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ASPIRE ACADEMY MOBILE PHONES AND DEVICES POLICY

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2025-2026

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## Introduction

Mobile phones and other personal devices now include advanced functions such as integrated cameras, instant messaging, mobile internet, social networking access (e.g., Snapchat, WhatsApp, TikTok), and more. These functions can disrupt learning, negatively affect discipline, and most critically, pose **safeguarding risks**, including cyberbullying and inappropriate content sharing.

This policy is built in line with statutory and government guidance:

- *DfE Mobile Phones in Schools: Guidance for Schools on Prohibiting the Use of Mobile Phones* (February 2024)
- *Keeping Children Safe in Education* (2023)
- *DfE Searching, Screening and Confiscation* (July 2022)
- Education and Inspections Act 2006, Section 91
- Education Act 1996
- JCQ Instructions for Conducting Examinations (2024)

## Prohibited Items

Banned on Site During the School Day, including extracurricular activities:

- **Mobile phones**
- **Smart watches (e.g., Apple Watch, Samsung Galaxy Watch, Fitbit with connectivity)**
- **Earphones / earbuds / wireless headphones (e.g., AirPods, Beats, etc.)**
- **Any device capable of receiving, recording, or transmitting audio, images, or video**

These items are **not to be used, seen, or heard** during the school day, including extracurricular activities.

## Student Responsibilities

### "Out, Off & Away" Routine

To support clear routines and prevent misuse, students must follow this daily procedure during morning line-up or indoor form time:

- **Out:** Take phone out of pocket or bag
- **Off:** Switch the device off completely (not silent or airplane mode)
- **Away:** Place the device in their bag (not in clothing or visible on person)

Failure to follow this will result in **immediate confiscation**.

### During the School Day (8:30am–3:00pm or later if attending an extracurricular activity)

- Phones and smart devices must **remain switched off and out of sight**.
- Devices may **not be used to check time, messages, notifications, timetables**, or for any other reason.
- Students may **not use phones for music, calls, photographs, videos, or social media** at any time.
- Smart watches must be **left at home or powered off and stored in bags**.

There are some school-owned devices used under staff supervision (e.g., for SEND or curriculum access). These are school-owned, monitored, and not personal property.

### Acceptable Exceptions (By Staff Permission Only)

Students who need to make a call or access their phone for urgent reasons may only do so by:

- Speaking to a staff member and requesting to use a **school phone**; or
- Gaining **explicit permission** from their pastoral office to temporarily power on a device

### Medical Exceptions

Students with a diagnosed medical condition that requires the use of a mobile device to monitor their health — such as diabetes (for glucose monitoring apps) or epilepsy (for seizure detection apps) — are permitted to carry and use their device for this purpose only. These exceptions must be approved in advance by the school, with supporting medical documentation and agreement from the Senior Leadership Team.

### Exams

During formal exams, e.g., Yr 11 Pre-Public exam as well during all external exams e.g., the GCSE exams, all students are required to hand in any electronic devices including their mobile devices and smart watches. These are returned to students once the exam has concluded. This is inline with the JCQ ruling on conducting examinations. Unauthorised possession in an exam is considered a serious breach and is subject to malpractice reporting procedures.

## Sanctions and Confiscation Procedures

### Sanction Ladder Per Half Term

Offence	Sanction
<b>First</b> (in any half-term)	Confiscation until 3:00pm. Lunchtime detention. Student collects from Attendance Office.
<b>Second</b>	Phone retained. Parent must attend a meeting with the Head of Year to collect the phone. <b>After school detention 3pm-4pm.</b> For the remainder of the half term, the phone must be handed in each morning and collected at the end of the school day.
<b>Third or serious misuse</b>	Headteacher may impose a <b>ban on bringing a device to school.</b> Searches will be conducted. <b>Internally Suspended for a period of time.</b>

### C5 (Serious Incident) – Misuse of Phones/Devices

Any of the following will result in a C5 sanction or higher. Please see the behaviour policy for full details of sanctions that may apply, which can include suspension, off-site direction, placement at another school, or permanent exclusion. Serious misuse includes:

- Filming, photographing, or audio recording staff or students, or sharing such images/recordings.
- Attempting to share harmful content.
- Accessing inappropriate material.
- Using a phone in direct defiance of staff instruction.

**Important Note:** “I was checking the time” or “I was using it for the timetable” are not valid excuses. Classrooms and corridors are equipped with visible clocks. Students are responsible for knowing their timetable.

### Confiscation Procedure & Logging

- Staff must deliver confiscated devices to the Attendance Office **promptly**
- Devices are logged and placed in the **school safe**
- A **text message** is sent home to inform parents of the confiscation
- All incidents are recorded on **Class Charts**
- On Call will be notified by the member of staff to confiscate the phone and place it in the safe in the Attendance Office.
- Lost or damaged items **are not the responsibility of the school** when confiscated in line with policy

### Refusal to Comply

- Any student who **refuses to hand over a phone or device** when instructed will be removed from lessons.
- They will be placed in **Isolation for defiance** and issued a **1-hour after-school detention.**

- If refusal continues, the student may be **removed from mainstream learning**, and the **device ban extended**.
- Further refusal may result in a **fixed-term suspension**.

### Device Storage and Tracking

- All confiscated devices will be placed in **clearly labelled envelopes**, locked in the school safe.
- A record of the incident will be **logged on Class Charts**.
- Parents will receive a **text message confirmation** on the day of confiscation.

### Searching and Legal Justification

In accordance with:

- **Searching, Screening and Confiscation Guidance (DfE, July 2022)**
- **Mobile Phones in Schools: Guidance for Schools on Prohibiting the Use of Mobile Phones (DfE, February 2024)**
- **Education and Inspections Act 2006, Section 91**
- **Education Act 1996**
- **School Behaviour Policy**

The school has a **legal right and statutory authority to search for, confiscate, retain, and dispose** of mobile phones and other prohibited devices where reasonable.

Aspire Academy has the legal right to search and confiscate mobile phones and related devices under:

- *Searching, Screening and Confiscation: Advice for Headteachers, School Staff and Governing Bodies* (DfE, July 2022)
- *Mobile Phones in Schools* Guidance (DfE, February 2024), **Page 10** states:

*"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. Headteachers can and should identify mobile phones and similar devices as something that may be searched for in their school behaviour policy."*

**Aspire Academy's Behaviour Policy** identifies mobile phones, smart watches, and related devices as **prohibited items**, and as such, they **can and will be searched for and confiscated** when seen, heard, or suspected of being used.

This ensures:

- The enforcement of clear routines and expectations
- The protection of teaching time, privacy, and safeguarding
- That misuse is addressed swiftly and lawfully

Confiscated phones are stored securely, and the school holds **no liability for loss or damage** if a phone is **lawfully confiscated under these powers**, as confirmed by DfE guidance.

### Parental Role and Communication

Parents/Carers should:

- Reinforce the policy and help children understand why it is in place.
- Avoid calling or texting students during school hours; instead, contact the **school office**.
- Understand that **phones will not be returned upon request during the school day**.
- Respect that confiscation is **lawful and proportionate** as backed by the DfE (Feb 2024).

### Extract from DfE Guidance (2024):

“Parents and carers must not come to school to demand return of a device. The school has discretion to retain a phone for as long as deemed proportionate.”

### Safeguarding Assurance

Confiscation of a phone **does not create a safeguarding risk**. In cases where a child needs to contact home:

- They will be allowed to use a **school phone at Reception or Attendance Office**.
- Parents are expected to **arrange travel and communication plans in advance**.

Where a genuine safeguarding concern exists, this will be reviewed **individually and sensitively**.

### Clean Slate & Ban Reviews

Each half term, all students begin with a **‘clean slate’** unless:

- They have been banned from bringing a phone to school, in which case the ban will be reviewed by the Headteacher.
- Any return of privilege will be **conditional on compliance and behaviour**.

### Staff Procedures: Confiscation & Logging

- The confiscating staff member must take the phone to the **Attendance Office at the earliest opportunity**.
- Staff must **log the incident** in Class Charts immediately.
- Phone is placed in the **safe with identification details**.

### Summary: Core Rules for Students

- Phones **must be switched off** and placed **out of sight** from **8:30am to 3:00pm (or later if attending an extracurricular activity)**.
- Smart watches and earphones **must not be worn or used**.
- Devices **seen, heard, or used** will be **confiscated immediately**.
- Repeated or serious breaches will lead to **device bans, detentions, isolation, or suspension**.
- Devices will not be charged in school either with their own cable & plug, power bank or using school equipment.

### Policy Enforcement and Support

- This policy will be shared during assemblies and parental newsletters.
- Staff and students will be trained on the routine: **Out, Off, Away**
- Posters will be visible around school as a reminder.
- A clear culture of **readiness, respect, and safety** underpins this policy.