

## Student Council Spring 2 2024-25 Summary

Following growing conversations among students and staff about mobile phone usage in school, the student body at Headlands School was surveyed to collect views, habits, and feelings related to phone use across all year groups (Years 7-11). The purpose was to better understand how phones are used, the impact they may have on learning and wellbeing, and how current policies are perceived.

The survey was completed by over 300 students, with balanced responses across year groups. Below is a summary of the findings and key recommendations based on student feedback.

### Ownership and Access

99% of students who responded own a mobile phone. The majority received their first phone between the ages of 6 and 11, with some getting one as young as age 4. For many students, having a phone was seen as a standard part of growing up, especially for safety, communication with parents, or keeping up with peers.

### Daily Use Outside of School

Most students (over 60%) use their phone between 2 to 4 hours per day outside of school hours. Around 30% reported usage of more than 4 hours a day.

### Common activities included:

- Messaging friends or family
- Checking or posting on social media
- Listening to music
- Watching videos or gaming
- School-related research and revision

### Phone Use in School

Nearly all students bring their phone to school every day.

Usage during school hours was not insignificant, despite being against policy. Students admitted using phones:

- At break and lunch times
- In toilets, corridors, and PE changing rooms
- Secretly in lessons, especially when teachers aren't watching

### Main reasons for in-school use:

- Messaging home or friends (including emotional support)
- Checking the time (especially when clocks are unavailable)
- Using music to manage stress or focus
- Searching for information relevant to schoolwork
- Taking photos of notes or revision materials

### Rules, Monitoring, and Consequences

About half of students had been caught using a phone during school at some point. Most students have said that on all of those occasions, the phones have been confiscated. Students have however perceived some inconsistent enforcement between staff, lessons, and locations.

### Emotional and Mental Health Impacts

Anxiety and frustration were common when students were unable to check their phones for long periods. Many described experiencing FOMO (Fear of Missing Out), particularly on messages from parents or social media updates. Over 40% reported receiving unkind messages, with very few incidents occurring during school hours.

Phones are integrated into students' routines, and many rely on them for emotional reassurance, learning, or managing responsibilities (e.g., diabetes care, checking timetables).

There is a clear tension between policy and reality: phones are banned in lessons, but secretly used at times.

Students respect the need for boundaries, but also want policies to acknowledge modern realities – including responsible usage and personal needs. Some students raised the idea of “phone zones” or designated break-time use to reduce sneaky use in lessons. A number of responses showed students using phones to support learning – looking things up for English vocab, using calculators, or accessing revision apps.