

July 2025

Dear Parent/Carer,

Re: Mobile Phone Policy – September 2025

Thank you for your recent correspondence regarding the upcoming changes to our mobile phone policy. We appreciate the time you have taken to share your views, and we would like to respond openly and respectfully to the questions raised.

Firstly, we want to acknowledge that many of you have expressed support for the general principle of limiting mobile phone use during the school day, and we are grateful for your backing. Our intention is not to remove access to communication but to create a focused, safe, and distraction-free learning environment where all scholars can thrive.

Contacting the School During the Day

We recognise the concern around being able to reach the school in an emergency. We are aware that at times our phone system and response times have not met expectations. Please be assured that we are currently reviewing our reception staffing levels and call handling systems, including a new phone loop system, to improve accessibility and ensure calls are answered promptly. It is vital that families can contact the school when needed, and we are committed to improving this area of our work in time for a September start.

Scholar Access in Emergencies

While phones will be securely stored during the school day, we will continue to facilitate urgent contact between scholars and families via scholar services, this is a new resource that will increase capacity and open up lines of communication. Should an emergency arise, our staff will make sure your child receives the message or is supported in calling home. Should an emergency result in a school closure, phone will be returned to scholars before they leave the academy.

Security of Phones

Phones will be stored in secure, designated storage areas. Phones will be locked in a phone safe, with an allocated slot for each scholar, and this in turn will be locked in an office. Although we are not liable for personal items brought to school, we are putting procedures in place to safeguard phones. Scholars will be responsible for handing in and collecting their own devices, and staff will supervise the process. There will only be a small number of staff with key access to the offices.

Insurance Coverage

We take the responsibility of holding scholars' phones very seriously. Phones collected under the new policy will be stored securely during the school day. The academy will uphold its duty of care to ensure that phones are stored behind a double lock, have appropriate supervision and that processes are in place to ensure that phones are collected and returned in a way that minimises the risk of loss or damage to the lowest level.

Access and Device Handling

Access to stored devices will be strictly limited to authorised staff who have received training on our procedures. Devices will be returned promptly at the end of the school day in a well-organised and supervised manner.

End of Day Procedures

We are mindful of concerns around scholars leaving later than scheduled. The new system for phone collection will be streamlined and supervised to minimise delays. Phones will be given back to scholars one by one in end of day form time. Scholars will be called to the front in alphabetical order to retrieve their phone, this will then be stored in their bag before scholars attend end of day line-up. If any changes are made to end-of-day routines, these will be communicated clearly in advance.

Staff Mobile Phone Use

Teaching staff follow a professional code of conduct regarding phone use during the school day and around scholars. Any use of phones by staff during the school day is strictly limited to professional purposes and emergencies. Scholars and staff are held to different standards based on their roles and responsibilities.

SEND Support and Scholar Wellbeing

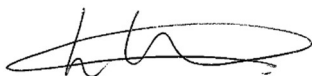
We understand that some families feel changes in school policy should be matched by improvements in other areas, such as SEND provision and pastoral care. We want to assure you that these areas remain a top priority. In fact, part of the rationale behind the phone policy is to help reduce anxiety, social pressure, and cyber distractions that can particularly affect vulnerable scholars.

Longer School Days and Homework

Regarding changes to the school day, any extension has been carefully considered to ensure it adds value without placing undue pressure on scholars, this will be in place for Y11 only in the 2025/26 academic year. Homework expectations will be reviewed alongside this to ensure a healthy and balanced approach. All decisions, such as those relating to phone free schools, have been made with the scholars' future interests at heart and are designed to create opportunities for them to reach university or a real alternative.

Your feedback is not only welcome but essential in helping us refine our practices. Thank you once again for engaging with us on this matter. Should you wish to discuss your concerns further, please do not hesitate to contact the school directly at contact@astreanetherwood.org

Yours faithfully,



Mr L Harper
Vice Principal
Netherwood Academy