



21st May 2025

Dear Parents and Carers,

Re: Mobile Phone Collection Protocol – From May Half Term

At Longbenton High School we are committed to fostering a calm, respectful, and focused environment that supports student learning, wellbeing and healthy social interaction. While we recognise that mobile phones can offer useful tools for communication and learning, they can also be a significant source of distraction and anxiety during the school day. You will remember that I wrote to you before Easter to give you advance warning of changes to our mobile phone policy from June onwards and asked parents to take part in a survey (the outcomes and comments summary from this are at the end of this letter, starting on page 9).

As a school, our position is: we do not feel a smartphone is necessary prior to Year 9. I would urge interested parents to look at the Smartphone Free Childhood community which is aligned with this position; the link for our region is here: <https://linktr.ee/SFCtyneandwear> You can also sign the pact for our school [here](#). (Please let me know if you would be interested in being part of a parent forum or steering group for our school).

To support our students in maintaining focus and building positive habits, we are introducing a new **Mobile Phone Collection Protocol** beginning after May half term. This system will **require students to hand in their phones each morning and collect them at the end of the school day**. Your child will be used to this from past schools - most if not all local primaries and middle schools have a hand in policy.

Outlined below are the details regarding how this will work. Please note that this does not apply to current Year 11, who are due to go on study leave, but we would ask that they continue to follow the 'off and away' approach so as not to cause conflict with other year groups. We will also be writing to Sixth Form parents separately about how we want our Year 12 and 13 students to behave regarding phone use in school, as they will be permitted to keep phones with them.

This new protocol is designed to:

- ➔ Reduce classroom distractions and thus improve behaviour further
- ➔ Promote positive mental health and healthy phone habits by limiting screen time
- ➔ Prevent incidents of inappropriate phone use during the school day (including students asking to go to the toilet to check phones)

The daily procedure will be as follows (see also our [FAQs starting on page 4](#) of this letter)

- ➔ **Students will hand in their phones to their form tutor between 8:45 and 9:00am.**
- ➔ Phones must be switched off or in airplane mode before being handed in.



Longbenton High School

- Students will line up alphabetically and place their phone in their designated numbered slot within a locked filing cabinet storage box. They will have the same number/slot every day.
- The cabinet storage box is not moveable (they have been fixed in place). They will be locked and keys will be kept in a wall-mounted key safe in the tutor room. They will be safe and secure.
- Students arriving after 8.45am will hand in their phone to the Pastoral Manager/SLT on duty in the AP and will come into school via the AP door. Students arriving after 9.00am will hand their phone into the Main Office and come into school via Main Reception. Students trying to avoid going to form rooms in order to avoid handing phones in will be picked up by on-call staff and taken to the Main Hall.
- **Phones will be returned by form tutors at the end of afternoon registration, ready for students to leave at 3:15pm.** Students who arrived late that morning will collect their phones from Student Reception at 3.15pm.
- On assembly days, phones will be returned by tutors after assembly (they will return to form rooms prior to 3.15pm).

We will of course have systems in place to account for students leaving early for appointments and needing to collect phones before they leave; students going on trips etc. If leaving early for appointments, students will need to go to Student Reception first to collect their pass/slip and to get staff to collect their phone.

Student Expectations

- Phones must **not** be on a student's person at any point during the school day, including breaks and lunchtimes.
- Students **cannot** use their phones to pay for food; alternative methods (e.g. contactless cards, MCAS codes, facial recognition) must be used.
- Phones must not be accessed until students have **left the school premises**, unless given permission by a staff member.

Consequences for Non-Compliance

Issue	Consequence
Refusal to hand in a phone to tutor or other member of staff	Student may be sent to RESET for the day. Parents/carers will be notified. Students will be searched by senior staff if they claim they do not have a phone with them but we have reasonable proof to believe that they are concealing a phone.
Use of phone during the day	Immediate confiscation. Student will be placed in RESET for 5 lessons. Further consequences may apply. Parents informed.



Longbenton HIGH SCHOOL

Repeated breaches	Escalation to senior leadership, possible internal suspension, parent meeting, and restriction on bringing phone to school at all. Student subject to daily searches on arrival to school.
Multiple phones/smartwatches/airpods used to bypass rules	Subject to confiscation and further sanctions as above. Students may be subject to daily searches.

Exceptional Circumstances

If your child has a medical need that requires access to a phone during the school day, eg a diabetes monitor linked to an app, please contact the year team to discuss this in advance. A written agreement and medical evidence will be required if we do not already have this information.

Communication During the School Day

We understand the desire for some parents to check in with their child during the day. However, this can place unnecessary pressure on students and staff. If you need to get in touch with your child during school hours, please call the **school office**. Likewise, students can request to use a school phone if they need to contact home.

Liabilities

While the school will take reasonable steps to ensure the safety and security of collected phones, students leave their phones at their own risk. The school does not accept responsibility for loss, theft, or damage to phones unless it can be shown that the school has been negligent in its handling or storage of the devices. We recommend that phones be clearly labeled / identifiable and protected in a sturdy case. By continuing to send your child to school with a phone, you acknowledge and accept this protocol. Students can of course choose not to bring their phone to school.

We appreciate your support in helping us uphold a school culture that values respect, wellbeing, and focused learning. Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions or concerns.

Kind regards

Kelly Holbrook

Headteacher

Student/Parent FAQs

Mobile Phone Protocol: Starting after May Half Term (June 2025)

We want school to be a calm, focused and friendly place for everyone. To help with that, we're changing how mobile phones are managed during the day. Here's everything you need to know.

1. What time do I have to hand in my phone?



You must hand in your phone during **morning registration (8:45 – 9:00am)** to your form tutor.

2. What do I need to do before handing in my phone?



Make sure your phone is **switched off or on airplane mode** before giving it to your tutor.

3. How will my phone be stored?



Phones are stored in a **locked box/cabinet**, and each student has their own numbered slot. Once phones are collected, the key is safely stored away until the end of the day. The locked cabinets are fixed and can't be moved. No one will be able to access them during the day.

4. What happens if I refuse to hand in my phone?



If you don't hand your phone in, staff may use metal detectors to check. If you still refuse, you'll be taken to **RESET**, and your parents will be contacted. You won't be allowed into lessons until your phone is handed in.

5. What if my parents want me to keep my phone?



Your parent or carer will be invited to meet with school leaders. This is a whole-school rule and applies to everyone, unless there's a medical exception (see below).

6. I'm running late – what do I do with my phone?



- If you're late **before 9:00am**, enter school via the AP entrance (side of building towards the car park) and hand in your phone to the Pastoral Manager/SLT on duty. They will give you a ticket with a number - you will need this to collect your phone at the end of the day.
 - If you arrive **after 9:00am**, you will hand it in at **main reception**.
 - If you are late, you'll collect it from **student reception** at the end of the day at 3.15pm. Do not go to student reception until the end of afternoon form - you will not be able to collect it until then.
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7. Can I use my phone during the day?



No. You can only use your phone **after 3:15pm**, unless you've been given permission for a serious reason (like a medical condition). You must wait until you are out of the building before accessing your phone. If you are going to an after school club 3.15-4.00pm your phone must stay switched off and away in your blazer pocket or bag.

8. What if I'm caught using my phone during the school day?



Your phone will be taken straight away, and you'll go into **RESET for 5 lessons**. There may be further consequences depending on the situation (eg Reset or Super Reset).

9. What if I try to bring two phones or hide one?



This is treated very seriously. You could face daily searches, be suspended, be placed in RESET, be banned from bringing a phone to school etc.

10. What about smartwatches, AirPods or similar devices?



If you're using them to connect to your phone or break the rules, they'll be confiscated too. The same consequences apply.

11. Can I have my phone for medical or family reasons?



Only if it's a **medical reason** (eg diabetes monitor) and you have agreed permission from your **Year Leader or Assistant Head**. This will be part of your health care plan. Otherwise, you can use a school phone from student reception to call home if needed.

12. What if my parent wants to contact me during the day?



They must **call the school office**. You can also ask to use a **school phone** at student reception if you need to contact home.



13. When will I get my phone back?

Phones will be returned during afternoon registration so you're ready to leave at **3:15pm**.



14. What happens on assembly days?

You will return to your form room at the end of assembly to collect your phone by 3.15pm.

15. What if I need to leave school early (e.g. for an appointment)?



Or if I am leaving to go on a school trip?

Go to **student reception**. A member of staff will **escort you to your tutor room** to get your phone. You **can't** go and collect it yourself or interrupt lessons. **If you are going out on a trip**, the trip leader will coordinate the collection and return of your phones before you leave the school site.

16. Why can't we just keep our phones in a lockable pouch like I have seen in the news?



You might have seen lockable pouches like Yondr pouches mentioned in the news (example [here](#) and [here](#)). These are expensive (£15-25 per student), a cost we cannot afford and a cost we did not want to put onto families.

17. What happens if I have a reflection (detention) after school?

You will have your phone returned with everyone else during form time but you will be required to hand your phone in again in the reflection room.

18. What happens if I have been taken to Reset during the day and I am still there during afternoon form time - how do I get my phone back?

We will make sure your phone gets back to you in Reset by 3.15pm.

19. What's happening to get all of this ready?

- You'll be reminded how to pay for lunch using your **MCAS code or card** - remember **you can no longer use your phone to pay for food**.
 - **New lock boxes and phone storage cabinets** are being installed to store phones and keys securely.
 - Your **parents are being sent a letter** with this information.
 - You'll be having **assemblies and tutor time** to go through this.
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20. Why is the school doing this?

- Too many students are going to toilets to use their phones secretly during the day, which we cannot monitor/stop. This will be a further step in improving behaviour.
- We think students should be supported to have healthy screen breaks.
- We want to prevent the risk of you being filmed or recorded secretly by someone else.
- The government is supportive of schools becoming a mobile free environment.
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/mobile-phones-in-schools>



Longbenton HIGH SCHOOL

Parent Survey Feedback

Before Easter we asked parents for their views on smartphone use - we had 126 responses, almost all were positive/in support. The main concern was access to phones to and from school. Below is a summary of the comments and feedback raised. Thank you to those who took the time to leave comments.

Comments	Our response
<p>Some parents are worried about safety and travel to and from school eg</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- My child uses his phone as he makes his own to and from school and he has a tracker on so I can watch him and keep track of his whereabouts travelling to and from school.- My child will continue to have her phone on her for her own safety.- I like to be able to track their location eg using Life360.	<p>Students can still have their phone for the journey to and from school. Their safety during the journey therefore will not be affected.</p> <p>Students are safe in the building: we increased our security over Easter with an additional fencing and gates and more timed maglocks on doors. Parents need to trust that when we are acting <i>in loco parentis</i> during school hours we are keeping children safe.</p>
<p>Some parents are concerned about children with SEND and/or anxiety and their ability to contact directly during the day</p>	<p>Children in school should not be making direct contact during the day - but we know this is happening in toilets and out of sight of staff. Children need to use Student Reception to contact home - this is one of the functions of Student Reception.</p>
<p>Some parents are worried about phones needed for medical reasons eg</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- My daughter needs her phone with her and uses it to monitor her diabetes medical treatment	<p>We can accommodate this - students who use phones for medical reasons can have an exemption.</p>
<p>Some parents wondered why the current system didn't seem to be working and why we needed to move to collecting phones in. Eg</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- I would like to understand why the children causing the problem are not disciplined and if they are why is it not effective. I suspect children deliberately disregarding school rules will continue to do so regardless of a ban.- Why are the rules being changed to 'punish' everyone just because some people can't follow the rules?- If students are abusing the current rules then clamping down on those breaking them should be the way forwards, not an outright ban.	<p>The vast majority do follow our current 'off and away' rules. But we have seen a rise since Covid in parents wanting to contact their child at all times. This sometimes makes it hard for students who feel the need to go somewhere in school where they can't be seen eg toilets to check their phone throughout the day. We can't 'police' this. The corresponding rise in students asking to go to the toilet during every lesson means monitoring our corridors has become more difficult and time consuming for staff.</p> <p>We have also had incidents where students have filmed in toilets or stairwells for TikTok. We have also had incidents where students have tried to film or photograph other students or staff covertly. This creates a safety and safeguarding issue for everyone. Government guidance on behaviour and phones in schools has also changed enabling us to take this further step.</p>
<p>Some parents wondered about rules for staff?</p>	<p>There is already an expectation that staff do not use personal mobile phones around school. We would ask that staff adhere to this. In short - staff should not have their phones out around the school site and should not be using phones in front of students / where they can be seen by students. This includes when on duty and when purchasing food from the kitchen or vending machines. We don't want to be accused of double standards.</p>
<p>Some parents are concerned about how children can contact home re after school clubs if plans change.</p>	<p>Students collect their phones at 3.15 so will be able to use them to contact home if plans change. We have taken on board</p>



Longbenton HIGH SCHOOL

	comments regarding communication about after school clubs to parents during the school day needing to be better.
Comments	Our response
<p><i>One comment was about the roll-out eg "This will be another poorly executed exercise from the school."</i></p> <p><i>Another parent asked about logistics eg "I'd be very interested in knowing how handing mobile phones in to school can be safely and confidently managed, i.e., mobiles not being mixed up, time spent doing this task with children each day (I can't imagine it will be an easy task!)"</i></p>	<p>Ouch! We don't feel we 'execute poorly'. Hopefully the protocol and FAQs are clear. It has been trialled. We have spoken to other schools who do this. We have carried out a thorough 'pre-mortem' plan. We will welcome any further feedback after the half term about things that parents feel don't work as well as they should or any loopholes in the system that appear.</p>
<p>Other general comments</p> <p>I think it's a good idea to have no mobile phone usage in school. There are times we message to sort arrangements after school or top dinner money up but actually it means the kids & parents need to be more organised!</p> <p>I would rather him not have a smartphone. He has become too reliant on it even if the reasons for going on seem positive (Duolingo etc.) I worry about YouTube shorts, and being sent inappropriate content, but I don't want him feeling he is excluded from conversations with friends. I would rather smartphones be banned all together for children and I hope the ban does come into place.</p> <p>They are part of modern life and have many useful applications but its about getting a balance. I would be more than happy to see a total ban in schools and work places.</p> <p>I feel my son is on the phone way too much, however his general knowledge is excellent on many topics and has been learned through the phone, so I think there are educational positives. We constantly remind him that you need to check information and that algorithms ensure you read more of the same material even when it is incorrect. I am sure my boys will have been fed misogynistic and pornographic material, however at this point in time we do not appear to have a problem with this.</p> <p>Happy to support the school in removing phones.</p> <p>Absolutely agree with the ban. Strong, decisive action is needed to control the absolute carnage phones do to childhood. 100% support the phone ban.</p> <p>I agree that there should be a no phone (at all) policy at school.</p> <p>Fully support going screen-free during school time.</p> <p>I would prefer it if children didn't have access to them.</p> <p>I feel children shouldn't have smartphone until they're 16 years old. They are a plague on our children, rotting their minds. They do not need phones at such a young age as they negatively impact their self esteem and view of the world.</p> <p>We have always kept a tight reign on our child's phone and iPad usage. They do not have any social media access and they have to request permission to download any app. I do believe that we have done everything we can to help protect our child but we are always open to more help and information</p> <p>We employ screen time and screen safety on the phone as well as age restrictions and ask to buy, this surprises my child's friends as they have no restrictions.</p>	



Longbenton HIGH SCHOOL

Parents should be more involved with their child's usage even if this means checking messages and search/watch histories.

I would welcome a ban in school.

Glad LBHS is banning phones.

I would be happy to support a system where phones are locked away during the school day.

I think phones have become something they were never meant to be. I feel in this day and age, there is a need for my child to be traceable and contactable and also for him to have the means to contact an adult in an emergency. I also like that he can communicate with friends outside of school. However, this all comes with unlimited access to everything and, my scary of all, addiction to the device. I welcome any reform that reduces the reliance/addictive nature of screens.

Surely smartphone use is largely an extension of how children are brought up at home. If a parent allows unrestricted smart phone access, chances are a similar blasé approach is taken with the child's general upbringing. No amount of controls taken at school is likely to help overall. That said, I agree phone use at school should be discouraged in lesson time. A collection box at the front of the classroom might be an approach where children deposit their phones at the beginning of each lesson. In reality smartphones and technology in general are just facts of life. It could be argued that removing their use completely could disadvantage children as they can be used for more than the likes of Facebook etc.

I think the current climate of looking at mobile phone usage within schools and impacts on the culture and learning is a very timely and a good thing. I think mobile phones should be banned from schools or certainly restricted during the school day.

We have recently limited smartphone use in our children's bedrooms after we realised how much time was being spent mindlessly scrolling. Our eldest (Y8) was spending a lot of time isolated in her room and although we trust her, we did not always know what she was looking at. Phones now stay downstairs after 5pm (with limited access e.g. if they want to message/call a friend) and the children pick them up in the morning. They do need to take them to school so that they can contact us if needed and let us know when they get home but we absolutely support a ban in school. My daughter says that currently some children use them in the school toilets, causing a long queue.

Wish they didn't have them. Full stop. Like being able to see their location and to contact them but apart from that nothing positive because social media is destroying way of life for everyone.

I wish they were banned completely. I think the school is taking a very positive step!

With the right education, awareness along with appropriate parental controls and app time limits, as a family we've experienced no negative impacts with our child and their smart phone device.

I think it's great you're going phone free and I totally support you doing this.

I believe it's an excellent idea to hand them in at the start of the day as the temptation to look at them is overwhelming for some young people. One of the concerns that might come up is anxiety regarding not being able to contact parents if they are ill. Young people often feel that they are dismissed if they say that they are unwell and end up contacting parents themselves. I think reassurance that they will be supported if they feel unwell/struggling, will calm nerves of parents and children. Might be worth acknowledging this as to prevent parents complaining and this will be especially important for young people with emotionally based school non attendance. If this will delay their progress would be worth writing something into your guidance document to cover EBSNA.

We fully support the decision to go phone free, we feel that use of smart phones within a school setting can make students and staff vulnerable. Students and staff have a right to feel safe and secure in their learning/ work environment.



Longbenton HIGH SCHOOL

Its very very challenging as parents adjusting to a growing child's changing needs in relation to smart tech usage and in conjunction with all the external pressures on them and their developing brains and hormones!! Not wanting to over restrict but needing and wanting to hero them safe. The best way is an open and ongoing dialogue with them from an early age I think. But I would support a complete ban in school time as this would do them no harm and help them get used to detaching from their phones at times.

Our concern would be that we are preparing children and young people to also be digital ambassadors and citizens in a rapidly changing world. Moving from non visibility to a complete ban seems reactive to a culture that is openly trying to make sense of how to manage these. Surely we want to train and teach children and young people to engage in moderate use rather than this approach. Where this has been implemented effectively in schools there are robust implementation plans in place and this takes place over time. There are also various research sources to suggest both benefits and negatives associated with the use.

I feel it is important for us as parents to communicate the correct use of their smartphones and to monitor screen time and website and social media usage. When I was my daughters age there were no smartphones but as long as used properly I don't see an issue outside of school . I support a ban in school up to year 11 but am undecided for year 12 and 13 .

My children use their phone sensibly and for use such as buying things, bus tickets, keeping in touch with family. All my children watched adolescence and were made aware by myself how to be safe whilst online.

Fully support the school ban.

I agree with the school going phone free. [My child] is not allowed her phone after 9pm in her room and she's not allowed social media or WhatsApp.

I monitor my child's phone and online usage. I watch the videos he is accessing with him, I check his chat history to make sure he is doing the right thing but also to make sure no one is sharing anything they shouldn't be with him. I got him his phone for safety when walking to and from school or out with friends so I can see where he is if an emergency and also he can contact me if something happens... While I agree phones do not belong in the classroom or at playtime I would want my child to have his phone for the commute to and from school.

Firstly I would interested to know how a complete ban on mobile phones will work when the current rule is not adhered to by a minority of students. I'd also be interested to know how you think using physical cards for payments (for travel home) is safer than face recognition android pay or Apple Pay and travel home without phone for home contact , or is there going to be provision for safe storage of phone at school. If so how secure will this space be and how will it be managed? I have been 100% supportive of the work you do with the students to improve discipline and wellbeing of the students but in this case I think it's a step too far, although as you say in the letter there are more details to come. I'll await those details which I'm sure will answer all my questions.

Highly support smartphone free childhood.

No I don't think they should do this.

It would be good for the kids to have a workshop to agree their own set of rules - ie what to access, how to report / block, how long to spend on phones and identify the negative (and positive uses of the phone, what time should the phone be switched off (and on!). It would also be good for parents to fill in their own survey too as the role of the parent is being lost due to phone addiction and is impacting on our children. In my opinion, schools themselves are also part of the problem. Mine had never had a phone or ipad and then suddenly needed them for online learning during covid. Why have the days of books and handwritten homework gone? This again blocks out the family support to the child. Kids never do projects or pieces of work that could be done at home, involving family members and using good old paper and pens and glue!

At home [my child] self-regulates well and doesn't have excessive phone time. We support restricting use but would need safe keeping of phone on school property. Will GSH be aligned on the ban?



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