

June 2026

Dear Parents and Guardians,

Change to Mobile Phone Policy – From September 2026

Why are we introducing this change?

Mobile phones are an ever-present part of young people's lives. While they offer clear benefits in terms of communication and convenience, we are increasingly aware of the impact that constant access can have on students' attention, relationships and overall wellbeing during the school day.

At Habs, our intention is to be smartphone free from Reception to Year 11 by 2030. We want to reduce any exposure to harmful content and importantly create the conditions in which students are fully present and able to concentrate deeply, engage meaningfully with one another, and feel a strong sense of belonging within the school community. Considerable evidence has been published which shows that reducing the visibility and use of mobile phones during the day is key to achieving this. The government have announced a ban on social media for under 16s and the Department for Education (DfE) has made clear its expectation that schools should be mobile phone-free environments. With this strengthened guidance, we believe this is the right time to take a proactive and supportive approach, helping our students' development and wellbeing, in line with ['Smartphone Free Childhood'](#).

We aim to help students develop a healthy and balanced relationship with technology, while creating a calm, focused environment in which they can engage fully and build positive habits for the future.

What are the key changes?

Our approach has been designed to be clear, consistent and developmentally appropriate, recognising that students at different stages need different levels of structure and independence. We are adopting a phased, age-appropriate model across the school:

- **The Prep and Junior Schools and Year 7 will be smartphone-free.**
Research shows that early smartphone use, particularly before age 13, is linked to poorer wellbeing. We have also found that many of the challenges linked to phone use, tend to arise with our younger students who are still developing the maturity needed to manage this responsibility. At this stage, basic/brick phones can still provide reassurance for travel and safety, while allowing both the school day and journeys to remain calm, focused and free from distraction. This approach also helps to limit exposure to possibly harmful online content at a younger age. Therefore, students in Year 7 and below will not be allowed smartphones in school under any circumstances. Basic/brick phones purchased for coach travel must not include internet access (for example, we recommend a [Nokia 105](#), approx. £13–£20).



- **Prep and Junior Schools: Mobile phone free.** The only exception will be pupils in **Year 3 to Year 6 who travel on the school coach. They will require a basic/brick phone.** On arrival at school, the phone must be handed in to Reception and collected at the end of the school day. Pupils in Reception and Key Stage 1 do not need a phone as they are supported by chaperones.
- **Year 7: Smartphone free:** Those who travel on the coach will require a basic/brick phone and on arrival at school, all devices must be switched off and secured in Yondr pouches. As they continue through the school, students will continue to be smartphone free.
- **Years 8–11:** Students will not have access to their phones during the school day. On arrival at school, all devices must be switched off and secured in Yondr pouches.
- **Sixth Form:** Students may use smartphones, but only in designated Sixth Form areas and never in shared spaces with younger students.
- Yondr pouches for Year 7-11 will be provided by the school at no cost. A charge of £20 will apply for any lost or damaged pouches.
- All students must carry a physical QR code for coach travel, and families can continue to track journeys using the SchoolBus Tracker app or via a smart tracker.
- Wearable tech (including Smart Watches) is not permitted in any year group. Any devices used for music, for example during travel, are to be non sim activated.
- For specific medical needs, individual arrangements can be agreed with the Head of Section.

How will this be implemented?

We recognise that any change of this kind takes time to embed, and our focus will be on introducing it in a thoughtful and supportive way.

- Yondr pouches will be introduced from September 2026, with clear guidance and expectations shared with students.
- Students will be supported through PSHE, assemblies and ongoing education about responsible technology use and online safety.
- Parent information sessions will continue to be provided.
- Consistency will be key to success. Expectations will be applied clearly and fairly across the school, helping students to understand what is expected of them and why it matters. Sanctions will apply for breaches.



- As students progress through the school, our intention will be that they continue to be smartphone free so that by 2030 we will be smartphone free from Reception to Year 11.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) can be found below.

We understand that this may be a contentious change for some, and that changes to established habits can be challenging. We will support students carefully as they adapt, and we are confident that this approach will have a positive and lasting impact on their wellbeing and development. Thank you for your continued support in this important aspect of school life.

Yours faithfully,

Robert Sykes
Headmaster Boys' School

Hazel Bagworth-Mann
Headmistress Girls' School

Mobile Phone Policy FAQs (Senior School)

Why does my child going into Year 7 need a non-smartphone if it's going in a pouch? Our priority is to keep all students safe and supported. There is a growing body of research showing that younger children can be exposed to inappropriate or harmful content through smartphones, often before they are fully ready to manage this independently. Alongside this, our experience shows that many mobile-related issues, particularly during journeys to and from school, tend to involve our younger students. By asking Year 7 students to use basic/brick phones, we can help ensure that these journeys remain safe, calm and free from unnecessary distraction.

With the strengthened guidance from the Department for Education, we feel this is the right time to take a proactive and supportive approach. Basic/brick phones continue to provide reassurance for communication when needed, while reducing access to online content at a younger age. You may also find it helpful to explore wider discussions on this topic, such as the documentary *The Social Dilemma* on Netflix, which highlights some of the challenges associated with smartphone and social media use.

What basic/ brick phone do you recommend? Families are free to choose a suitable device; however, we ask that the phone does not have internet access and ideally does not include a camera (for example, a Nokia 105 or similar model).



What will happen each morning at the start of the school day? On arrival to the school site, students must switch off their phone and place it into their Yondr pouch. They will use the magnetic unlocking/locking points (located at the coach park and other key entry points around school site) as required. They should leave it unlocked until form time when the tutor will ensure they lock it securely and place it in their school bag, ensuring it remains out of sight and untouched for the remainder of the day. Staff will support students in developing consistent routines and may carry out occasional checks throughout the day to ensure the policy is being followed.

What happens if my child arrives late to school? Students arriving late must follow the same process at reception: switching off their phone, placing it in the pouch, locking it securely, and placing it in their bag before joining lessons.

How can my child access their phone at the end of the school day? At 4pm, having left the school buildings, students can use the magnetic unlocking/locking devices to unlock their pouch and retrieve their phone. They are advised to re-lock the pouch to avoid damage.

What happens if my child has to leave school early? If a student has to leave school early (e.g. for a medical appointment) when signing out at reception, they can use the magnetic unlocking/locking device in reception to unlock their pouch to retrieve their phone. Heads of Section will also have unlocking devices available if needed.

What if my child attends a school trip or a sports fixture? During the entirety of the fixture or trip, the same expectations apply (phones must be switched off, secured in the pouch and placed completely out of sight in their school bag). If return is running later than 4pm students can use the magnetic unlocking/locking devices located at the coach park or the hand-held device which the trip leader will have, to unlock their pouch and retrieve their phone.

What happens if my child forgets to unlock their pouch after school? If a student forgets to use the magnetic unlocking/locking devices to unlock their phone before they leave the school site, an unlocking point will be available at the school gates, allowing students or parents to return later that day or over the weekend to unlock the pouch and retrieve the phone.

What about smart watches, air pods etc? Smart watches are not permitted and must not be brought into school. Devices such as air-pods will be treated in exactly the same way as mobile phones (and must be locked in the pouch if brought to school). Smart glasses are not permitted on site.

What happens if I need to contact my child? If parents need to contact their child, then they should do this by contacting reception in the usual way. They should not attempt to contact their child using their mobile phone. Similarly, if a student needs to contact their parent, they must speak to an appropriate member of staff and a landline telephone can be used. They must not attempt to contact their parent using their mobile phone.



What about students with serious medical conditions? Students with specific medical conditions (e.g. diabetes) may be issued with a Velcro pouch, allowing access to their phone when required for medical purposes. At all other times, the phone must remain in the pouch and out of sight. These arrangements must be agreed in advance with the Head of Section.

What will happen if my child is found with their phone?

We expect our students, with the full support of parents, to abide by our new Mobile Phone Policy. However, if a student is found with a mobile phone that is not locked securely in a pouch, or they have attempted to tamper with the Yondr system, parents or guardians will be contacted and the following non-negotiable sanctions will apply:

- First offence: It will be confiscated until the end of the day and the student will receive an After School Detention / L2.
- Second offence: The phone will be confiscated for a week.
- Third offence: The phone will be confiscated until the next school holiday break.

Where do I get a mobile phone pouch from and how much will it cost? The mobile phone pouch is a specialist product and can only be provided by the school. The students in Years 7 to 11 will be provided with the hire of a pouch free of charge. All students must return the pouch to the school at the end of year 11. If the pouch is not returned, or if the pouch is lost or damaged, a replacement fee of £20 will be charged to you.

What if my child loses or forgets their pouch? Pouches are a compulsory item on the school equipment list if your child is bringing a mobile phone to school. In the first instance, the phone will be handed into reception until the end of the day. If the pouch is repeatedly forgotten, it will be treated as lost, and a replacement pouch can be provided and a charge of £20 will apply. We suggest students keep pouches in their school bags, and they remain locked when they are not in use.

