



Policy for Mobile Devices

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Mobile Devices Policy

Introduction

The widespread ownership of mobile devices among young people requires that there are clear guidelines around their presence and use in the Academy. This policy is designed to ensure that potential issues involving mobile devices can be clearly identified and addressed, ensuring the benefits that mobile devices provide (such as increased safety) can continue to be enjoyed by our students.

For the purposes of this policy, a mobile device is any kind of electronic device with the ability to communicate. It includes mobile phones, smartphones, tablets, and iPods or similar devices with Wi-Fi or mobile signal capability.

Churchill Academy & Sixth Form is a signatory to the Parents and Teachers for Excellence 'Phone-Free School' status, which is achieved by signing up to two principles:

1. For Year 11 students or below, ensure that mobile phones are not used, seen, or heard at any point anywhere on the school site, during school hours
2. Breaches of this rule, without expressed permission in exceptional circumstances, are sanctioned in line with the school's usual disciplinary procedures.

The Phone-Free School logo is displayed on the Academy's Code of Conduct.





5 reasons behind our phone-free school day

Why schools are using **JUST FOCUS** lockable pouches



Students can still bring a phone to school, but it is secured and unavailable during the school day.

Purpose

This policy sets out the Academy's rules for bringing mobile phones and other personal electronic devices onto the school site and the arrangements for securing such devices in approved JUST FOCUS lockable pouches during the school day.

The purpose of this policy is to:

- support a calm, safe and focused learning environment;
- reduce distraction and disruption during the school day;
- protect students from misuse of devices, including recording, messaging and online activity during school hours;
- provide a clear and consistent framework for students, parents, carers, staff and visitors.

This policy should be read alongside the Academy's Behaviour Policy (which includes Searching, Screening and Confiscation arrangements), Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, Acceptable Use / Online Safety Policy. It is also intended to reflect current DfE mobile phone guidance and related behaviour guidance.



Scope

This policy applies to:

- all students on roll;
- mobile phones, smartphones, smartwatches with communication capability, tablets, earbuds or headphones with independent connectivity, and other personal electronic devices capable of communication, recording, internet access or data transmission;
- the school day, including registration, tutor time, lessons, movement between lessons, break, lunch, assemblies, enrichment, extra-curricular activities and any other time students are under the Academy's care on site.

For Sixth Form students, Churchill Academy may continue to operate separate access arrangements in designated times or places. Any such arrangements must remain consistent with the Academy's wider behaviour expectations and must not undermine the main school policy.

Main School Students (Year 7-11)

The Academy operates a mobile phone-free school day for main school students (Years 7–11).

Main school students must not use a mobile phone or other personal electronic device during the school day unless:

- the student has been expressly authorised under a medical or other approved exemption;
- a member of staff has given specific permission in exceptional circumstances; or
- use is required under a safeguarding, health or emergency direction from staff.

If a main school student brings a mobile phone to the Academy, it must be secured in an approved JUST FOCUS lockable pouch in accordance with this policy.

"During the school day" is defined as:

- From the moment a student sets foot on the Academy's property in the morning (either crossing the threshold of the gate, or stepping down off the bus, or getting out of a car)
- Until the student is dismissed from their final lesson of the day.



Sixth Form Students (Years 12 and 13)

Sixth Form students are permitted to bring and use mobile devices during the Academy day, **in the Sixth Form Centre Only.**

- Mobile devices may be used by Sixth Form students within lessons where there is a clear benefit to learning and this has been agreed by the classroom teacher.
- Mobile devices must not cause distraction, distress, discomfort or disruption to others.
- Sixth Form students should refrain from using mobile devices in the presence of main school students where such use would undermine the Academy's expectations for Years 7–11.

JUST FOCUS lockable pouches will be made available to Sixth Form Students who wish to use them on request.

JUST FOCUS lockable pouch system

The Academy uses an approved JUST FOCUS lockable pouch system to prevent student access to mobile phones during the school day.

For the purposes of this policy:

- a “lockable pouch” means a school-approved pouch that is locked for the duration of the school day and can be opened only at authorised unlocking points or by authorised staff;
- when a phone is correctly placed inside a locked pouch, it is treated as inaccessible to the student for the duration of the school day;
- the locked pouch remains with the student unless staff direct otherwise.

The Academy's policy is based on secure containment and student inaccessibility. Any reduction in wireless connectivity while a device is enclosed is incidental to the pouch system.

Bringing a phone to school

A main school student may bring a mobile phone to school only if all of the following apply:

- the device is switched off or on silent before the school day begins;



- the device is switched off and placed into the approved JUST FOCUS pouch during morning registration.
- the pouch is locked before the student proceeds into the school day.

The locked pouch must remain closed throughout the school day unless opened:

- at the end of the school day at an authorised unlocking point; or
- by an authorised member of staff in accordance with this policy.

Student responsibilities

Students are responsible for:

- bringing their assigned pouch to school each day, where the Academy operates an individually issued pouch system;
- placing the phone into the pouch as instructed;
- keeping the locked pouch in their possession unless directed otherwise by staff;
- not attempting to open, tamper with, damage, bypass or defeat the pouch;
- not using any undisclosed secondary device;
- handing over a device to staff when directed under this policy.

Failure to comply will be treated as a breach of this policy and may also be treated as a breach of the Behaviour Policy.

Safe use and handling

- Students must not force the pouch closed or open.
- Students must not touch, bend, tamper with or interfere with the locking part or retractable locking pin.
- Students must not use magnets, tools, blades, sharp objects or any other item to interfere with the pouch.
- Students must not attempt to access or remove the phone before the pouch has been properly unlocked.
- Students must report immediately if the pouch appears damaged, does not close properly, or if the locking part appears bent, exposed, stiff, misaligned or unusual in any way.



Important product notice

The JUST FOCUS pouch is a secure locking pouch. It is not a protective phone case and should not be treated as one. The Academy does not represent that the pouch protects the phone from impact, crushing, liquid damage or general accidental damage.

Forgotten pouch procedure

Where a student brings a phone to school but has forgotten their assigned pouch, the Academy will require the student to switch off their phone and hand it in for secure storage until the end of the school day.

Where the Academy uses secure storage:

- the device will be deposited at in the school office;
- the device will be returned at the end of the school day in accordance with Academy procedures from reception.

The Academy may apply a sanction where a student repeatedly forgets their pouch.

Prohibited conduct

The following are prohibited:

- using a phone during the school day without authorisation;
- opening a pouch without authorisation;
- carrying a phone outside the pouch during the school day;
- refusing to place a device in the pouch when instructed;
- refusing to hand over a device when instructed;
- using a second or substitute device to avoid the policy;
- photographing, filming, audio recording, messaging, gaming, browsing or online activity in breach of this policy;
- damaging or attempting to damage the pouch or unlocking mechanism;
- using earphones, headphones, AirPods or similar devices in breach of Academy rules for main school students.

Damage, misuse and out-of-service criteria

Examples of misuse or deliberate damage include:

- ripped, cut or torn fabric;



- bent, cut, weakened or damaged pin;
- signs of force to the locking point or button;
- use of magnets or tools to interfere with the pouch;
- burning or heat damage;
- pouch opening without the authorised unlocking process due to tampering;
- inappropriate, offensive or abusive language, graffiti, symbols or markings on the pouch.

If accidental damage occurs, it must be reported immediately. Unreported visible damage may be taken into account when the Academy considers whether the damage was accidental or deliberate.

A pouch must be removed from use immediately if:

- it cannot be locked correctly;
- it opens without the unlocking process;
- the fabric is torn, cut or materially weakened;
- the locking part or retractable pin is bent, exposed, distorted or damaged;
- there are signs of force, burning, tampering or sharpness that could affect safe use.

Breach of policy and sanctions

Where a student breaches this policy, the Academy may:

- confiscate or secure the device for the remainder of the school day;
- place the device in secure storage;
- require collection by a parent or carer;
- record the incident on the school behaviour system;
- apply behaviour sanctions in line with the Behaviour Policy;
- require replacement or payment for deliberate damage to school-issued equipment;
- where repeated or serious breaches occur, require daily hand-in arrangements or impose further restrictions consistent with Academy procedures.

Any response will be proportionate, consistent, and in line with the Academy's Behaviour Policy and statutory guidance on behaviour, searching, screening and confiscation.



Search, confiscation and secure retention

Authorised staff may require a student to hand over a phone or device where they reasonably believe that:

- this policy has been breached;
- the device is being used in a way that is unsafe, disruptive, inappropriate, or contrary to school rules; or
- inspection, confiscation, or further action is justified under the Academy's behaviour and safeguarding arrangements.

Where a device is retained by the Academy:

- it will be stored securely;
- the Academy may notify a parent or carer;
- the Academy may require collection by a parent or carer.

Medical, safeguarding and exceptional access

The Academy recognises that some students may require access to a phone or connected device for medical, disability, safeguarding, or other exceptional reasons.

In such cases:

- parents or carers must notify the Academy and provide appropriate supporting information;
- the Academy will consider reasonable adjustments and individual arrangements;
- the Academy may authorise a modified pouch arrangement, medical pouch, supervised access, or another suitable control measure;
- the agreed arrangement will be recorded and communicated to relevant staff.

Emergencies and parent contact

Where a student needs urgently to contact a parent or carer, or where a parent or carer needs urgently to contact a student, the normal route is through School Reception, the school office, or another member of staff.



In an emergency, authorised staff may direct that a pouch be opened or may facilitate contact in another appropriate way.

Safety, security and responsible use

- Using mobile devices to bully, threaten, harass or intimidate other students is unacceptable and will not be tolerated.
- It is unacceptable to use a mobile device to photograph or film any student without their consent, or to use a mobile device in toilets, changing rooms or any situation that may cause embarrassment or discomfort to students, staff or visitors.
- Any student caught using a mobile phone to cheat in exams or assessments will face disciplinary action. In public examinations, such behaviour must be reported to the examination board and will usually result in disqualification.
- Students should use passwords, PIN codes or biometric ID where possible to help protect their devices from unauthorised use.

Residential trips

On a residential trip, the Academy may allow students to take mobile devices with them during their stay. The usual Academy rules will continue to apply unless the trip leader sets a different supervised arrangement.

Students must not use a phone to harass, film or intimidate other students whilst on a trip. The normal rules apply regarding confiscation of the phone and parents / carers will be informed. On a residential, the trip leader will have the final decision as to when the phone will be returned to the student.

Care of pouches, connectivity and liability

Where the Academy issues pouches to students:

- the pouch remains school property unless expressly stated otherwise;
- students must take reasonable care of the pouch;
- parents or carers may be charged the reasonable replacement or repair cost where the pouch is deliberately damaged, lost, or damaged through misuse.



Parents and carers should be aware that when a phone is enclosed within a lockable pouch, wireless connectivity and location-based services may be reduced or unavailable, depending on the device and pouch design.

The Academy does not guarantee that a device enclosed in a pouch will remain reachable, traceable, or locatable during the school day.

A mobile phone brought to school remains the property of the student and their parent or carer. Where the Academy takes possession of a device or stores it under this policy, the Academy will take reasonable steps to store it securely. Any question of responsibility for loss or damage will be considered on the facts of the individual case, including whether the student complied with this policy, whether the device was stored in accordance with school procedures, and whether the Academy took reasonable care in the circumstances.

Staff, visitors, communication and review

Staff mobile phone use is governed by the Lighthouse Schools Partnership Code of Conduct. Visitors should follow the same core principle as students: mobile devices must not be seen or heard in the Academy when their use would conflict with school expectations or safeguarding. Visitors who need to use mobile devices for the purposes of their visit should do so either under supervision by Academy staff or away from students.

The Academy will:

- publish this policy or a summary of it for parents, carers and students;
- explain the policy to students in an age-appropriate way;
- train relevant staff in consistent implementation;
- review implementation regularly.

This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner if there is a change in statutory guidance, inspection expectations, relevant case law, or school practice.