

BW/KH
5th December 2025

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Dear Parents/Carer,

Smartphone use for children

Over recent years, there have been growing concerns about the impact of smartphones and smart technology on children's lives. Evidence shows that the use of smartphones can have a stark effect on young people's emotional wellbeing, sleep, safety and focus in school.

Data tells us that:

- 90% of girls and 50% of boys surveyed by Ofsted had been sent unsolicited explicit content online (Ofsted, 2021);
- 51% of 11-13 year olds in the UK have seen pornography online, with the majority being seen unintentionally (BBFC, 2022);
- 75% of 15 and 16 year olds questioned for the Children's Commissioner Digital Childhoods report had been sent a video of a beheading (The Children's Commissioner: Digital Childhoods);
- Teens with problematic smartphone use are three times as likely to have depression (Kings College London, 2024);
- Teens who spend more than 3 hours a day on social media face a doubled risk of anxiety and depression (Jama Psychiatry, 2019).

Staff at Southam College have been consulted about their views on smartphone use amongst secondary aged students. 92% of our staff respondents were somewhat or very concerned about the smartphone use of students, citing exposure to harmful content and distractions/lack of focus as their biggest concerns.

Review of Procedures

Following this consultation, we have reviewed our mobile phone procedures, with effect from **Tuesday 6th January 2026**. From this date, it will be mandatory for mobile phones and any web-enabled wearable devices such as smartwatches to remain switched off in students' bags from the moment they enter school site until the 15.20 bell, for all students in Years 7-11. Specific information for Sixth Form students can be found below.

Confiscation

Our confiscation procedures remain unchanged: phones are confiscated if seen outside of a bag and secured in the Student Office until the end of the day, and on the second, or further occasions of the academic year parents are required to collect the mobile phone. The same procedures apply for smartwatches and other wearable internet-enabled devices. Students are responsible for informing parents of confiscation and any collection arrangements.

If a student refuses to hand over their phone or smart-device, they will be placed on internal, until they hand in the device.

Please note that headphones/ear buds are not permitted to be used in school, and will be confiscated in line with the procedures set out above. Students can collect headphones at the end of the school day.

Phones are permitted for use after the 15:20 bell for purposeful activities such as checking ClassCharts, news or for checking a bus apps. Phones will still be confiscated if used inappropriately such as watching videos, taking photographs, making calls, or playing music out loud.

Sixth Form Procedures

Students within the Sixth Form will be able to use mobile phones and other internet-enabled devices within the Sixth Form-only areas, which are the Quad and the Sixth Form Study Room. Sixth Form students will be required to ensure that mobile phones are switched off and placed inside bags in all other areas of the school site including the cafeteria.

Mobile phones should remain in bags during Sixth Form lessons, however when students are in a lesson without a teacher due to staff absence they will be allowed to use their phones to check ClassCharts when in their allocated classroom.

If a Year 12 or 13 student's mobile phone is seen outside of the Sixth Form Study Room, Quad or lesson without a teacher, it will be confiscated and placed in the Head of Sixth Form office. Students can collect their phone from this office at the end of the school day. The Head of Sixth Form has produced an acceptable use guide for mobile phones, which has been shared with all Sixth Form students and this must be adhered to at all times.

ClassCharts

Students will not be permitted to access ClassCharts on their phones at any time during the school day. Students are expected to carry a printed copy of their timetable at all times. These are reprinted and issued in registration at least once a half term. Students are expected to take responsibility for checking detention information outside of school hours and will not be permitted to use a smartphone to check this while on school site before the 15:20 bell. This information is listed on the student noticeboard by reception if needed.

Communication with Parents/Carers

If you have cause to contact your child during school hours, please contact the College office on 01926 812560. A message will be delivered to your child. If your child needs to contact you, they should visit the Student Office during breaktime or lunchtime only and ask for a text message to be sent or call to be made.

Our attendance procedure for medical needs remains unchanged: if students feel unwell, or have an accident, during social time, they should go to the Student Office where a trained first aider will take care of them. If they are unwell in lesson time their teacher will call for a staff member to come to their class to support. If they are too ill to remain at college, or if hospital treatment is necessary, you will be contacted to make appropriate arrangements or an ambulance called. Students must not use mobile phones to call home when ill.

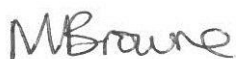
Overview

From January we will move from phones being “not seen, not heard” to being in student bags. If a phone is found in a students’ clothing this will be confiscated in line with the current procedures. This update is to support with students’ engagement and concentration as well as supporting their wellbeing and safeguarding.

Questions

If you have any questions about the practicalities of this updated procedure, please complete the form link below by Friday 12th December 2025. Questions will be reviewed and answers provided in a Frequently Asked Questions format before the end of the Autumn Term. [Parent Questions - Mobile Phones – Fill in form](#)

Yours sincerely,



Mrs M Browne
Designated Safeguarding Lead