

VALENCE SCHOOL

Westerham Road, Westerham, Kent TN16 1QN

Mobile Phone Policy

This policy has been written for:	All individuals on the school's premises
Copies of this policy may be obtained from:	Valence School website www.valenceschool.com Staff Intranet
Responsible for policy:	Vice Principal for Safeguarding & Social Care
Policy Date: Governor Approval Date: Review Date: Version:	10 th July 2026 14 th July 2026 July 2027 Version 1.0
Relevant statutory guidance, legislation and other sources of information:	Keeping Children Safe in Education DfE Mobile phones in schools Education Act 1996 (S550ZA – 'prohibited item') Behaviour Policy- Valence School Searching, Screening & Confiscation Policy- Valence School Social Media & Acceptable Use Policy – Valence School
Definitions and key terms used in this policy:	The school day is defined as 08.45hrs – 15.30hrs, Monday – Thursday and 08.45hrs – 14.00hrs Friday
Appendices:	FAQ – Parents (July 2026) FAQ – Students (July 2026)
Key Personnel:	Matt Strange (Principal) Deputy designated Safeguarding Lead mstrange@valence.kent.sch.uk Tel; 01959 562156 (Ext 1100) / 07894 483673 Lisa Kavanagh (Vice Principal) Designated Safeguarding Lead & Head of Safeguarding & Social Care lkavanagh@valence.kent.sch.uk Tel: 01959 567810 (Ext 1103) / 07912 124724 Kirsty McIntosh (Acting Asst. Principal) kmcintosh@valence.kent.sch.uk Tel: 01959 567156 (Ext 2236) Mark Roberts (Chair of Governors) mroberts@valence.kent.sch.uk

Policy Statement	This school is committed to providing a calm, safe and focused learning environment. Mobile phones and similar smart technology can disrupt learning, affect wellbeing, increase safeguarding risks and reduce opportunities for positive social interaction. In line with Department for Education statutory guidance, the school operates as a mobile phone-free environment during the school day. Mobile phones must not be used by students during lessons, transitions, breaktimes or lunchtimes unless specifically authorised by a member of senior staff.
1. Scope	This policy applies to: • Mobile phones • Smartphones • Smartwatches • Earbuds with communication functions • Tablets with messaging capability • Any other personal device capable of communication, recording, internet access or notifications
2. Student Expectations	Students may bring a mobile phone to school for travel and safety purposes. Upon entering the school site: • Mobile phones must be switched off or placed in flight mode. • Phones must be stored and secured in a school provided pouch which will be sealed until the end of the day. • Smartwatches must not be used for messaging, calls, photography, recording or internet access. • Headphones and earbuds will not be able to connect to mobile phones including by Bluetooth, Wi-Fi and 4G/5G so should not be worn during the school day.
3. Permitted Exceptions	The school recognises that some students may require access to technology for legitimate reasons. Exceptions may be granted for: • Specific safeguarding arrangements • Prescribed health monitoring needs (e.g. blood glucose monitoring) – A separate medical phone pouch will be issued. Any exception must be agreed in advance by the school and recorded where appropriate.
4. Educational Use	The school will provide alternative technology where necessary.

5. Sixth Form and Residential Students	Post16 students and residential students are expected to comply with these arrangements during the school day and during any agreed afterschool study or revision sessions. Post16 and Residential students are able to access their phones and devices outside of the times, in compliance with the school's Acceptable Use Agreement.
6. Breaches of the Policy	Where a student breaches this policy, staff may confiscate the device in accordance with the school's behaviour policy
7. Sanctions	First Incident • Device confiscated until end of school day. • Recorded on behaviour system. Second Incident • Device confiscated for a 5-day period • Parent/carer informed. • Behaviour sanction applied. Repeated Incidents • Device handed in daily. • Meeting with parent/carer. • Escalated behaviour consequences in line with school policy.
8. Searches & Confiscation	Staff may confiscate mobile phones when school rules are breached. Where necessary and lawful, searches may be undertaken in accordance with: • Behaviour Policy • Searching, Screening and Confiscation guidance • Safeguarding procedures
9. Responsibility and Liability	Students bring mobile devices onto site at their own risk. The school cannot guarantee the security of personal devices and accepts no responsibility for: • Loss • Theft • Accidental damage
10. Communication With Parents	Parents and carers who need to contact their child during the school day should do so through the school reception. Students who need to contact home during the day should seek permission from a member of the Education Leadership Team or DSL and use school systems where appropriate.

11. Monitoring and Review

The effectiveness of this policy will be reviewed annually through:

- Behaviour data
- Student voice
- Parent feedback
- Staff feedback
- Safeguarding monitoring

The policy will be updated in response to changes in legislation, statutory guidance and emerging technology.

HOW IT WORKS

YONDR

POUCH

During arrival, students turn off phones and place them inside the pouches under staff supervision.



LOCK

Close the flaps and push the lock button. Students then take their locked phones to class.



UNLOCK

Tap the green ring to the magnet and press the button to unlock the student pouch.



Mobile Phone Policy –

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) for Parents

(Effective from September 2026)

What devices are covered by this policy?	The policy applies to mobile phones, smartphones, smartwatches, earbuds with communication functions, tablets with messaging capability and any other personal device capable of communication, internet access, recording or receiving notifications.
Why is the school introducing this change?	In line with Department for Education guidance, the school is introducing a mobile phone-free environment during the school day. The aim is to reduce distractions, support learning, improve wellbeing, minimise safeguarding risks and promote positive social interaction.
When does the policy start?	Our school policy will come into effect from September 2026 , at the start of the new academic year.
What will happen to students' phones during the day?	Students who bring a mobile phone to school will be issued with a school provided faraday phone pouch on arrival. The pouch blocks all signals, preventing the phone from being used during the school day. Students will keep the pouch and their phone with them throughout the day.
How does the Faraday pouch work?	The pouches are secured using a magnetic locking mechanism which can only be unlocked by authorised school staff. At the end of the school day, students will be able to have their pouches unlocked by authorised staff before leaving school.
Can my child wear a smartwatch?	Smartwatches may be worn but must not be used for calls, messaging, internet access, photography or recording during the school day. Students who misuse smartwatches will be subject to the same sanctions as mobile phone users.
Can my child use headphones or earbuds?	No. Earbuds and headphones must not be connected to mobile phones or other communication devices during the school day and should not be worn unless specifically authorised by staff.
Who is responsible for the phone during the school day?	Students bring mobile devices onto school site at their own risk. The school cannot accept responsibility for loss, theft or accidental damage to personal devices.
Do families need to purchase the pouch?	No. The school will provide Faraday pouches for students.
What happens if a pouch is damaged?	Students must not tamper with, force open or damage the pouch. If a pouch is deliberately damaged, torn or rendered unusable, the student may be required to pay a £15 replacement charge .

What if my child needs access to their phone for medical reasons?	The school recognises that some students use mobile devices for agreed medical purposes, such as blood glucose monitoring apps. In these circumstances, medical pouches and individual arrangements will be put in place. Please contact the school if your child has a medical need that may be affected by these arrangements.
How can parents contact their child during the school day?	Parents and carers should continue to contact the school via the main school telephone number, in the event of an emergency or urgent message. The school will ensure messages are passed on promptly.
How can my child contact home during the school day?	Students who need to contact home during the school day should seek permission from a member of the Education Leadership Team or a Designated Safeguarding Lead and use school communication systems where appropriate
What if a student needs to make or receive an important call?	Students should speak with their: • Pathway Lead • A Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) • The Senior on Call Where appropriate, staff may unlock the pouch to allow access to the phone for an appointment or important communication. Calls will take place in a private office space away from other students. The pouch will then be relocked and returned to the student.
Will staff continue to use mobile phones in school?	Staff are expected to follow the school's Acceptable Use Policy and will refrain from using personal mobile phones in front of students except where required for authorised professional purposes.
Will there be a new Acceptable Use Policy?	Yes. Updated Acceptable Use Policies (AUPs) and agreements will be shared with students, parents and staff before implementation. Students and parents will be required to sign and agree to the arrangements before a device can be brought into school.
Will this affect residential or Post-16 students?	Post-16 and residential students must follow the mobile phone arrangements during the school day and during any agreed after-school study or revision sessions. Outside these times, students may access their devices in accordance with the school's Acceptable Use Agreement and residential expectations
What if a lesson requires technology?	The school will provide appropriate alternative devices and equipment for learning activities where required.
What are the consequences if a student breaks the mobile phone rules?	The school's aim is to educate and support students in following the policy. However, where the policy is not followed, sanctions may be applied in line with the school's Behaviour Policy and Mobile Phone Policy. First Incident • Device confiscated until the end of the school day. • Recorded on the school's behaviour system.

	Second Incident • Device confiscated for five school days. • Parent/carer informed. • Behaviour sanction applied. Repeated Incidents • Device handed in daily. • Meeting held with parent/carer. • Further behaviour consequences applied in line with school policy. Examples of behaviours that may result in sanctions: • Using a mobile phone during the school day without permission. • Refusing to place a phone into a Faraday pouch. • Refusing to surrender a phone when requested by a member of staff. • Tampering with, forcing open, or damaging a Faraday pouch. • Using another student's phone or attempting to access a phone on behalf of another student. • Repeated failure to follow the school's mobile phone procedures. As mobile phones are considered a prohibited item during school hours, the school may exercise its legal powers to search, screen and confiscate devices where a phone is being used in breach of the policy or has not been surrendered when requested. The school will always consider individual circumstances, including SEND needs and agreed medical arrangements, when responding to any breach of the policy. Our focus remains on maintaining a safe, respectful and distraction-free learning environment for all students.
Will the arrangements be reviewed?	The school will review the effectiveness of the policy annually, taking account of behaviour data, student voice, parent feedback, staff feedback and safeguarding monitoring.
Who can I contact if I have questions or concerns?	If you have any questions regarding the implementation of the policy, safeguarding considerations, or individual circumstances, please contact: Lisa Kavanagh (Vice Principal and Lead DSL) lkavanagh@valence.kent.sch.uk or Kirsty McIntosh (Learning Dimension Leader – Computing) kmcintosh@valence.kent.sch.uk . The school will be happy to discuss any concerns and ensure appropriate support is in place where needed.

Mobile Phone Policy – Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) for Students

Effective from September 2026

Question	Answer
What devices are covered by this policy?	This policy applies to mobile phones, smartphones, smartwatches, earbuds with communication functions, tablets with messaging capability and any other personal device capable of communication, internet access, recording or receiving notifications.
Why is the school introducing this policy?	We want to create a distraction-free environment where everyone can focus on learning, wellbeing and positive social interaction. The policy also supports safeguarding and follows Department for Education guidance.
When does the policy start?	The policy takes effect from September 2026 .
Can I bring my phone to school?	Yes, but if you bring a phone onto the school site it must be placed into a school-issued Faraday pouch when you arrive.
What happens to my phone during the day?	Your phone will remain inside a locked Faraday pouch that blocks signals and prevents use throughout the school day. You will keep the pouch with you.
How do Faraday pouches work?	The pouch is locked using a magnetic locking mechanism. Only authorised staff can unlock it. At the end of the school day, staff will unlock the pouch before you leave.
Can I wear a smartwatch?	Yes, but it must not be used for calling, messaging, internet access, photography or recording during the school day. Misuse will be treated in the same way as mobile phone misuse.
Can I use earbuds or headphones?	No. Earbuds and headphones must not be connected to communication devices during the school day and should only be used when specifically authorised by staff.
What if I need to contact home?	Speak to a member of the Education Leadership Team or a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). School communication systems can be used where appropriate.
What if I am expecting an important call or have an appointment?	Speak to your Pathway Lead, a DSL or the Senior on Call. If appropriate, staff may unlock your pouch so you can access your phone privately. The pouch will then be relocked.
What if I need my phone for medical reasons?	The school will make individual arrangements for students with agreed medical needs, including the use of medical monitoring apps. Please ensure the school is aware of your requirements.
Who is responsible for my phone?	You bring your device onto site at your own risk. The school cannot accept responsibility for loss, theft or accidental damage.
What happens if I damage a Faraday pouch?	You must not tamper with or damage the pouch. Deliberate damage may result in a £15 replacement charge and further consequences.
What happens if I break the rules?	Consequences may include confiscation of the device, behaviour sanctions, parental contact and daily phone hand-in arrangements for repeated

Question	Answer
	incidents. The school may also use its legal powers to search, screen and confiscate devices where appropriate.
What behaviours are not allowed?	Examples include using a phone without permission, refusing to use a pouch, refusing to hand over a device when asked, damaging a pouch, using another student's phone or repeatedly ignoring procedures.
What if a lesson requires technology?	The school will provide alternative devices and equipment where technology is needed for learning.
Will there be an Acceptable Use Agreement?	Yes. Students will be asked to read and sign an updated Acceptable Use Agreement before bringing devices into school.
Will this apply to Post-16 and residential students?	Yes. The policy applies during the school day and agreed study sessions. Access outside these times will follow school and residential expectations.
Who can I speak to if I have concerns?	Speak to your tutor, Pathway Lead, a DSL, or another trusted member of staff. The school will work with you to resolve any concerns.