

Mobile Device Policy

Written by	Deputy Head - Quality of Care		
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Purpose and Rationale

Headlands School is committed to providing a calm, safe and focused learning environment for all students. In line with the latest Department for Education (DfE) guidance on mobile phones in schools (February 2026) — which states that **all schools should be mobile phone-free environments by default** and that anything other than a full day prohibition should be an exception only — this policy sets out the expectations for students, staff, visitors and parents/carers in relation to mobile devices.

This policy aims to:

- minimise classroom and social distraction;
- support high standards of behaviour and wellbeing;
- safeguard students from online harms and inappropriate use during the school day; and
- clarify expectations and consequences consistently.

Scope

This policy applies to:

- All students enrolled at Headlands School.
- All staff (teaching and support).
- All visitors, contractors and volunteers when on school premises.

"Mobile devices" include (but are not limited to) smartphones, smartwatches, tablets, earphones, and any device capable of communication, recording or internet access.

The policy is applicable from the start of the school day at 8:15am through to the end of any educational activity (in most cases this is 2:45pm).

General Expectations

Students

- Students *may bring* a mobile device to school for travel safety purposes (e.g., walking to/from school). However, devices must remain off and unseen throughout the school day — including lessons, movement between lessons, breaktimes and lunchtime.
- Devices must be switched off (not just silenced) and kept in students' bags.
- Devices must not be carried in pockets, worn, used, or accessed during the school day.
- Any visible mobile device will be confiscated.

Students in the 6th Form

Students in the 6th Form will be granted access to mobile devices in limited locations, reflecting this period of education as one of increased independence and responsibility, without compromising the school's policy on the use of mobile phones for other students.

- 6th Form students will be permitted to use mobile devices within the 6th form social areas.
- 6th Form students should not use any mobile device when in any other communal location around the school site outside of lessons.

Students in the ARC Enhanced Resource Provision

- Students *may bring* a mobile device to school for travel safety purposes (e.g., walking to/from school).
- Students will be required to place mobile devices in a locker at the start of each day, having this returned at the end of the school day.

Staff

- Staff must model appropriate professional behaviour by not using mobile phones for personal use in front of students during the school day and keeping phones on silent.
- Staff may use mobile devices in private areas (e.g., staff room)
- Use of personal devices to capture student data (images, video, voice) is prohibited; school-issued or authorised devices must be used in line with data protection policies.
- Mobile devices can be used by staff.

Visitors and Contractors

- Must adhere to this policy while on site, particularly in areas where students are present.

Permitted Use and Exceptions

Mobile device access during the school day is only permitted in the following exceptional circumstances:

- Medical need: A student who requires a device as part of a documented healthcare plan (e.g., monitoring apps for diabetes, emergencies). Use must be limited strictly to the medical purpose and will be supervised as required.

Parents/carers should use the school office to communicate with students where possible; direct messaging to students during the school day is discouraged to support the policy's effectiveness.

Educational visits and trips

The use of mobile phones on school trips and educational visits will be determined on a trip-by-trip basis at the discretion of the Visit Leader; parents and students will be informed in advance of the specific expectations and any restrictions that apply.

Consequences for Breaches

Breaches of this policy will be handled progressively and sensitively:

Incident	Consequence
First sighting / unauthorised use	Device confiscated and returned at the end of day to students. Parent/carer informed Via Edulink.
Repeat breaches	Device held until collection by parent / carer.
Persistent breaches	Permission to bring devices to school site revoked. Risk assessment in place to ensure hand in occurs each day.

Confiscation will be carried out in line with the school's approach to searching and screening as outlined in the Positive Discipline Policy and statutory guidance; it is never used punitively but to uphold safety, learning and consistency.

Safeguarding and Safety

This policy should be applied alongside our Online Safety, Safeguarding, Behaviour and Acceptable Use policies, recognising that:

- Mobile devices can contribute to online harm during unsupervised school hours.
- The school has processes to protect students and staff and to respond to any safeguarding concern.
- Confidential reporting channels exist for concerns related to misuse.

References and Related Documents

- Headlands School Positive Discipline Policy
- UK Government guidance - Searching, screening, and confiscation in schools
- UK Government guidance - Mobile phones in schools

Appendices

Appendix A - Mobile phone safety guide for parents – Apple iPhone Users

- Use your own phone to set up controls first.
- Do not tell your child your parental control passcode.
- Use a different passcode from their normal phone unlock code.
- Keep this document safe.

Step 1 — Add Family Sharing

Open Settings on **your** iPhone.

- Tap your name (at the top).
- Select Family Sharing, then Add Family Member.
- Follow the steps to add your child (using their Apple ID).
- If your child doesn't have an Apple ID, you'll be guided through creating one.

Step 2 — Turn On Screen Time for Your Child

- Tap your child's name under Family.
- Choose Turn On Screen Time.

You'll see:

- Downtime — set hours when only allowed apps/functions work
- App Limits — daily limits by category (e.g., Games, Social)
- Always Allowed — key apps that can always be used
- Content & Privacy Restrictions — block unwanted content

Step 3 — Set a Screen Time Passcode

- Still in Screen Time, tap Use Screen Time Passcode.
- Choose a PIN your child doesn't know.
- This prevents them changing the rules.

Tip: Use a different passcode from their phone unlock.

Step 4 — Configure Downtime

- In Screen Time → Downtime, choose times when most apps are blocked.

Example: 8:30pm–7:30am on school nights or 8:15am to 2:45pm to help them focus at school.

Calls & approved apps are still reachable.

Step 5 — Set App Limits

- Go to Screen Time → App Limits.
- Tap Add Limit.
- Select categories (Games, Social, Entertainment).
- Choose hours per day (e.g., 1–2 hours on weekdays).
- Tap Add.

You can create different limits for weekends vs school days.

Step 6 — Content & Privacy Restrictions

- Go to Screen Time → Content & Privacy Restrictions.
- Turn on the switch at the top.

Choose:

- iTunes & App Store Purchases — block new installs/purchases of apps
- Allowed Apps — restrict FaceTime, Safari, Camera, etc.

Content Restrictions → ensure:

- Web Content: Limit Adult Websites or Allowed List
- Movies/TV/Music: Set age ratings (e.g., 12+, PG)
- Books & Apps: Restrict by age rating

Step 7 — Optional: Share Location

- In Family Sharing, tap your child's name.
- Tap Location Sharing → Share My Location.
- This lets you use Find My to view their phone's location.

It is important to check that your children remain part of your family group regularly as they can leave this group, removing restrictions. As long as they remain in the family link, restrictions will remain in place until they turn 18.

Appendix B - Mobile phone safety guide for parents – Android Users

Android phones vary slightly (Samsung, Google, etc.). These steps use Google Family Link which works on nearly all Android phones.

Step 1 – Install Google Family Link

- On your phone, open the Google Play Store.
- Search: 'Google Family Link for parents'.
- Install it.
- On your child's phone, install 'Google Family Link for children & teens'.

Step 2 – connect your child's phone

- Open Family Link on your phone.
- Tap create or add child.
- Follow on-screen instructions.
- When asked, approve supervision on your child's phone.
- Do not skip permission screens.

Step 3 – Set Daily Screen Time Limits

- In Family Link, select your child.
- Tap daily limit.
- Set weekday limit (example: 1–2 hours).
- Set weekend limit if different.
- Save changes.

Step 4 – Set Bedtime (Locks the Phone Overnight)

- Tap bedtime.
- Set lock times (example: 9:00 pm to 7:00 am to help them sleep or 8:15 am to 2:45 pm to help them focus at school)
- Confirm.

Step 5 – Approve or Block Apps

- In Family Link, tap apps.
- You will see installed apps.

Tap any app to:

- Block it completely
- Set a time limit

Step 6 – Restrict Downloads from Google Play

- In Family Link, tap manage settings.
- Tap filters on google play.
- Set age rating for Apps & Games (e.g., PEGI 12).
- Set age limits for Films and TV.

This stops inappropriate apps being downloaded.

It is important to routinely review permissions as these can change with updates, similarly, children can delete the app from their phone so it is important to check it is still installed.