Hexham Middle School

Mobile Phone Policy

August 2026

Next annual update: July 2027

1. Policy Statement

At Hadrian Learning Trust, we are committed to creating a calm, safe and focused learning environment where Pupils can thrive academically, socially and emotionally. In line with the Department for Education's *Mobile Phones in Schools: Updated Guidance (January 2026)*, the school operates a **mobile phone-free school day**.

Hexham Middle School recognises that unrestricted access to mobile phones can negatively affect behaviour, attention, wellbeing and social interaction. This policy sets clear expectations to ensure consistency, fairness and clarity for pupils, staff and parents/carers.

2. Scope

This policy applies to:

- All pupils in Years 5 to 8
- The entire school day, including:
    - Before form time
    - Lessons
    - Transitions between lessons
    - Breaktime and lunchtime

The policy also applies during school-run activities where mobile phone use could undermine educational objectives or pupil safety.

3. Definitions

For the purposes of this policy, *mobile phones* include, but are not limited to:

- Smartphones
- Non-smartphones
- Smartwatches or wearable technology capable of messaging, calling, internet access or recording
- Personal tablets or devices with connectivity

4. Expectations and Rules

4.1 Whole School Approach

- Pupils **must not use or access mobile phones** during the school day.
- If on school premises (defined as within the main HMS gate and perimeter secure fence), phones must be **switched off and stored securely in provided lockboxes throughout the school day.**

This reflects the Government's clear expectation that schools establish a mobile phone-free environment. Following consultation with parents across the Hexham Partnership of Schools, Hexham Middle School has established the following approach to mobile phones:

Years 5 and 6

- Our expectation is that pupils in these year groups will **not be given access to a smartphone** by their parents.
- Instead, parents may choose to provide a non-smart 'brick' phone (and/or tracking device) as desired. Non-smart 'brick' phones are allowed to be brought to school but must be switched off and stored in provided secure storage boxes.
- Smartphones are banned in school for pupils in years 5 and 6 i.e. they should not be brought to school at all.

- In exceptional circumstances, e.g. for a medical reason such as diabetes monitoring, a parent may write to the Headteacher requesting special dispensation.

Years 7 and 8

- Our expectation is that pupils in Year 7 will **not be given access to a smartphone** by their parents (this will extend to include Year 8 in due course).
- We accept that some pupils moving into Year 7 and Year 8 in September 2026 may already have a smartphone (and existing phone contract agreement in place).
- If brought to school, all mobile phones including smartphones must be handed in and stored securely during the school day.
- Mobile phones are not allowed to be used on the school premises without staff permission. If your child needs to contact you, they should come to the school office.

Parents are asked to consider signing the smartphone-free childhood parent pact for Hexham Middle School at: northumberlandparentpact.smartphonefreechildhood.co.uk

If parents/carers need to urgently contact their child during the school day, they can contact the school office (01434 610300). If a matter is urgent pupils can contact parents/carers at break or lunch from the school office.

4.2 Storage

- All pupils who bring a mobile phone to school must:
    - Hand in the device during morning form time (8.45am).
    - Collect the device at the end of the school day from their form room (3.15-3.25pm).
    - Keep the phone in secure storage from morning form time until the end of the school day.

Secure storage is provided in form classrooms and locked during the day. While the school takes reasonable steps to ensure secure storage, parents/carers should be aware that bringing a device onto the school site is at their own risk.

If a pupil is leaving school early (for example, to attend a medical appointment), their phone/watch should be stored securely in the HMS office.

If a pupil arrives at school late:

- Before 9.10am: phone and/or watch will be stored securely in the child's form classroom and form tutors will be responsible for collecting the phone/watch.
- After 9.10am: devices will be handed in at the HMS office for secure storage and can be collected at the end of the day.

4.3 Emergency Use

- In exceptional circumstances, pupils may use a phone **only with staff permission**.
- Parents/carers should contact the **school office**, not pupils directly, during the school day.

4.4 Educational Use

- Mobile phones are **not permitted** for learning activities, including calculators or research, unless explicitly authorised by the Senior Leadership Team for a specific purpose and under direct supervision.

5. Safeguarding and Wellbeing

The mobile phone-free school day supports:

- Reduced bullying and online harassment
- Improved focus and engagement in learning
- Healthier peer relationships
- Reduced anxiety linked to social media and constant connectivity

This policy aligns with the school's safeguarding duties and wider wellbeing strategy.

6. Responsibilities

6.1 School Leaders and Staff will:

- Communicate and enforce the school's policy consistently
- Model appropriate behaviour by avoiding personal mobile phone use in front of pupils during the school day (unless required for professional or safeguarding reasons)
- Ensure sanctions are proportionate and fair

6.2 Parents and Carers

- Support the school's expectations
- Reinforce the importance of compliance at home
- Contact the school directly when communication with a pupil is required

6.3 Pupils

- Follow the school's policy at all times
- Understand that the policy supports learning, wellbeing and fairness
- Hand over all phones to staff for secure storage each morning and collect phones at the end of the school day

7. Sanctions and Consequences

Breaches of this policy will be addressed in line with the school's **Behaviour Policy** and will include:

- Use of mobile phone in school (all year groups) or having a smartphone on school premises for years 5 and 6 **(first instance)**
    - Confiscation – we operate a 'Use it and Lose It' approach – any phones in use will be confiscated and stored securely in secure storage in the school office until the end of the school day.
    - Sanction – an S3 reflection will be issued, and a discussion will take place about use of the phone.
    - Parental contact – parents will be notified via MCAS.
    - Confiscated devices will be stored securely and can be collected by the pupil at the end of the school day.
- Use of mobile phone in school (all year groups) or having smartphone on site for years 5 and 6 **(second instance)**
    - Repeated or serious breaches will result in escalated sanctions.
    - For two instances of phone use (as described above), the phone will be confiscated and stored securely.
    - A parent/carer will be expected to collect their child's phone from school. Phones can be collected from the school office between 3.20pm and 4.00pm.
    - An S4 reflection will be issued for repeated breaches of school policy.
    - Parents/carers will be contacted by school staff to discuss the repeated breach and to arrange collection of the phone.

    - In the case of repeated breaches of school expectation and policy, sanctions will escalate in accordance the school's behaviour policy. Refusal to comply with expectations of staff with regards mobile phones may result in escalated sanction such as a fixed-term suspension from school.
- **Refusal** to hand in mobile phone for secure storage (all year groups)
    - Reasonable opportunity to reflect and make a positive decision will be given.
    - Failure to comply with the school policy will result in a day in Reflection being issued.
    - Parents/carers will be called to collect the mobile phone from school as soon as possible that day.
    - Appropriate escalation for repeated refusal to comply will be issued in line with the school's behaviour policy. It is essential that pupils comply with the school's reasonable expectations.

8. Reasonable Adjustments and Exceptions

The school will make reasonable adjustments in line with the **Equality Act 2010** for pupils who require access to a mobile device due to:

- Medical needs
- SEND
- Safeguarding or welfare considerations

Any agreed exception must:

- Be authorised by a member of the Senior Leadership Team
- Be documented and be reviewed regularly

During residential visits:

- Decisions regarding the use of mobile phones on residential visits will be communicated on a trip-by-trip basis.
- Trip leaders will inform parents/carers and pupils during the initial sign-up phase of trip planning and registration.
- As part of the trip's behaviour agreement, visit leaders will ask for parent/carer assurance that the expectations will be adhered to.

9. Ofsted and Inspection Expectations

In line with Ofsted's stated position (January 2026):

- Inspectors will discuss the school's mobile phone policy with leaders
- Inspectors will consider how well the policy is understood by pupils and staff
- Inspectors will look at how consistently the policy is implemented
- Inspectors will consider the impact of the policy on behaviour, learning and wellbeing

Ofsted does not mandate a specific model but expects schools to **clearly justify their approach and demonstrate effective implementation**.

10. Monitoring and Review

This policy will be:

- Reviewed annually
- Updated in response to changes in government guidance or inspection expectations