

NOTTINGHAM GIRLS' ACADEMY MOBILE PHONE POLICY

REVIEWED
February 2026 by R Turner-Ramadan, August 2026

Next review date
July 2027

Mobile Phone Protocol

Mobile Phones (smartphones and other connected devices)

- Mobile phones (and any other connected devices including earbuds/headphones, tablets and smart glasses) **must not be seen or heard on the school site for any reason**.
- Reasons include (but are not limited to):
    - devices visible in pockets (either poking out or as an outline);
    - checking the time;
    - switching devices off;
    - putting devices on silent;
    - receiving a message or call from a parent, relative or friend;
    - contacting a parent, relative or friend;
    - playing music;
    - completing homework;
    - using them as a calculator;
    - taking photographs or videos;
    - using them as they exit school (pupils must have left the school site before devices are seen or heard);
    - using them before school, during an after-school activity, on a school trip, or during a school event.
- Where it is clear that a smartwatch is connected to a phone, both the phone and smartwatch will be confiscated. Watches of any description are not allowed in public examinations.
- The *school site* means anywhere within the perimeter fence of the school grounds (for pupils this will start/end at the pedestrian entrance/exit or the exit via music).
- If a device is seen or heard for any reason, the pupil will be expected to hand it in for confiscation. They will be asked to switch it off and it will be placed in an envelope, with their name on it, in reception.
- The device will only be returned to a parent or carer for the pupil (as recorded on Arbor).

- Parents and carers will be able to attend school to collect confiscated devices between 8.45am and 4pm each day. Any devices that have not been collected by 4pm will be stored in a safe until the next school day.
- Pupils that usually require their device for public transport home will be lent bus fare on the day of confiscation. Parents or carers will be expected to pay this back when they collect the phone.
- Pupils that refuse to hand in their device will be isolated for the remainder of the day and suspended the following day. Following the suspension, they will be expected to surrender their device each morning on arrival at school and only collect it as they leave school. This will be for an agreed period of time (not usually less than 2 weeks).
- Where other evidence exists that a pupil has used their mobile phone in school (such as a photograph or a video taken with the phone), they will be expected to surrender their device each morning on arrival at school and only collect it as they leave school. This will be for an agreed period of time (not usually less than 2 weeks).

Sixth Form

- Sixth Form students are expected to set an example to our younger pupils.
- They should, therefore, *only* use devices within the Sixth Form common room.
- Sixth Form students must not use their devices in other areas of the school, around the school site, or in lessons.
- By special arrangement, however, Sixth Form students will be allowed to use iPads/tablets in lessons for note taking. This must be agreed by a member of the Sixth Form pastoral team in advance. If the device is found to be used for other purposes or is deemed to be hindering a students' achievement, the arrangement will be revoked.
- Sixth Form students who repeatedly breach these rules will also have their devices confiscated and parents or carers will be contacted to discuss.

Reasonable Adjustments

- A small number of pupils who require a device to support their health, a special educational need, or a temporary issue may be given special dispensation to carry and use their device in specific ways.
- In most cases, the dispensation will require the pupil to use the device in an office, in the presence of an adult.

- This is likely to include diabetic pupils who use a phone to monitor blood sugar levels.
- Dispensation must be given by a member of SLT, the SENDCo, or a member of the pastoral team. Pupils - or parents and carers - must arrange this in advance.
- Pupils given dispensation, who are found to be using their device outside of the granted dispensations, will have their device confiscated in line with this policy and the dispensation will be reviewed.

The Power to Search and Suspected Covert Use

- Headteachers, or staff they authorise, have a statutory power to search a pupil or their possessions where they have reasonable grounds to suspect that the pupil is in possession of a prohibited item as set out in legislation or any item identified in the school rules as an item that may be searched for.
- At Nottingham Girls' Academy this list includes mobile phones and other electronic devices.
- Reasonable grounds for believing a pupil has a prohibited item will include pupils under suspicion of using, or trying to use, a device covertly (under a table or coat, inside a bag, at the toilets, etc). In such an instance, if a device is found, it will be confiscated and only returned to a parent or carer.
- In order to reduce opportunity for covert use, pupils given permission to go to the toilet during a lesson will be expected to leave their coat and bag in the classroom.
- Searches will be conducted by two staff. The search will consist of looking through the pupil's bag(s), the contents therein, and their coat pockets. Pupils will also be asked to empty their shirt and trouser pockets and, in some circumstances, to take off their shoes.
- Pupils that refuse to cooperate with a search will be assumed to have the contraband that led to the reasonable grounds for the search and sanctioned accordingly.
- Reasonable grounds to believe a pupil may have (or have had) a device in their possession, and have used it in contravention of this policy, will include evidence that their phone has been used to take photographs or video footage on the school site at any time in the past. In such an instance, even if the device has not been seen or heard that day, the pupil will be asked to delete all images and video, and the device will be confiscated and only returned to a parent or carer.
- Reasonable grounds to believe a pupil may have (or have had) a device in their possession, and have used it in contravention of this policy, will include evidence

that the pupil has used the phone to contact a parent or carer without seeking suitable support and permission from an appropriate member of staff first. In such an instance, even if the device has not been seen or heard that day, the device will be confiscated and only returned to a parent or carer. The pupil will then be expected to surrender their device each morning on arrival at school and only collect it as they leave school. This will be for an agreed period of time (not usually less than 2 weeks).

Staff

- Our staff code of conduct already makes it clear that staff should not use mobile phones for personal reasons in front of pupils.
- Leaders, however, will continue to use mobile phones for communication with colleagues in school, parents, and to access Arbor (for example, whilst on call).

Application of the policy

- Ignorance of this policy and the sanctions therein will not be considered sufficient excuse for breaking the rules.
- Whilst we will endeavour to apply these rules consistently and evenly, there may be occasions that they are breached by a pupil, but this is not identified and they are not sanctioned. This will not constitute sufficient grounds for other pupils to be exempt from the policy.

Mobile Phone Use on Educational Visits and trips

Purpose

At school, pupils are not permitted to use mobile phones during the school day. However, on educational visits and trips, limited mobile phone use may be permitted to enhance the experience, allow pupils to capture memories, and maintain contact with parents where appropriate and contact with staff via the emergency contact number provided.

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that mobile phones support the educational experience rather than detract from it. We want pupils to engage fully with activities, interact with their peers, and immerse themselves in the opportunities provided by the visit.

Permitted Use

Pupils may use their mobile phones:

- During coach or bus journeys to and from the visit.
- To take photographs during the visit where permitted by staff and the venue.
- At times specifically authorised by trip leaders.

Prohibited Use

Pupils must not:

- Access or post content on social media during the visit.
- Use phones during educational presentations, guided tours or organised activities unless instructed by staff.
- Use phones in a manner that distracts themselves or others from the purpose of the visit.
- Photograph or record other pupils, staff or members of the public without permission.
- Share images or videos from the visit online.

Expectations

Pupils are expected to:

- Focus on the experience and engage fully in the activities provided.
- Take opportunities to converse with peers, staff and members of the public where appropriate.

- Respect the educational nature of the visit and the expectations of the school.
- Follow all instructions given by trip leaders regarding phone use.

Consequences

If a pupil does not follow these expectations:

- Staff may require the phone to be switched off and stored away.
- Repeated misuse may result in the phone being confiscated for the remainder of the visit and returned at the end of the trip, with the parent collecting the mobile phone.
- Serious misuse may result in further action in line with the school's behaviour policy.

Final Statement

Educational visits provide valuable opportunities for learning, discovery and personal development. While mobile phones may be used in a limited way, pupils are encouraged to make the most of the experience by engaging with the people, places and activities around them rather than through a screen.

Mobile Phone Protocol for Overseas School Visits/Residentials

Purpose

To ensure that mobile phones are used safely, responsibly and appropriately during overseas school visits, while supporting student wellbeing, safeguarding and effective communication.

Expectations Before Departure

1. Students may bring a mobile phone at their own risk.
2. The school accepts no responsibility for loss, theft or damage.
3. Students and parents/carers must sign and agree to this protocol before departure.
4. Students must ensure:
    - Their phone is fully functioning.
    - International roaming arrangements are understood.
    - Emergency contact information is stored on the device.
    - Appropriate charging equipment is brought.

Permitted Use

Students may use mobile phones:

- During designated free time.
- To contact parents/carers at agreed times.
- For educational activities directed by staff.
- For photography of places and activities where permitted.
- For accessing travel documents or educational resources.

Prohibited Use

Students must not:

- Use phones during organised activities unless authorised.
- Record, photograph or film others without permission.
- Share images or videos of students or staff on social media without consent.
- Engage in online behaviour that could bring the school into disrepute.
- Access inappropriate websites or content.

- Use phones after designated "lights out" times.

Safeguarding and Social Media

1. Students must follow the school's acceptable use and online safety policies at all times.
2. Location sharing should be disabled unless instructed by staff.
3. Students must immediately report:
    - Concerning messages.
    - Online harassment.
    - Contact from strangers.
    - Loss or theft of a device.
4. Staff may require students to stop using phones if a safeguarding concern arises.

During Travel

- Phones should be fully charged before each journey.
- Students should carry a power bank where possible.
- Headphones may be used respectfully during travel periods.
- Students must remain attentive to staff instructions and travel announcements.

Nighttime Arrangements

- The visit leader will determine the most appropriate approach based on the age and needs of students.

Breaches of the Protocol

Where expectations are not met, staff may:

1. Issue a warning.
2. Restrict phone use for a period of time.
3. Confiscate the device temporarily.
4. Contact parents/carers.
5. Apply further sanctions in line with school behaviour and safeguarding policies.

Emergency Communication

- Staff will maintain primary responsibility for communication during emergencies.

- Students should not post information about emergencies, incidents or accidents on social media.
- Parents/carers should use the designated school emergency contact procedures rather than relying solely on student contact.