

# West Hatch High School

## West Hatch High School Mobile Phone Policy – Parent Information Guide

### “Why We’re Making a Change”

Dear Parents and Carers,

From the first day back after half term, West Hatch High School will be implementing a whole-school ban on mobile phones and connected devices during the school day. This decision follows extensive research, national guidance, and what we’re seeing every day in school: the negative impact of mobile phones on students’ focus, wellbeing, and achievement.

Our aim is simple — to create a calmer, safer, and more focused environment where every student can thrive academically and socially.

### Why It Matters – The Facts Behind the Change

We shared some powerful facts with students during their launch assemblies this week:

- 97% of 12-year-olds own a smartphone (Ofcom, 2023)
- The average teenager checks their phone 150 times a day (Common Sense Media, 2022)
- It takes the brain 20 minutes to fully refocus after each phone interruption (University of California)
- In schools where phones are banned, exam results rise by 6–10% (London School of Economics)
- Teen anxiety and depression have risen by 70% since 2010, in line with increased smartphone use (National Institute of Mental Health)

We believe these figures are too important to ignore. Phones have a place in life, but not during school hours. This change is about protecting learning, emotional health, and future success.

As you are aware, we did hold consultation meetings and parents, students and staff have had the opportunity to feed into our planning of the mobile phone ban. Following this consultation period, we are now able to share the details of how the policy will work.

## How the Policy Works – What Parents Need to Know

Starting after half term: (students return on Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2025)

- ✗ Phones and connected devices are banned from use during the entire school day
- This includes arrival at the school gates, breaktimes, lunchtimes, and lesson transitions.
- Phones must be switched off and put away before students enter the school site.
- They cannot be seen, heard, or used for any reason during the school day.
- ✓ The rule is simple: If we can't see it or hear it, then our students are doing the right thing.

### What Counts as a “Connected Device”?

- Smartphones
- Smartwatches
- Wireless earbuds
- Tablets or other devices capable of communication or recording

All such devices are subject to the same rule: off and away during the school day.

### Sanctions – What Happens If the Policy Is Broken?

We want to work in partnership with parents to ensure clear expectations are upheld fairly. If a student does not follow the rule, here is the staged response:

1. First time: Phone is confiscated and returned at the end of the day. Parents are informed.
2. Second time: Phone is confiscated and returned at the end of the day. Parents are informed + 30-minute detention.
3. Third time: Phone is confiscated and returned at the end of the day. Parents are informed + 1 hour detention + parent meeting.
4. Fourth time: Phone is confiscated and returned at the end of the day. Parents are informed + 2-day isolation.
5. Fifth time: Phone is confiscated and returned at the end of the day. Parents are informed + 2-day suspension. Further breaches will lead to escalating consequences.

Phones will be returned by a Head of Year or senior leader at the end of the day. If students miss their bus because they broke the rule — that is a natural consequence we want to help them avoid.


## **Are There Any Exemptions?**

Yes — but only for medical needs.

For example, students who require a phone to monitor diabetes will be issued a medical exemption card. They must show this card if asked. No other exemptions apply.

## **Emergencies – How to Contact Your Child**

If you need to contact your child during the day:

 Call the school office — we will ensure your message is passed on quickly.

If a student needs to contact home, they should go to Student Services for support.

No student will be left unsupported in an emergency — we're always here to help.

## **What Are the Benefits for Your Child?**

- ✓ Improved concentration and better academic performance
- ✓ Reduced online pressure and improved mental health
- ✓ Increased face-to-face communication and real friendships
- ✓ Fewer distractions, less disruption in lessons, and better behaviour
- ✓ A calmer, more respectful school culture

## **We're Doing This Together**

The Department for Education, school leaders across the country, and the majority of parents all agree — phones in school have become a serious problem. This is a positive step to put learning and wellbeing first.

We know that parenting in the digital age is challenging. We're here to support you — and your child — as we work together to make school a place where they can truly focus, feel safe, and grow into their best selves.

Thank you for your support as we implement this important change.

West Hatch High School