

MOBILE PHONE & WEARABLE TECHNOLOGY RESPONSIBLE USE POLICY

Non Sibi Sed Aliis

Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.
Psalm 119, vs 105

"Avoid irreverent babble, for it will lead people into more and more ungodliness."
2 Timothy 2:16

This policy document and the content contained therein remains the responsibility of the Headteacher and Governing Body of the school. No amendments can be made without their express instructions and they remain the final arbiters in any matters relating to it.

Review Date: Summer Term 2026

Next Review Date: Summer Term 2027

Reviewed By: Mrs A Wilson

APPROVED BY THE HEADTEACHER – Spring Term 2026

MOBILE PHONE AND WEARABLE TECHNOLOGY RESPONSIBLE USE POLICY

POLICY STATEMENT

As a Church of England school, at Balshaw's we believe that every person is made in the image of God and should be treated with dignity, respect and as an individual. We are committed to providing a safe, happy and supportive environment where all Students can learn, achieve their potential and use their talents to the full.

Mobile phones and wearable smart technology are now common and can provide reassurance and safety before and after school. However, their use during the school day can cause disruption to learning, affect concentration and behaviour, increase safeguarding and online safety risks, contribute to bullying, and negatively affect wellbeing and social relationships.

From 10th September 2026, Balshaw's will be a mobile-phone-free school.

The use or access of mobile phones during the school day is prohibited, including during lessons, between lessons, breaktimes and lunchtimes. Smartwatches with phone functionality, AirPods and other wearable technology are also not permitted.

Students who need to bring a phone to school for use before or after school must keep it secured in a personal YONDR pouch. Students are responsible for bringing their pouch to school each day and keeping it in good working condition.

Any student found using prohibited technology during the school day will be dealt with in accordance with this policy. Where electronic communications involve harassment, threats or other potentially criminal behaviour, the Headteacher may seek advice from the Police.

The school requires all students to comply fully with this policy, which is designed to protect learning, promote positive behaviour and wellbeing, safeguard students and support positive social interaction throughout the school day.

Phones must be placed in the pouch on arrival to school and will be released at the end of the school day for the student to use outside of school. Sanctions will be given if a phone is seen during the school day. Smartwatches and other wearable technology such as AirPods are not allowed in school and sanctions will apply if students are found to be using these in school and they will be confiscated. The same conditions apply to all after school activities and residential trips (unless students have permissions from the trip leader to take photographs for memento purposes).

PURPOSE:

1. To clarify the Balshaw's CE High School's position on mobile phones and other wearable technology.
2. To ensure that staff, students and parents are fully conversant with the policy and understand the reasons for the policy.
3. To support our behaviour management policy, which aims for outstanding behaviour and safety of Students across the school.
4. To ensure that student welfare and safeguarding incidents associated with mobile phones are minimised.

AIMS OF THE POLICY

This policy aims to:

1. Improve concentration and engagement in lessons for Students, with fewer distractions.
2. Help Students achieve better academic outcomes as they remain focused on learning.

3. Increase face-to-face communication, helping young people develop confidence, social skills and stronger friendships.
4. Reduced opportunities for cyberbullying and the misuse of social media during the school day.
5. Improve mental wellbeing by reducing the pressure of constant notifications, messaging and online interactions.
6. Encourage more active and inclusive breaktimes, with students spending more time talking, playing and participating in school life.
7. Create a calmer school environment where Students are more present, attentive and engaged.

DAILY PROCESS FOR THOSE STUDENTS BRINGING A MOBILE PHONE TO SCHOOL

Start of the Day:

Students must bring their YONDR pouch to school with them each day.

- KS4 Students will enter school via the Senior Entrance gates by the mini roundabout on Church Road
- KS3 Students will enter school via the Junior Entrance near the bus stop on Church Road

As students arrive at school they will:

- 1) Turn their phone off.
- 2) Open their YONDR pouch by tapping against the unlocking magnet, located at each entrance.
- 3) Place their phone inside the pouch, securing the pouch in front of school staff.
- 4) Store it in their school bag for the day.

Students must not use mobile phones during lessons at breaktimes or lunchtimes, movement between lessons, in toilets or changing areas or on any educational or residential visits

End of the School day- As Students leave school they will:

- 1) Open their YONDR Pouch by tapping against the unlocking magnet.
- 2) Remove their phone.
- 3) Close their pouch (Important to stop the pin bending in their bag).
- 4) Keep their pouch in their school bag overnight.

Late Starters or Early Leavers -Students arriving late or leaving early will lock their pouch/unlock their pouch for their phones at the main office.

Unlocking Magnet

There will be 13 unlocking magnets positioned around school. 6 will be on the external path on the Junior entrance and exit, 4 will be on the Senior entrance and exit, one will be located on the wall at the main office and there will be several portable ones in the Pastoral Hub, with Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and one which can be used on school trips. They will all be open and available to use at the start and end of the day. The only one available during the school day will be the one in main office, all others around school will be locked.

Pouch Damage or Lost Pouch- If a student damages or loses their pouch, parents will be expected to replace the pouch within 5 days. The student's phone will be confiscated daily until the pouch is replaced, and a sanction will be applied. Sanctions will include: Detention, Internal Suspension or for repeated infringements a Fixed Term Suspension.

Checks will be made of the pouches - Examples of damage:

- Ripped fabric
- Cut
- Torn
- Bent/cut pin
- Signs of force to black button on flap
- Damage to the black ball
- Pouch opens without unlocking station

When a phone is confiscated, it will be stored in a case in a secure space in school and parents will be notified by the school office. If this happens, the following day, students must hand their phone back-in. If parents do not collect the phone, the phone will remain in school until the end of the week.

Exceptions and students who use their phone to access a medical app

At Balshaw's we recognise that, in exceptional circumstances, some students may require access to a mobile device for medical or safeguarding reasons. Any exceptions must:

1. Be agreed in advance with the Headteacher or Designated Safeguarding Lead
2. Be supported by appropriate evidence where required. Medical evidence will be provided by parent/carer to confirm this and a variation of the pouch will be made available and a designated place will be agreed to use it during the day
3. Include clear arrangements for appropriate use

Forgotten - If a student forgets their pouch, their phone will be confiscated. Please refer to the 'Lost Pouch' section above.

Phone seen or heard during the School day - If a student is found in possession of a phone outside a YONDR pouch, the phone will be confiscated, and a sanction will be issued. This is likely to be a suspension for 2 days.

Students whose parents do not purchase a YONDR pouch- Parents will be asked to sign an agreement between school and themselves that their child will not bring a mobile phone to school. The student will be wanded with a handheld scanner by a member of Senior Staff or SLT, daily. If they are found to have their phone on their person, they will be expected to hand it in, and a sanction will be issued. Refusal will be met with a sanction, most likely a fixed term suspension from school.

Random checks - Random searches and checks will take place daily across all year groups to enforce the policy.

Unlocking Magnets - If a student is found in possession of a pouch unlocking magnet, or a similar strength magnet used to unlock the pouches, this will be considered a serious offence and will lead to a fixed term suspension.

Accidental damage of a YONDR pouch- Students/parents should notify the school immediately explaining what has happened. If any damage is spotted at a pouch check, it will be considered intentional unless the student has raised it previously.

Forgetting to unlock a YONDR pouch on leaving school

All students will go past the unlocking stations at the exit points for school at the end of the school day. We believe students will want their phones back and most will not forget to unlock their pouches.

If they do arrive home with a phone in a pouch, they can either come back to school before 4pm to unlock it or they will have a phone free evening.

SCHOOL TRIPS AND EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

The school's mobile-free expectations apply to all school trips, visits, fixtures, residential and extra-curricular activities, whether they take place on or off the school site. Students are expected to have their mobile phone switched off and secured in their YONDR pouch for the duration of the activity. The pouch must remain closed and in the student's possession unless a member of staff authorises otherwise. This approach ensures that the school's mobile-free environment is maintained consistently and supports students to engage fully, safely and positively in activities without the distraction or inappropriate use of mobile devices. Where a student has an agreed individual requirement to access a mobile device for medical, safeguarding or other exceptional reasons, this will be managed in advance by the school and appropriate arrangements will be communicated to the student and staff. At the end of all trips, fixtures, visits or extra-curricular activities staff will allow students to unlock their pouch using a mobile unlocking magnet. This will also be used on all residential trips for the same purpose. The sanctions outlined above will still apply to any student found in breach of the school's policy when out of school on a trip or extra-curricular activity or residential.

WIDER GUIDELINES ABOUT MOBILE PHONE USE IN THE SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT

- At the end the school day students will be able to unlock their pouches. Once pouches are unlocked, students are allowed to use their phone to contact home relating to safety/transport home or following involvement in an after-school activity such as drama, music or sporting activity. In this instance staff should allow students to use their phone on the school site if this is appropriate
- For their own safety, students must not use their phone to listen to music if they are cycling to school. Students should also be mindful of traffic and dangerous situations if using their phone when walking to and from school.
- Parents are responsible for their child's use of their phone outside of school and any issues resulting from the phone when it is used by a 'minor'. When issues with mobile phones exist that involve serious misuse of the phone, transmitting images, cyber bullying etc; parents will be brought into school and the Malicious Communications Act will be explained to them. Balshaw's CE High School accepts no responsibility for loss or damage to any phones on school site. The school accepts no responsibility for replacing lost, stolen or damaged mobile phones or smartwatches. Equally, the school accepts no responsibility for students who lose or have their Mobile Phone/Smartwatches stolen whilst travelling to and from school. Parents/carers should be aware if their child takes a mobile phone/smartwatch to school it is assumed household insurance will provide the required cover in the event of loss or damage.
- If parents choose to send their child to school with a phone for safety reasons they are expected to adhere to the conditions of this policy and purchase a pouch.
- Staff are not permitted to use their mobile phones in public areas and will be asked to keep their phones in their bags/coats during the school day.
- On trips, if staff use their phone to take photographs for school social media purposes, the photographs must be deleted once the trip returns to school. The trip leader must ensure that this takes place and have sought prior authorisation from the Headteacher.
- Visitors are not allowed to use their mobile phones on school site.

- Smartwatches and wearable smart technology and ear buds are banned in school. If seen by a member of staff, they will be confiscated and only returned when a parent or a family member listed as a priority on school records comes to collect the item(s).

In order for this policy to be effective it is inextricably linked with other school policies. It should be read in conjunction with the following: Teaching and Learning Policy, Behaviour for Learning Policy, Safeguarding, Child Protection Policy and Procedures, Attendance and Punctuality Policy, Equality Policy, Anti-Bullying Policy, the Home School Agreement and Student Code of Conduct

WANDING

Balshaw's High School reserves the right to use handheld detection wands where there are reasonable grounds to suspect that a student may be in possession of a prohibited item, including a mobile phone or vape.

The use of such equipment will be undertaken appropriately, proportionately and in accordance with Department for Education (DfE) guidance on searching, screening and confiscation. The use of a wand is intended as a screening measure and does not constitute a physical search. Any screening or subsequent search will always be conducted by two members of staff, one of whom will be a member of the Senior Leadership Team. There will always be a member of staff of the same sex as the gender of the child being searched or wanded. Students will be treated with dignity, respect and sensitivity throughout the process, with due consideration given to their age, individual needs and any vulnerabilities.

Parents or carers may be informed where appropriate, particularly where prohibited items are identified. A record of any search undertaken and its outcome will be maintained in accordance with the school's safeguarding, behaviour and searching procedures, and any confiscated items will be dealt with in line with school policy. Any vapes found will be handed over to Lancashire Police.

Any student found with a phone after having been wanded will have the phone confiscated and a sanction will be issued following this policy.

SANCTIONS FOR INFRINGING SCHOOL RULES ON MOBILE PHONES AND SMARTWATCHES

Students who infringe the rules set out in this document will face having their phone/smartwatch confiscated by teachers. If the mobile phone/smartwatch is being used inappropriately the student will have the item confiscated and must hand it to a teacher when requested. Failure to do so will incur a sanction separately most likely, to be a Fixed Term suspension.

Mobile phones are to be switched off, locked in a YONDR pouch and placed in school bags. It is not permissible to keep the phone in a blazer or skirt/trouser pocket and the phone must be switched off.

SLT and Heads of House will ensure this process is carried out daily every morning and will use wands to check for mobile phones if they suspect a child has failed to follow school rules on mobile phones and smartwatches.

If a student is suspected of handing in or using a dummy/burner phone, they will be required to switch the device on in the presence of staff to verify its operation.

NB: Any mobile devices confiscated in school can only be collected by a parent or carer who is listed on the student's official school records.

Failing to adhere to the policy	Consequences
1	Phone goes in secure storage for 2 overnight periods (school working days)
2	Phone goes in safe for 3 overnight periods (school working days)
3	Phone goes in safe for 5 overnight periods (school working days)
4	One day in the Internal Suspension Unit
5	A Fixed Term Suspension
At any time, any infringements of the mobile phone/smartwatch policy may result in the Headteacher issuing a ban on bringing a mobile phone/smartwatch to school for the student	Student would be banned from bringing their phone to school and would have to be checked daily using a wand
If a student continues to persistently flout school rules on mobile phones in school after all sanctions have been issued above	A parental meeting will be arranged between the Headteacher and parent and the Headteacher will consider a further Fixed Term Suspension or time in another school's Inclusion Unit as an Off-Site Direction for continual infringement of school rules

Any further stages will result in a meeting with the student, their parents/carers, the headteacher and a member of the Governing Body

Lost or damaged phone pouches must be replaced within 5 days at a cost of £22, made payable via ParentPay. A student will only receive their pouch once payment is made and the pouch should then last them the duration of their high school life if it is taken care of and the guidance in this policy is followed on its care. School will not issue refunds for returned pouches and will not refund if your child leaves school.

If a student has 'no pouch' on 5+ occasions, this will be deemed as lost and will need to be replaced at the cost above.

As set out in the previous section, failure to heed the rules set out in this document may result in an alleged incident – of a serious nature – being referred to the Police for investigation. In such cases, the parent or carer would be notified immediately.

Balshaw's CE High School may conduct screening without consent were permitted by legislation and DfE guidance, particularly where there are safeguarding or behavioural concerns. Staff may search, examine or confiscate items in accordance with their statutory powers and safeguarding responsibilities. Where required, Students may be screened using a handheld wand device.

The legal basis on which the school is operating relates to sections 91 and 94 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006. Current DfE guidance expressly states that headteachers may confiscate phones "for whatever length of time they deem proportionate". [DfE: Mobile phones in schools](#) and [Education and](#)

[Inspections Act 2006](#). Where a mobile phone is confiscated, Balshaw's C.E High School may legally retain it until the end of the school day, require collection by a parent or carer, or retain it for a longer period, including overnight or over a weekend, where the headteacher considers any of the above to be a reasonable and proportionate response to the breach. Each student will be treated on an individual basis and any safeguarding, medical, disability or travel circumstances will be considered.

NB – The Headteacher is the final arbiter of all sanctions given for use of a mobile phone in school. Sanctions will be applied to achieve a consistent approach to misdemeanours relating to inappropriate mobile phone use for whatever is considered a reasonable and proportionate response to the breach of the policy.

EMERGENCIES

If a student needs to contact their parents/carers in exceptional circumstances they will be allowed to use a school phone. If a parent needs to contact children urgently, they should phone the school office and a message will be relayed promptly.

Parents/carers are reminded that in cases of emergency, the school office remains a vital and appropriate point of contact and can ensure your child is reached quickly and assisted in any relevant way. Passing on messages through school reception also reduces the likelihood of disrupting lessons inadvertently.

Students are not permitted to contact home directly to ask parents to collect them if they are feeling unwell. This needs to be done via the school office where a member of school staff will contact parents. If a student does this or contacts home to let parents know about any issues during the school day they will receive a sanction and the absence will not be authorised.

RESPONSIBILITIES

Students are responsible for:

1. Following the expectations set out in this policy
2. Ensuring devices remain switched off and out of sight in the YONDR pouch throughout the school day
3. Respecting the learning environment of others
4. Ensuring their pouch is looked after daily and does not get damaged or lost
5. Respecting the unlocking stations around school so they do not get damaged

Parents and Carers are expected to:

1. Support the school's mobile phone free approach and any sanctions imposed on their child
2. Communicate through the school office via telephone on 01772 421009 or email enquiries@balshaws.org.uk where communication is essential
3. Reinforce the reasons with their child for creating a safe, calm and focused learning environment where your children can thrive both academically and socially
4. Agree to sign a contract with school if they are unable to purchase a YONDR pouch ensuring that their child will not bring a phone to school daily

Staff will:

1. Support students in understanding the reasons behind the policy
2. Model appropriate professional use of technology and follow the staff mobile phone and smart devices policy
3. Apply the policy consistently and fairly

4. Report and record any pupil seen to be using their phone during the school day

Staff are not permitted to use their mobile phone in any public area or in front of any pupil throughout the school day.

Visitors will be told that we are a mobile phone free school and will be asked to turn their phones onto silent and told not to use their phone whilst on the school site.

STAFF GUIDANCE FOR SAFEGUARDING STUDENTS

1. Staff should not contact students or parents from their personal mobile phone in or out of school time or give their mobile phone number to students or parents. If a member of staff needs to make telephone contact with a pupil, a school telephone should be used in the staff room.
2. Staff should not share personal contact details through social media and messaging apps.
3. Staff should regularly monitor and update their privacy settings on social media sites
4. Staff should never accept a 'friend request' or respond to any posts that may deliberately or inadvertently include them but inform their line manager or Senior Leader of the contact.
5. Staff should never send to, or accept from, colleagues or students, texts or images that could be viewed as inappropriate.
6. Staff are not permitted to take photos or videos of students or anything else (e.g., work) that might identify the pupil.
7. If photos or videos are being taken as part of the school curriculum or for promotional purposes, then school equipment must be used unless agreed in advance by the Headteacher in specific emergency circumstances. If this agreement is given, boundaries, protocols for supervision and image deletion will be agreed with the Headteacher and confirmation of protocols being followed given.
8. In circumstances such as outings and off-site visits, staff will agree with their Line Manager the appropriate use of personal mobile phones in the event of an emergency.
9. Staff should not allow themselves to be photographed by a pupil(s).
10. Using a personal mobile for work purposes may in some circumstances, be appropriate. Where possible this should always be agreed with a line manager or Senior Leader in advance. Such circumstances may include, but are not limited to:
11. Emergency evacuations or parental contact in emergencies (mobile phones setting that allow for the number not to be identified should be used)
12. This guidance should be seen as a safeguard for members of staff and the school. Any breach of school policy may result in disciplinary action against that member of staff.

MONITORING AND REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner in response to changes in legislation, DfE guidance or school needs.

The Governing Body and SLT will monitor the implementation and effectiveness of the policy, including any updates linked to statutory Government requirements and Ofsted expectations.

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