COWLEY INTERNATIONAL COLLEGE

MOBILE PHONE POLICY

Status	**NON-STATUTORY**
Responsible Governors' Committee	Pupil Behaviour & Wellbeing
Responsible Person	Vice Principal
First approved	Summer 2024
Date of next review	Summer 2027

Contents:

About this policy

This policy, in conjunction with the [Behaviour Policy](#), the [Suspension and Exclusion Policy](#), and the [Safeguarding Policy](#) outlines the College procedures prohibiting the use of mobile phones throughout the College day. The policy has been developed with guidance from the DfE ([Mobile phones in schools Feb, 2024](#)) and in consultation with the parents, students and staff of Cowley International College. Where the text uses the word 'parent,' it should be read as inclusive of carers and any person with parental responsibility. The policy will be regularly reviewed, and adjustments will be made where necessary.

Aim

The aim of this policy is to detail the College's approach to prohibiting the use of mobile phones at College and throughout the College day. It includes the procedures which will ensure students are able to responsibly comply with the policy, whilst maintaining student safety on their journey to and from College. The policy details the roles and responsibilities of staff, students, visitors, and parents/carers.

Rationale

The College has a duty to create an environment that is calm, safe and free from distraction so that all students, whatever their background, can learn and thrive.

One of the greatest challenges facing all schools is the presence of mobile phones. Mobile phones risk unnecessary distraction, disruption and diversion. Phone use not only distracts the single student using the phone, but disrupts the lesson for a whole class, and diverts teachers' efforts away from learning. By removing mobile phones from the College day, we can create a safe space where students are protected from the risks and dangers associated with social media and cyber-bullying, as well as the peer pressure and possible stigma associated with owning what are often expensive devices.

The national evidence indicates that removing mobile phones from a school day changes the whole culture of a school for the better. The environment becomes safer, protecting students not only from the short-term distraction of a notification but also the background noise of their lives outside school. Without a mobile phone at school, students have the headspace and calm to focus on their lessons.

Today's children are growing up in an increasingly complex world, living their lives on and offline. This presents many exciting opportunities – but also challenges. By prohibiting mobile phones, we can create safe and calm environments free from distraction so all students can receive the very best education.

Principles

- Students will be permitted to bring their mobile phones into College for use off site before and after College.
- Mobile phones will be powered down at College*.
- Mobile phones will not be kept 'on person' at College and will be safely stored elsewhere, for example in bags, lockers, or at Student Services.
- Electronic devices such as smart watches and EarPods are banned from College.
- Sanctions will be applied by staff to ensure mobile phones are powered down, not used, not seen and not heard at College.
- Students will be taught the benefits of environments free from distraction.

*In this policy 'at College' means at any point on the site, and/or during the College day.

The role of staff

✓ Staff should consistently communicate and enforce the College policy on mobile phones use.

✓ Staff have an important role in explaining to students the risks associated with mobile phone use and the benefits of a mobile phone-free environment.

✓ Staff should not use their own mobile phone for personal reasons in front of students throughout the College day. There may be occasions where it is appropriate for staff to use a mobile phone, for example to use multi-factor authentication.

The role of parents

✓ Parents have an important role in supporting the College policy on prohibiting the use of mobile phones and are required to reinforce and discuss the policy at home as appropriate, including the risks associated with mobile phone use and the benefits of a mobile phone-free environment.

✓ Parents should ensure that their child knows to 'power down' their mobile phone at College.

✓ Parents should ensure necessary arrangements, such as collection time and location, are made in advance.

✓ When parents need to make urgent contact with their child during the school day, they should use the school office, where staff will support with relaying messages and facilitating contact.

✓ Parents should mirror the College expectations at home, and ensure students are provided with a mobile-free environment at key times, for example before bedtime.

The role of students

✓ Students should be clear on the policy prohibiting the use of mobile phones and the consequences and sanctions for not following it.

✓ Students should understand the risks associated with the use of mobile phones, both at College and more broadly, to ensure they understand the benefits of prohibiting mobile phone use.

✓ Students should understand the benefits of having a mobile phone-free environment and be encouraged to see such an environment as desirable and valuable.

✓ Students should ensure necessary arrangements, such as collection time and location, are made in advance.

✓ If students wish to urgently contact their families during the college day, students should speak to their Year Team or Senior Member of Staff who will support them.

✓ Sixth Form students must follow the policy when present on the 11-16 site.

The role of visitors

✓ Visitors should mirror the values of the College and ensure that, wherever possible, mobile phones are not seen, used or heard in front of students.

Sanctions

If a student breaches the policy, then their mobile phone will be confiscated and locked in Student Services. Students will be issued a C3 consequence (30 minute after College detention) and will be permitted to collect their phone at the end of their college day. Alternatively, parents can collect the mobile phone from college at the end of the day from the main office.

This sanction is applied if:

- A mobile phone is seen
- A mobile phone is heard
- A mobile phone is found 'on person' for example, not in a bag or locker
- A mobile phone is not powered down

The C3 sanction is escalated to an Inclusion Referral where students do not comply immediately with the confiscation process.

Escalation of sanctions

Where a student does not comply reasonably with the mobile phone sanction further consequences will be applied as per 'defiance' in the College consequence system.

Where there is a recurrent breach of the policy by a student, the mobile phone will not be returned to the student, and must be collected by a parent.

Where the College identifies a recurrent breach by a student, this may result in the student being required to hand their mobile phone to Student Services on arrival to College, and/or that the student is screened and searched for a mobile phone on entry into College.

Where such a plan is necessary, this will be determined by a member of the Senior Leadership Team.

Medical Conditions & specific needs

There are exceptional circumstances where reasonable adjustments for specific students are required. Students whose needs require use of their mobile phone for this purpose will be given specific guidance on the acceptable and permitted mobile phone use. For example, a student with diabetes might use continuous glucose monitoring with a sensor linked to their mobile phone to monitor blood sugar levels. Where a student uses a mobile phone for other reasons, College staff will apply appropriate sanctions as a deterrent.

Educational Visits

It is important that any educational experience is not disrupted by mobile phones.

Mobile phone use on visits will be subject to one of the following conditions:

- High Control - the 11-16 site policy will be followed
- Restricted Control - lead staff will approve the use of a mobile phone for the purpose of communicating timings and pick up arrangements
- Low Control – students will be able to use their mobile phone if they wish

For the purpose of this policy, visits have been split into 3 categories:

A. A visit during the normal College day which will return by the end of the College day
B. A visit that will be returning after the College day has ended (this includes sports fixtures)
C. An overnight visit

A. A visit during the normal College day which will return by the end of the College day

High Control

The 11-16 site policy will be followed; mobile phones will be powered down and stored in bags. Depending on the activity and requirements of the visit, the lead staff may approve the use of a mobile phone for an educational purpose. Parents who wish to contact their child should do so using the 11-16 site policy by contacting the College office.

B. A visit that will be returning after the College day has ended (this includes sports fixtures)

Restricted Control

Mobile phones are permitted to be switched on silent mode and students must ensure that they are not seen or heard. Lead staff will approve the use of a mobile phone for the purpose of communicating timings and pick up arrangements, however students must have permission to 'check' their device by staff at the visit who will choose reasonable and appropriate times for them to do this.

C. An overnight visit

The procedure for mobile phone use will be communicated in advance by lead staff. It is likely that time on the visit will be split into periods of High Control, Restricted Control, and Low Control.