MOBILE PHONE AND PERSONAL DEVICE POLICY

Policy area

All Students, Staff

Statutory regulation

Schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014
The Independent Schools (ISS) Guidance April 2026

SLT Lead

Whole School Digital Literacy Lead / Senior Leadership Team

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September 2026

Next review

August 2027

The King Alfred School

Policy summary
This policy restricts mobile phones and other personal devices according to age and stage. Smart watches capable of communication or recording are not allowed on site for any students below Sixth Form. All other personal devices capable of sending or receiving phone calls and text messages, or taking photos or videos, are not allowed on site for any student. Personal laptops are not allowed on site below Sixth Form, for more information on laptops, please refer to the Acceptable ICT Use Policy.

1. Purpose of this Policy

The King Alfred School recognises that mobile phones can be useful for travel, communication and safety, particularly for older students travelling independently. However, we also recognise that mobile phones, smartphones, smart watches and other connected devices can distract from learning, affect wellbeing, contribute to social pressures, and create safeguarding risks if used inappropriately.

This policy sets out the School's expectations for mobile phones and connected personal devices across different year groups. It aims to support a school environment in which students can focus on learning, relationships, wellbeing and play without unnecessary digital distraction.

2. Guiding Principles

- Students should be able to learn and socialise without the distraction of mobile phones or wearable devices.
- Mobile phone access should be age appropriate.
- The School supports families who want their child to have a phone for independent journeys or safety reasons.
- The School supports the necessary use of simple, limited-function phones for younger students.
- Smartphone use during the school day is restricted.
- Smart watches and other connected wearable devices are not permitted on site for students below Sixth Form.
- Students are expected to take increasing responsibility for their own choices as they move through the School.
- The School does not accept responsibility for lost, damaged or stolen mobile phones, smart watches or any other devices brought onto site.

3. Definitions

Term	Meaning
Mobile phone	Any portable device capable of making calls, sending messages, accessing apps, connecting to the internet, taking photographs or videos, or communicating digitally.
Feature phone / dumb phone	A mobile phone with limited functionality, typically allowing calls and text messages, but without full smartphone capability, app stores, social media access or internet browsing.
Smartphone	A phone capable of running apps, accessing the internet, using social media, taking photographs or videos, messaging through internet-based platforms, or providing other advanced digital functions.
Child-friendly smartphone	Only the specific devices permitted by the School for Years 7 and 8: Pinwheel and Wingio phones.
Smart watch or personal device	Any watch, wearable or similar device capable of making or receiving calls, sending or receiving messages, connecting to the internet, using apps, tracking communications, or recording images, audio or video. This includes, but is not limited to, Apple Watches and Meta Raybans.
Bell to bell	From the time the school bell rings at the start of the school day until the bell rings at the end of the school day.

4. General Expectations

Students may only bring a mobile phone to school where this is permitted under the year-group rules set out below.

Where phones are permitted, they must be used only in accordance with this policy. Students must not use mobile phones on site unless explicitly allowed to do so.

Students must not use phones to take photographs, make recordings, access social media, send messages, browse the internet, or contact others during the school day unless permission has been given by a member of staff for a specific reason.

Parents and carers should not expect to contact students directly on their mobile phones during the school day. Urgent messages should be sent through the relevant School Office.

5. Smart Watches and Other Personal Devices

Whole-school prohibition below Sixth Form
Smart watches are not permitted on site for any student below Sixth Form. If a watch or wearable device is capable of making or receiving calls, sending or receiving messages, or recording images, audio or video, it must not be brought onto the School site by students in Lower School or Years 7 to 11.

Whole-school prohibition for all students
Any other personal devices are not permitted on site for any student. If a device is capable of making or receiving calls, sending or receiving messages, or recording images, audio or video, it must not be brought onto the School site by any student. This includes, but is not limited to, smart glasses.

This includes, but is not limited to, Apple Watches and any other watch or wearable device, including Smart Glasses, capable of making or receiving phone calls; sending or receiving text messages; sending or receiving app-based messages or notifications; connecting to the internet; using apps; taking photographs; recording video; or recording audio.

Sixth Form students may bring smart watches, but they are expected to use them responsibly, maturely and sensibly. The School reserves the right to intervene if use is considered inappropriate, excessive, disruptive, unsafe or contrary to the values and expectations of the School.

6. Lower School

6.1 General Rule

Students in Lower School are not expected to bring a mobile phone to school. The School's expectation is that Lower School students do not need a phone during the school day and that, where communication is necessary, this should take place through parents, carers and the Lower School Office.

6.2 Year 6 Exception for Independent Travel

In Year 6, students who have long, independent journeys to and from school may bring a mobile phone to school, but only if the phone is a feature phone, sometimes known as a dumb phone. This exception is intended to support safe travel and communication before and after school only.

6.3 Handing in Phones

Any permitted Year 6 feature phone must be handed in to the Lower School Office immediately on arrival at school. Phones must be collected from the Lower School Office at the end of the school day. Students may not keep phones in bags, lockers, pockets or classrooms during the school day.

6.4 Smartphones and Smart Watches in Lower School

No student in Lower School is permitted to bring a smartphone to school. No student in Lower School is permitted to bring a smart watch or other personal device to school if it is capable of making or receiving calls, sending or receiving messages, connecting to the internet, using apps, or recording images, audio or video.

7. Upper School: Years 7 and 8

7.1 Permitted Phones

Students in Years 7 and 8 may bring a phone to school, but it must be a feature phone, also known as a dumb phone. This supports students who are travelling independently while maintaining clear boundaries around digital access during the school day.

7.2 Child-Friendly Smartphone Exception

If parents or carers wish their child to have access to Google Maps, location tracking, or similar safety features, students in Years 7 and 8 may bring only one of the following School-approved child-friendly smartphones:

- Pinwheel phone
- Wingio phone

No other smartphone is permitted in school for students in Years 7 and 8.

7.3 Non-Permitted Devices

Students in Years 7 and 8 must not bring any other smartphone to school. This includes, but is not limited to, standard iPhones, Android smartphones, or other app-enabled mobile devices.

Students in Years 7 and 8 must not bring a smart watch or other personal device to school if it is capable of making or receiving calls, sending or receiving messages, connecting to the internet, using apps, or recording images, audio or video.

If a student brings a non-permitted smartphone, smart watch or connected wearable device to school, it may be confiscated and held securely until it can be collected in line with School procedures.

8. Upper School: Years 9 to 11

8.1 Bringing Phones to School

Students in Years 9 to 11 may bring any mobile phone to school. However, phones must not be used on site during the school day except in the limited circumstances set out below.

8.2 Locker Requirement

Students in Years 9 to 11 must place their phone in their assigned locker at the start of the school day. Phones must remain in lockers from **bell to bell**. Students are not allowed to access their phones during lessons, between lessons, morning break, lunchtime, or any other part of the school day, unless an exception applies under this policy.

8.3 Bell to Bell Rule

The School operates a bell to bell restriction for Years 9 to 11. This means students may not access or use their mobile phones from the bell at the start of the school day until the bell at the end of the school day. This includes breaktimes and lunchtimes.

8.4 Year 10 and Year 11 Off-Site Lunch Exception

Students in Year 10 and Year 11 who are permitted to go off-site for lunch may take their phone with them when leaving the premises. However:

- Phones may only be used once the student is off-site.
- No on-site use is permitted before leaving for lunch.
- Students must not use their phone while still on the School site.
- Phones must be returned to the student's assigned locker immediately upon return to School.
- Students must not continue to carry or use their phone on site after returning from lunch.

This exception exists only to support safety, communication and independence while students are off-site.

8.5 Smart Watches and Personal Devices in Years 9 to 11

Students in Years 9 to 11 must not bring smart watches or personal devices onto the School site if they are capable of making or receiving calls, sending or receiving messages, connecting to the internet, using apps, or recording images, audio or video. This applies even if the device is placed in "school mode", "airplane mode" or similar, as the presence of such devices on site can create distractions, and can violate GDPR and Safeguarding legislation.

9. Sixth Form

9.1 Sixth Form Expectations

Sixth Form students may bring any mobile phone to school. Sixth Form students may also bring smart watches.

As senior students, they are expected to use these devices responsibly, maturely and sensibly. Sixth Form students should ensure that use of phones, smart watches or other connected devices does not interfere with their learning, the learning of others, social interactions, or the wider life of the School.

Sixth Form students may not bring other personal devices if they are capable of making or receiving calls, sending or receiving messages, connecting to the internet, using apps, or recording images, audio or video.

The School reserves the right to intervene if a Sixth Form student's use of a phone, smart watch or connected device is considered inappropriate, excessive, disruptive, unsafe or contrary to the values and expectations of the School.

Sixth Formers are reminded that Smartphones and Smart Watches are not to be worn or used during exams of any type. For more information, please refer to our Exams Policy.

10. Contact During the School Day

Parents and carers should contact the relevant School Office if they need to pass an urgent message to their child during the school day.

Students who need to contact home during the school day should speak to a member of staff or go to the relevant School Office.

Students should not use personal mobile phones, smart watches or connected devices to contact parents or carers during the school day without permission from a member of staff.

This helps ensure that pastoral and safeguarding concerns are managed appropriately by School staff.

11. Responsibility for Devices

Students who bring phones, smart watches or any other devices to school do so at their own risk.

The School does not accept responsibility for mobile phones, smart watches or connected devices that are lost, stolen, damaged or misplaced while on School premises or during School activities.

Parents and carers should ensure that any permitted device brought to school is clearly labelled where possible, and that appropriate insurance arrangements are in place if desired.

12. Misuse of Mobile Phones and Connected Devices

Misuse of mobile phones, smart watches or connected devices may include, but is not limited to:

- Using a phone or connected device when not permitted.
- Keeping a phone on a student's person when it should be handed in or stored in a locker.
- Bringing a non-permitted smartphone to school.
- Bringing a smart watch or other personal device to school when not permitted.
- Using a phone, watch or device to take photographs, videos or audio recordings without permission.
- Accessing social media during the school day.
- Messaging or calling others during the school day without permission.
- Using a device in a way that disrupts learning or social time.
- Using a device to bully, intimidate, exclude, harass or upset others.
- Sharing inappropriate, unkind or harmful content.
- Refusing to hand over a phone, watch or device when reasonably asked by a member of staff.

Such behaviour will be addressed in line with the School's behaviour, safeguarding, anti-bullying and digital conduct procedures.

13. Confiscation and Consequences

Where a student does not follow this policy, the School may confiscate the phone, smart watch or connected device.

Confiscated devices will be stored securely and returned at an appropriate time, which may be at the end of the school day or directly to a parent or carer, depending on the circumstances.

Repeated breaches of this policy may lead to further sanctions and a meeting with parents or carers.

Where misuse raises safeguarding, bullying, privacy or wellbeing concerns, the matter will be handled in accordance with the School's relevant policies and procedures.

14. Exceptional Circumstances

The School recognises that there may be exceptional medical, pastoral, accessibility or safeguarding reasons why a student may need access to a specific device or communication arrangement.

Any request for an exception to this policy must be discussed and agreed in advance with the relevant Head of Section, pastoral lead or member of the Senior Leadership Team.

Exceptions will be considered on a case-by-case basis and may be time-limited or subject to specific conditions.

15. Roles and Responsibilities

Students are expected to

- Follow the rules for their year group.
- Hand in or store their phone as required.
- Avoid using phones or personal devices during the school day unless explicitly permitted.
- Not bring smart watches or other personal devices onto the School site, with the exception of smart watches in Sixth Form.
- Use permitted devices responsibly when travelling to and from school.
- Respect the privacy and wellbeing of others.

Parents and carers are expected to

- Support the School's approach to mobile phones and connected devices.
- Ensure their child only brings a permitted device to school.
- Ensure their child does not bring a smart watch or personal device to school unless they are in Sixth Form.
- Avoid contacting their child directly during the school day except where appropriate.
- Discuss responsible device use with their child.
- Understand that the School does not accept responsibility for lost or damaged devices.

Staff are expected to

- Apply the policy consistently.
- Remind students of expectations where necessary.
- Confiscate phones or connected devices where appropriate and in line with School procedures.
- Report concerns relating to device misuse, safeguarding or wellbeing.
- Model appropriate professional use of mobile and connected devices.

16. Summary of Year Group Rules

Year Group	Phone Permission	Type of Phone Allowed	Smart Watches / Connected Wearables	Access During School Day
Lower School, up to Year 5	Not expected	None	Not permitted	Not permitted

Year Group	Phone Permission	Type of Phone Allowed	Smart Watches / Connected Wearables	Access During School Day
Year 6	Only for long, independent journeys	Feature phone only	Not permitted	Phone must be handed in to Lower School Office
Years 7–8	Permitted	Feature phone only, or Pinwheel/Wingio child-friendly smartphone	Not permitted	No general use during school day
Years 9–11	Permitted	Any phone	Not permitted	Phone must be stored in assigned locker from bell to bell
Years 10–11 off-site lunch	Permitted during off-site lunch only	Any phone	Not permitted	Phone may be taken off-site; no on-site use; returned to locker immediately on return
Sixth Form	Permitted	Any phone	Smart Watches permitted only	Responsible and sensible use expected

17. Related Policies

- Behaviour Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Online Safety Policy
- Acceptable Use Policy
- Pastoral Care Policy

18. Review

This policy will be reviewed regularly to ensure that it remains appropriate, effective and aligned with the needs of students, families and the School community.

The King Alfred School reserves the right to amend this policy in response to changes in technology, safeguarding guidance, educational practice or the needs of the School.