones must be kept on silent and "away" (in a pocket or bag, completely out of sight).
- Sixth Form pupils may only use their mobile phones inside House Common Rooms or the Sixth Form Centre during breaktime or lunchtime.
- In accordance with DfE statutory guidance, Sixth Form pupils must never use mobile phones while moving around the school site, in corridors, outdoors between buildings, or in the presence of younger pupils (Years 7–11), so as not to undermine the phone-free environment for the rest of the school.

Permitted Use (Staff-Directed Educational Tasks)

Mobile phones may only be used during lessons or activities when ALL of the following conditions apply:

1. a member of staff has given direct, explicit permission;

2. the use is for a clear, planned educational purpose (for example, capturing practical coursework evidence or scanning a verified learning QR code); and

3. the use is strictly time-limited and under direct staff supervision, with phones switched off and put away immediately once the task ends.

Registration, Contacting Home and Away Fixtures

- **Registration of Numbers:** All pupil mobile phone numbers must be registered with their HsM, and any change of number or device must be reported immediately.

- **Contacting Home During the Day:** If a pupil needs to contact their parents/guardians during the school day, they should go to their HsM or the Head's PA office to use a school telephone. Parents who need to reach their child urgently during the school day must telephone the School Office rather than calling or messaging their child's mobile phone.
- **Away Sports Fixtures and Trips:** Pupils travelling to away fixtures or off-site visits may collect their phones prior to departure only as directed by the member of staff in charge, and must follow the trip leader's instructions regarding storage and use during travel and at host venues.

PART 3: REASONABLE ADJUSTMENTS, MEDICAL EXCEPTIONS AND BOARDING PROVISION

Medical Conditions, Disabilities and Reasonable Adjustments (Equality Act 2010)

- In compliance with the Equality Act 2010 and DfE statutory guidance, Wrekin College makes reasonable adjustments where a pupil has a disability, special educational need, or medical condition that requires access to a mobile phone or smart device (for example, pupils with Type 1 diabetes using a phone-linked Continuous Glucose Monitor (CGM) or insulin pump app).
- Any medical or disability exemption must be verified by the Health and Wellbeing Centre (H&WC) Senior Nurse Manager and authorised by the Deputy Head (Pastoral), documented in the pupil's Individual Healthcare Plan (IHP) on iSAMS, and communicated to relevant teaching and boarding staff.
- Exceptional pastoral flexibility (for instance, for a young carer or during an acute family emergency) may be authorised on a time-limited basis by the Deputy Head (Pastoral) / Supervising DSL or the pupil's HsM.
- Permitted medical or pastoral access is strictly limited to the specific authorised purpose and does not exempt the pupil from general rules regarding social media, photography, or non-approved device use.

Boarding Provision (National Minimum Standards 2026)

- In accordance with the *Boarding Schools: National Minimum Standards (May 2026)*, mobile phones are prohibited throughout the teaching day and supervised prep for all boarders.
- Outside the teaching day (evenings and weekends), boarding houses operate age-appropriate routines overseen by the HsM and boarding team so that boarders can relax, complete prep without distraction, and get sufficient sleep.
- Bedtime Hand-In: Boarders in First to Fourth Form (Years 7–10) must hand in their mobile phones and internet-enabled devices to House staff at bedtime for overnight secure charging/storage. Fifth Form and Sixth Form evening arrangements are set out in each Boarding House Handbook and may be restricted by the HsM if a boarder misuses their device or experiences sleep disruption.
- Private Family Contact (NMS Standard 11): Boarding staff ensure that all boarders—including international boarders across different time zones—have access to suitable private spaces in House (and House landlines where needed) to contact their parents and families in private at reasonable times.

- Network Filtering and Monitoring: Boarders connecting personal devices to the school Wi-Fi network outside the teaching day remain subject to Wrekin College's *E-Safety and Online Safety Policies* and active filtering and monitoring systems. Using 4G/5G mobile data or VPNs to bypass school filtering is a serious breach of school rules.

PART 4: PROHIBITED BEHAVIOURS, SMARTWATCHES, ONLINE SAFETY AND GENERATIVE AI

The following prohibitions apply at all times (including during boarding evenings, weekends, school transport, and off-site trips) to mobile phones and all other personal electronic devices (smartwatches, iPads/tablets, laptops, music players, headphones/earbuds, and handheld consoles):

- **Chapel and Dining Hall:** Devices and headphones/earbuds must never be used or visible in Chapel or the Dining Hall.
- **Movement Around Campus:** Pupils must not walk around the campus using mobile phones or listening to audio through headphones or earbuds.
- **Smartwatches and Wearables:** Smartwatches must not be used during the school day to send/receive notifications or messages, access the internet, or record audio/video; they are strictly banned from all examination rooms.
- **Non-Consensual Photography and Recording:** Pupils must never take photographs or record audio/video of pupils, staff, or visitors without prior consent, and never in changing rooms, toilets, H&WC treatment rooms, or another boarder's private bedroom.
- **Nudes, Semi-Nudes and AI-Generated / Deepfake Imagery (KCSIE 2026):** Pupils must never create, request, possess, store, or share nudes, semi-nudes, or sexually explicit imagery—including images or videos that have been digitally altered or generated using Artificial Intelligence (deepfakes). Such behaviour constitutes harmful sexual behaviour / child-on-child abuse under KCSIE 2026 and may constitute a criminal offence.
- **Cyberbullying, Harassment and Online Misogyny:** Pupils must never use devices or group chats to send unkind, discriminatory, misogynistic, threatening, or malicious messages, or to bully, harass, intimidate, or exploit others.
- **Generative AI Misuse:** Pupils must not use Generative AI apps or chatbots on personal devices to impersonate peers or staff, generate abusive/deepfake content, or commit academic malpractice.
- **Bypassing Filtering and Age-Restricted Services:** Pupils must not use VPNs, proxy tools, personal hotspots, or anonymous accounts to conceal their identity or bypass school filtering and safeguarding systems. Pupils under 18 must not access sites, apps, or platforms restricted to users aged 18 and over (including online gambling, financial trading/crypto scams, and adult content, in line with KCSIE 2026 'Commerce' online safety risks).
- **Location-Based Networking:** Pupils must not use public location-sharing or location-based social networking features (e.g., Snap Map) while at school or on school trips.
- **School Transport Safety:** During travel on school minibuses or coaches, pupils must not use devices in any manner that may distract the driver (including playing audio aloud or using flash photography).

- **Examination Rooms (JCQ Regulations):** Mobile phones, smartwatches, earbuds, and any web-enabled devices must never be taken into an examination or controlled assessment room under any circumstances (even switched off). Possession of an unauthorised device in an examination room is a serious JCQ malpractice offence and will be reported to the awarding body, risking disqualification.

PART 5: STAFF EXPECTATIONS AND MODELLING GOOD PRACTICE

Consistent enforcement and visible adult role-modelling are essential to maintaining a mobile phone-free school culture:

- **Lead by Example (DfE 2026 Guidance):** Staff must **not use their personal mobile phones for personal reasons in front of pupils during the school day** (including in classrooms, corridors, Dining Hall, Chapel, and while on duty). Narrow operational exceptions apply solely where a staff phone is strictly required for Multi-Factor Authentication (MFA) to log into school systems, urgent safeguarding/medical communication (such as the on-call H&WC Nurse mobile), or off-site trip safety.
- **Prohibition on Photographing Pupils with Personal Devices:** In accordance with Wrekin College's *Guidance for Staff on the Use of Photographs and Videos*, staff must **never** use personal mobile phones or personal devices to take, store, or transmit photographs or videos of pupils.
- **Consistent Challenge:** All teaching, boarding, and support staff must enforce this policy consistently across the campus—challenging unauthorised phone or headphone use immediately, avoiding negotiation or ad-hoc exceptions, and logging confiscations and repeated issues promptly.

PART 6: SANCTIONS, CONFISCATION AND SEARCHING DEVICES

Confiscation Procedure and Sanction Escalation

If a pupil breaches this policy during the school day, the member of staff will confiscate the device immediately, instruct the pupil to **switch it off**, and hand it to the **Head's Office** for secure storage (logged on **iSAMS**):

Offence Stage	Sanction & Return Procedure
First Offence	Device confiscated (switched off) and held in the Head's Office; returned to the pupil at the end of the school day.
Second Offence	Device confiscated (switched off) and held in the Head's Office; a parent/guardian is required to collect the device in person (or agree formal release arrangements with the HsM / Deputy Head (Pastoral) for distant boarding families).
Third Offence	Device confiscated as above and the pupil is required to attend a Friday Sanction. Persistent

	defiance will lead to further disciplinary action under the Behaviour, Rewards and Sanctions Policy.

- **Contacting Parents:** A pupil whose phone has been confiscated will be permitted access to a school telephone in the Head's Office or Boarding House if they need to contact their parents/ guardians.
- **Pastoral Discretion and Legal Protection:** Sanctions may be applied with discretion where there are safeguarding, SEND, or pastoral considerations. Under Sections 91 and 94 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 and DfE statutory guidance, staff acting lawfully in confiscating and securely storing a prohibited device are protected from liability for loss or damage.

Safeguarding, Searching Devices and Prohibited Content (KCSIE 2026)

- **Suspicion of Inappropriate or Illegal Content:** If a member of staff suspects that a device contains inappropriate, harmful, or illegal material—or has been used in connection with bullying, harassment, or safeguarding harm—they must confiscate the device immediately, place it in flight mode or switch it off, and pass it directly to the Supervising DSL / Deputy Head (Pastoral) or the Head.
- **Strict Ban on Staff Viewing or Searching Indecent Imagery:** Staff must **never** browse, view, screenshot, forward, or delete images or messages on a pupil's device themselves—especially where nudes, semi-nudes, or AI-generated/deepfake imagery is suspected (see *Guidance for Staff on the Use of Photographs and Videos*, Appendix 2). Searching a pupil's electronic device may only be authorised by the Head (or a senior leader explicitly authorised by the Head) in accordance with the *Conducting Interviews, Searches and Confiscation Procedures (Pupils)* and DfE *Searching, Screening and Confiscation* guidance.
- **CPOMS Logging and Referral:** Any safeguarding concern arising from mobile phone use must be recorded factually on **CPOMS** immediately without attaching any offending image, so the Supervising DSL can coordinate parental communication, Family Help / Children's Social Care, or Police involvement where required.

Appendix 1: Mobile Phone Policy – Staff Summary (Updated September 2026)

Area	Staff Quick-Reference Standard
Core Principle	• All pupils' mobile phones and smartwatches must be "OFF AND AWAY" during the school day. • Devices must be switched off, out of sight, and not used unless explicitly permitted. • Applies from arrival on site until the end of the final scheduled school activity.
Year Group Expectations	• First to Fifth Form (Years 7–11): No access at any point during the school day. Phones must be handed in on arrival and stored securely in House lockers. If seen or heard → confiscate immediately. • Sixth Form (Years 12–13): Must be silent and out of sight in lessons and the Library. May only be used in House Common Rooms / Sixth Form Centre at break or lunchtime only. Never permitted while moving around the site or in front of younger pupils.
When Phones CAN Be Used (6th Form)	• Only when ALL of the following apply: (1) a member of staff has given direct permission; (2) there is a clear educational purpose; and (3) use is time-limited and supervised.
Reasonable Adjustments	• Verified medical/disability exemptions (e.g. Type 1 diabetes glucose monitoring) recorded on iSAMS/IHP and authorised by the H&WC / Deputy Head (Pastoral) must be respected strictly for their approved purpose.
Prohibited at All Times	• Use in Chapel or Dining Hall; walking around site using phones or headphones/earbuds. • Taking photos/videos without consent; creating/ sharing nudes, semi-nudes, or AI/deepfake imagery. • Cyberbullying, unkind messaging, accessing 18+ content (including gambling/scams), or using VPNs/ mobile data to bypass school filtering. • Any use that may distract drivers on school transport; phones or smartwatches in examination rooms under any circumstances.
If a Pupil Needs to Contact Home	• Direct them to their HsM or the Head's PA office. Parents should contact the School Office, not pupils directly.

Sanctions (Apply Consistently)	• 1st offence: Confiscate → return end of day | 2nd offence: Parent must collect | 3rd offence: Friday Sanction. • Phones must be switched off and taken to the Head's Office. Pupils may request access to a school phone to contact parents.
Safeguarding & Staff Modelling	• If concerned about content on a device: confiscate (flight mode/off) and pass to the Supervising DSL / Deputy Head (Pastoral) or Head immediately and log on CPOMS. NEVER view, copy, forward, or search devices yourself. • Staff must model the policy by not using personal phones for personal reasons in front of pupils (and never photographing pupils on personal devices).
Quick Rule of Thumb	• Years 7–11: Never seen, IN LOCKERS IN HOUSE | Sixth Form: Only in designated spaces, at the right times | All pupils: If in doubt → OFF AND AWAY.

Appendix 2: Mobile Phone Rules – Student Guide (Updated September 2026)

Topic	What You Need to Know
The Main Rule	• "OFF AND AWAY" from the moment you arrive at school until the end of your final activity (including lessons, breaktimes, lunchtime, Chapel, meals, and prep). • This applies to mobile phones, smartwatches, and headphones/earbuds.
Years 7–11 (First to Fifth Form)	• You must not use your phone or smartwatch at all during the school day. • On arrival, you must switch your phone off and hand it in to your HsM for safe storage in House lockers. • You can collect it at the end of the school day. (Boarders in Years 7–10 also hand phones in at bedtime.) • If your phone or smartwatch is seen or heard, it will be confiscated.
Sixth Form (Years 12–13)	• Phones must be on silent and out of sight in lessons, the Library, and corridors. • You may ONLY use your phone in House Common Rooms or the Sixth Form Centre at break or lunchtime. • You must NOT use your phone in corridors, while walking around school, or in front of younger pupils.
When You ARE Allowed to Use Your Phone (6th Form)	• Only if a teacher gives you direct permission, it is for learning, and it is for a short, specific supervised task.
Not Allowed (For Everyone)	• Using phones or headphones/earbuds in Chapel, the Dining Hall, or while walking around school. • Taking photos, videos, or audio recordings without permission. • Sending or sharing unkind, discriminatory, or inappropriate messages, nudes/semi-nudes, or AI-altered/deepfake images. • Accessing 18+ websites/apps (including gambling or scams) or using VPNs/mobile data to bypass school Wi-Fi filters. • Bringing phones, smartwatches, or earbuds into exams (this is a serious exam offence).

Need to Contact Home?	• Go to your Housemaster/Housemistress (HsM) or the Head's PA office to use a school phone. • Your parents should contact the School Office, not your mobile phone.
What Happens If You Break the Rules	• 1st time: Phone taken (switched off) → returned at end of day. • 2nd time: Parent must collect it. • 3rd time: Friday sanction.
Bottom Line	• Years 7–11: Your phone should be switched off and locked away all day. • Sixth Form: Only use it in the right place, at the right time. • If you're unsure → keep it OFF AND AWAY.