



# The Burgess Hill Academy

## Mobile Phone Policy

2026-27

|                   |           |       |                |
|-------------------|-----------|-------|----------------|
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## 1. Introduction and aims

The Burgess Hill Academy is committed to providing a calm, safe and purposeful environment in which students can focus on learning, build positive relationships and participate fully in academy life.

Mobile phones and other smart technology form part of everyday life outside school. However, their use during the academy day can distract students from learning, disrupt lessons, contribute to bullying and online harm, reduce face-to-face interaction and create safeguarding concerns.

In line with statutory guidance, the academy operates as a mobile phone-free environment throughout the academy day. Students may bring a mobile phone to the academy for use when travelling to and from school, but they must not access or use it while on the academy site unless a specific adjustment has been formally agreed.

The academy operates an 'in school, out of sight' approach. During the academy day, mobile phones and other devices covered by this policy must be:

- switched off, not placed on silent;
- stored securely in the student's bag or another agreed location;
- not seen;
- not heard;
- not accessed.

This policy applies throughout the time a student is on the academy site, including before registration, registration and tutor time, lessons, movement between lessons, breaktime, lunchtime, assemblies, detentions, clubs and activities taking place after school while the student remains on site.

For the purposes of this policy, the academy site includes all areas within the academy boundary, including indoor and outdoor spaces and the route used by students when entering or leaving through Ashway.

This policy applies to mobile phones, smartphones, smartwatches, ear pods and wireless earbuds, headphones, devices capable of sending or receiving messages or notifications, devices capable of recording audio, photographs or video, and other smart technology with similar functionality.

The aims of this policy are to:

- protect teaching time and reduce distraction;
- promote positive relationships and face-to-face interaction;
- reduce inappropriate screen use during the academy day;
- reduce opportunities for online bullying, harassment and harmful behaviour;
- support safeguarding and online safety;
- establish clear and consistently applied expectations;
- support students to develop safe and responsible habits around technology;
- align mobile phone expectations with the academy's Behaviour Policy.

## 2. Roles and responsibilities

### 2.1 Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- ensuring that the academy is a mobile phone-free environment;



- approving this policy and ensuring that it is implemented consistently;
- ensuring that sanctions and confiscation arrangements are lawful and proportionate;
- ensuring that reasonable adjustments and individual exceptions are considered appropriately;
- authorising staff to carry out searches where legally permitted;
- ensuring that parents and students understand the policy.

## **2.2 Assistant Principal responsible for Behaviour and Culture**

The Assistant Principal responsible for Behaviour and Culture will:

- provide strategic oversight of the policy;
- monitor the consistency of implementation;
- oversee the strike system and repeated breaches;
- ensure that confiscated devices are managed securely;
- review patterns of non-compliance;
- coordinate communication with parents;
- ensure that staff are clear about expectations and procedures;
- review the impact of the policy annually.

## **2.3 All staff**

All staff, including teachers, support staff, supply staff and agency staff, are responsible for enforcing this policy consistently. Staff must:

- challenge any mobile phone or smart device that is seen, heard or used;
- follow the confiscation procedure;
- record breaches accurately;
- avoid negotiating different expectations with individual students unless an agreed adjustment is in place;
- report serious misuse or safeguarding concerns immediately;
- model appropriate mobile phone use.

## **2.4 Staff use of mobile phones**

Staff should not use personal mobile phones for personal reasons in front of students during the academy day.

There may be occasions when staff need to use a mobile phone or similar device for an approved professional purpose, including:

- multi-factor authentication;
- emergency communication;
- academy duties;
- issuing rewards or sanctions;
- approved operational tasks.

Personal use should take place away from students and in staff-only areas.

## **2.5 Volunteers and visitors**

Volunteers, contractors and other visitors must alert a member of staff if they witness a breach of this policy.



Visitors should use mobile phones discreetly and must not photograph, film or record students unless specifically authorised.

## **2.6 Parents and carers**

Parents and carers are expected to:

- support the academy's mobile phone-free approach;
- discuss the policy and its purpose with their child;
- ensure that their child understands the sanctions;
- avoid contacting their child directly during the academy day;
- contact the academy office where an urgent message needs to be passed on;
- collect confiscated devices within the published collection times;
- work constructively with the academy where the policy has been breached.

## **2.7 Students**

Students must:

- ensure that phones and other covered devices are switched off before entering the academy site;
- keep devices out of sight and securely stored;
- hand over a device immediately when instructed;
- use the academy office where contact with home is required;
- follow any individual arrangements agreed by the academy;
- comply with expectations on visits, examinations and after-school activities.

## **3. Use of mobile phones by students**

### **3.1 General expectations**

Students may bring a mobile phone to the academy at their own risk.

Once on the academy site, the phone must be switched off and stored securely.

Students must not:

- use a mobile phone;
- look at a mobile phone;
- check notifications;
- use a smartwatch to send or receive messages;
- wear or use ear pods, headphones or wireless earbuds;
- use a device to take photographs, videos or audio recordings;
- use a device to access social media, messaging or games;
- use a mobile phone as a substitute for academy systems.

### **3.2 Learning and academy systems**

Staff must not normally require students to use a personal mobile phone for lesson activities, homework, checking the timetable, viewing detentions, accessing academy communication or completing registration or attendance tasks.



The academy will provide appropriate alternative systems or devices where technology is required for learning.

### **3.3 Toilets and changing rooms**

Mobile phones, cameras, smartwatches and recording devices must never be used in toilets, changing rooms or other areas where privacy is expected.

Any breach involving photography, filming or recording in these areas will be treated as a serious safeguarding matter.

### **3.4 Contact with parents**

Where a student needs to contact home during the academy day, they must speak to a member of staff or attend the academy office.

Parents who need to contact their child urgently should contact the academy office.

Students must not use their own mobile phone to contact parents during the academy day unless an authorised member of staff has given specific permission.

## **4. Reasonable adjustments and exceptional circumstances**

The academy recognises its duties under the Equality Act 2010 and the Children and Families Act 2014.

A student may be permitted limited access to a mobile phone or similar device where this is necessary because of disability, a medical condition, an agreed healthcare plan, a significant communication need, caring responsibilities or another exceptional individual circumstance.

Examples may include a student who needs a phone linked to a continuous glucose monitor or another medical device.

Any agreed adjustment will specify the purpose for which the device may be used, the times when it may be accessed, the place where it may be used, how it will be stored at other times, the staff responsible for monitoring the arrangement and the review date.

An adjustment does not provide unrestricted access to the device. The student must continue to follow all other elements of the policy.

Adjustments will be agreed by an appropriate senior leader in consultation with the student, parent or carer, SENDCo, medical team or other relevant professional.

## **5. Confiscation and sanctions**

### **5.1 Confiscation**

A mobile phone or other device may be confiscated where it is seen, heard, used, accessed, worn, connected to ear pods or headphones, or otherwise in breach of this policy.

The device must be handed to the member of staff immediately and without argument.

### **5.2 Storage**

The member of staff will arrange for the device to be taken to reception at the earliest reasonable opportunity.

Confiscated devices will:



- be recorded;
- be stored securely;
- only be released in accordance with the strike system;
- be handled with reasonable care.

Students bring mobile phones and other devices onto the academy site at their own risk. The academy will take reasonable care of items that have been lawfully confiscated but will not accept liability for loss or damage where staff have acted lawfully and reasonably.

### 5.3 Mobile phone strike system

| Strike   | Response                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|----------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Strike 1 | Device confiscated. Parent or carer must collect the device between 3.15 and 4.00 pm.                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| Strike 2 | Device confiscated. Parent or carer must collect the device between 3.15 and 4.00 pm.                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| Strike 3 | Device confiscated. Parent or carer must collect the device between 3.15 and 4.00 pm. The academy may arrange a meeting or agree additional expectations with the student and parent.                                                                                         |
| Strike 4 | Device confiscated and retained until the end of the short term. A parent or carer must collect the device between 3.15 and 4.00 pm on the agreed collection date. A formal mobile phone plan may be introduced.                                                              |
| Strike 5 | Device confiscated and retained until the end of the long term. A parent or carer must collect the device between 3.15 and 4.00 pm on the agreed collection date. The student may be required to participate in a daily checking or hand-in arrangement for an agreed period. |

### 5.4 Application of the strike system

The strike system is the academy's normal response to repeated breaches. However, the academy will consider the seriousness of the incident, the student's age, SEND or disability, medical need, safeguarding factors, whether the student has an agreed adjustment, and whether another response is necessary or more appropriate.

The academy may move directly to a more serious sanction where a device has been used to:

- bully or harass;
- photograph, film or record another person without permission;
- share harmful or illegal content;
- facilitate a fight or criminal conduct;
- undermine the safety or orderly running of the academy;
- breach examination regulations.

### 5.5 Refusal to hand over a device

Refusal to hand over a device is a separate breach of the Behaviour Policy. The matter will be escalated to a senior member of staff and may result in a more serious sanction.



Any sanction will be proportionate and will take account of safeguarding, SEND, disability and the individual circumstances.

## **5.6 Parent collection**

A poster showing collection arrangements will be displayed at reception.

Devices will only be returned to a parent or carer, another adult authorised by the parent or carer, or the student where an authorised senior leader has agreed this in exceptional circumstances.

The academy may request identification before releasing a device.

## **6. Searching, safeguarding and examination of devices**

### **6.1 Searching for a device**

The Headteacher, or a member of staff authorised by the Headteacher, may search a student or their possessions where there are reasonable grounds to suspect that the student has a prohibited item defined in law, an item identified in academy rules as an item that may be searched for, or a mobile phone or similar device linked to a serious breach of academy rules.

Any search will follow current statutory guidance on searching, screening and confiscation.

### **6.2 Suspected intimate images or other safeguarding content**

Staff must not search through a device in order to look for, view or verify nude or semi-nude images or videos.

Where there is a report or suspicion that a device contains nude or semi-nude images, sexual content or other material indicating that a child may be at risk of harm, staff must:

- confiscate or secure the device where this can be done safely and lawfully;
- avoid opening, viewing, copying, forwarding, saving or sharing the content;
- report the concern immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or a deputy;
- record only the information necessary to explain the concern;
- follow the academy's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and current safeguarding guidance.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead will decide the next steps, including whether advice or involvement is required from the police or children's social care. Any examination of the device or content will only take place where it is lawful, necessary and carried out by an appropriately authorised person following safeguarding and police advice.

### **6.3 Other serious content or criminal conduct**

Where there are reasonable grounds to believe that a device contains evidence relating to bullying, harassment, threats, violence, exploitation, criminal conduct or another serious safeguarding concern, the matter must be referred to the Designated Safeguarding Lead and, where appropriate, the police.

Staff must not routinely search through the contents of a device. Any decision to examine a device will follow statutory searching guidance, the academy's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, data-protection requirements and police advice where appropriate.



## **6.4 Refusal to cooperate with a lawful search**

Where a student refuses to cooperate with a lawful search or instruction, the matter will be addressed under the Behaviour Policy. The response will be proportionate to the circumstances and may include suspension where the seriousness of the refusal or the surrounding circumstances justify it.

## **7. Safeguarding and serious misuse**

Mobile phone misuse may create or reveal a safeguarding concern. Staff must refer concerns promptly to the Designated Safeguarding Lead where use of a device involves bullying, intimidation, coercion, sexual harassment, sexual violence, sharing nude or semi-nude images or videos, upskirting, exploitation, threats of violence, hate incidents, abusive messages, harmful online content, photographing or recording without consent, or concern that a student may be at risk of harm.

The academy will respond in line with the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, Behaviour Policy, Online Safety Policy, current guidance on sharing nude and semi-nude images, and police and local safeguarding procedures.

The academy will consider both the behaviour and any appropriate sanction, and whether the student involved needs safeguarding, pastoral or early support.

## **8. Loss, theft or damage**

Students bring mobile phones, smartwatches, ear pods and headphones onto the academy site at their own risk.

The academy is not responsible for loss, theft, accidental damage, damage caused by another student or damage occurring because a device has not been stored securely.

The academy will take reasonable care of devices that have been confiscated and stored. Any concern about the handling of a confiscated device should be raised promptly with the Assistant Principal responsible for Behaviour and Culture.

## **9. Examinations and assessments**

Mobile phones, smartwatches, ear pods, headphones and other communication devices are not permitted in examination rooms.

Students must follow the instructions issued by the examinations team and current Joint Council for Qualifications regulations.

Before entering an examination room, students must leave devices at home, store them in the location directed by the academy, or hand them to an invigilator where this has been arranged.

Possession of a mobile phone, smartwatch or other unauthorised device in an examination room may be reported to the awarding body and could lead to loss of marks, disqualification from a component, disqualification from a qualification or other penalties set by the awarding body. The device does not need to have been used for a breach to occur.

## **10. Trips, visits and residential activities**

The normal academy rule remains in place on curriculum visits and enrichment activities unless the trip leader has agreed a different arrangement.



The trip leader will decide in advance whether students may bring phones, when phones may be accessed, where they must be stored, how contact with parents will be managed and the consequences of misuse.

On day visits, use will normally be prohibited unless permission is given for a specific purpose, such as contacting parents about a delayed return.

On residential visits, arrangements will reflect the nature and location of the visit, safeguarding, student age, accommodation, emergency contact arrangements and the educational purpose of the visit.

For some visits, including overseas homestays, students may need to retain a mobile phone. Restrictions and expectations will still apply and will be communicated before departure.

## **11. Communication with parents and students**

The academy will publish this policy on its website.

Students and parents will be reminded of the policy before the start of the academic year, during induction and transition, through assemblies and tutor time, through parent communications, when a breach occurs and when significant changes are made.

The academy will explain the benefits of a mobile phone-free environment, the risks associated with inappropriate mobile phone use, how parents can contact their child in an emergency, the strike and confiscation arrangements, and how reasonable adjustments can be requested.

The academy will use a range of communication methods, including the website, letters and emails, newsletters, transition events, open evenings, parent meetings and direct telephone contact where appropriate.

Where a student may require an adjustment, the academy will communicate directly with the family to agree a suitable arrangement.

## **12. Teaching safe and responsible use**

Students will be taught about the effect of distraction on learning, healthy screen use, online bullying and harassment, sharing information and personal data, recording and sharing images, online reputation, harmful and illegal content, the impact of online actions on others, and how and when to report a concern.

This will be addressed through the personal development curriculum, online safety education, assemblies and pastoral work.

## **13. Monitoring and review**

The academy will review this policy annually.

The review will consider the consistency of implementation, the number and pattern of strikes, confiscation records, serious behaviour incidents, safeguarding concerns, feedback from students, parents and staff, the effectiveness of reasonable adjustments, staff compliance and current Department for Education guidance.

The policy may be reviewed sooner where statutory guidance changes, safeguarding concerns arise, implementation is inconsistent, the current sanctions are not having the intended effect, or academy systems or arrangements change.



## **Appendix 1: Student code of conduct**

Mobile phones and other smart technology must not be used or accessed at any point while a student is on the academy site unless an agreed individual adjustment applies.

1. Mobile phones, smartwatches, ear pods and headphones are brought to the academy at the student's own risk.
2. Phones must be switched off before the student enters the academy site.
3. Phones must remain stored securely and out of sight.
4. Devices must not be used before school, during lessons, between lessons, at break, at lunchtime or during after-school activities while the student remains on site.
5. Ear pods and headphones must not be worn or used.
6. Smartwatches must not be used to send or receive messages, access notifications, take photographs, make recordings or communicate.
7. Phones and recording devices must never be used in toilets or changing rooms.
8. A student must hand over a device immediately when instructed by a member of staff.
9. Refusal to hand over a device will result in an escalation of the sanction.
10. Where ear pods or headphones are being used, the connected mobile phone may also be confiscated.
11. Students must not use a device to photograph, record, bully, intimidate, harass or threaten another person.
12. Students must not use a device to access or share harmful, abusive, sexual or illegal material.
13. Students must not bring mobile phones, smartwatches, ear pods or headphones into an examination room.
14. On trips and visits, students must follow the arrangements communicated by the trip leader.
15. Where a student has an agreed medical, disability-related or exceptional adjustment, the device may only be used for the agreed purpose, at the agreed time and in the agreed place.
16. Students who need to contact home during the academy day must speak to a member of staff or use the academy office.



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