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<b>Approving Body</b>	ELT
<b>Regulatory References</b>	Non-statutory guidance: "Mobile phones in schools" (DfE)
	Education Act 2002 (Section 21)
	Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) – DfE statutory guidance 2025
<b>Next Review</b>	April 2027

**Document distribution:**

Stowe website, Parent Portal, School policy (StoweNet)
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## Electronic Devices and Mobile Phone Policy

### Purpose and Rationale

Stowe is committed to providing a learning environment that promotes academic focus, positive behaviour, wellbeing, and healthy social interaction, in line with the School's STOICS Change Maker framework. While technology has an important role in supporting learning, there is clear evidence that unrestricted access to mobile phones can have a detrimental impact on pupils' concentration, relationships, sleep, and mental health.

This policy reflects the Department for Education's non-statutory guidance, which sets a clear national expectation that schools should be mobile phone-free throughout the school day for junior pupils. Any departure from this expectation is exceptional, carefully justified, and appropriately supervised. Stowe aligns with this guidance while ensuring flexibility for pupils with specific needs.

### Scope of the Policy

This policy applies to all Third, Fourth, and Fifth Form pupils, whether day or boarding, with adjustments for Sixth Form, and to all staff, visitors, and volunteers during the school day. It covers mobile phones, smart watches, tablets, and any other smart devices with similar functionality, including messaging, notifications, internet access, and audio or video recording.

Laptops issued through the School's 1:1 Scheme are governed separately by the ICT Acceptable Use Policy.

### Core Expectations

Stowe School is mobile phone-free in the junior years (Year 9 – 11 (3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> & 5<sup>th</sup> form)) by default during the school day. Pupils are not permitted to have access to mobile phones at any point during the teaching day, including during lessons, breaks, lunchtimes, movement between lessons, or activities.

The policy is clearly communicated, consistently enforced by all staff, and supported by proportionate sanctions where necessary. Reasonable adjustments are made where required for SEND, medical, or safeguarding reasons, in accordance with the Equality Act 2010.

This policy also explains to pupils and parents both the risks of unrestricted mobile phone use and the benefits of a phone-free environment, in line with DfE guidance.

### Mobile Phones During the School Day (Third, Fourth, and Fifth Form)

All Third, Fourth, and Fifth Form pupils are required to hand in their mobile phones at the start of the school day.

- Boarding pupils' phones are collected before bedtime and held securely by Houseparents.
- Day pupils' phones are collected in Houses before the beginning of the school day and held securely by Houseparents.
- Mobile phones are returned after activities have finished at 17:00.

Mobile phones are not required for teaching and learning. Wi-Fi provision across academic areas ensures that all educational needs can be met through pupils' 1:1 Scheme laptops. Mobile phones are therefore not

permitted in lessons or activities and are not included within any Bring Your Own Device arrangements. Social media access is blocked on the School Wi-Fi network during school hours.

Mobile phones are strictly prohibited in any examination room or examination hall.

### Boarding Arrangements and Evening Use

Stowe recognises the importance of balance between structure, independence, and safeguarding within a boarding environment.

- All Third, Fourth, and Fifth Form pupils must hand in their mobile phones before first prep at 17:30 and again before second prep at 19:30.
- Phones may be accessed again after prep, in accordance with House routines.

To support healthy sleep habits:

- Third and Fourth Form pupils must hand in phones, laptops, and other electronic devices 15 minutes before lights out. Charging trolleys are provided in Boarding Houses.
- Fifth Form pupils must hand in mobile phones before bed but may retain laptops overnight as a managed step towards independence. Any misuse will result in confiscation.

Day pupils who bring mobile phones to school must hand them in before the start of the school day and may collect them after activities at 17:00. This ensures parity between day and boarding pupils and supports a calm, focused school day for all. They will also hand in phones during prep sessions.

### **General Mobile Telephone Protocol (All Pupils)**

- Mobile phones must always be used with discretion.
- Pupils are not required to answer calls or message alerts immediately and should wait until an appropriate time and place.
- Mobile phones must never be used during formal occasions such as lunch, concerts, plays, or films.
- Mobile phones must never be used in the library, during lessons, during study periods, during prep, or after lights out.
- For safety reasons, pupils must not move around the site wearing earphones or headphones. This applies to mobile phones and all other electronic devices.

The School's ICT Acceptable Use Policy applies equally to mobile phones, including the use of cameras, video, and internet applications. Where there is reasonable suspicion of a disciplinary offence, the School reserves the right to inspect and monitor the use of a mobile phone in line with statutory guidance.

All staff reserve the right to confiscate a mobile phone if it is used improperly. Confiscated phones are returned via the Houseparent. Phones are normally confiscated for 48 hours but may be held for longer where there is a clear and proportionate reason.

Mobile phones are included as items subject to search under the School's behaviour policy, in line with statutory guidance.

All pupils with a mobile phone must register that phone with their Houseparent. The number will be recorded on iSAMS. Any pupil found using an unregistered or alternative phone will be liable to have it confiscated and to receive a sanction.

Where international pupils need to contact family at times when phones would not normally be accessible, arrangements will be agreed on a case-by-case basis with the Houseparent. In an emergency, pupils may always access a School telephone via House staff or the School Office.

### **Safeguarding, SEND, and Medical Needs**

Some pupils may require access to mobile phones for specific reasons related to disability, medical needs, or individual safeguarding circumstances, such as young carers. Any agreed access will be purpose-specific, time-limited, and supervised and will not constitute a blanket exemption from this policy.

Where misuse raises safeguarding concerns, this will be addressed in line with the School's safeguarding and child protection procedures.

## **Behaviour, Sanctions, and Enforcement**

All staff are expected to enforce this policy consistently.

- Pupils using a mobile phone without permission, or for an inappropriate purpose, should expect the phone to be confiscated for a minimum of 48 hours.
- Repeated misuse may result in longer confiscation periods and further disciplinary sanctions.

Staff Liability Protection: The School is explicitly supported by the Department for Education guidance, which confirms that staff are legally protected from liability for loss or damage to confiscated devices, provided actions are lawful and proportionate.

The School is supported by Department for Education guidance to confiscate mobile phones as a sanction and to include mobile phones as items subject to search under the School's behaviour policies.

## **Sixth Form Access to Mobile Phones**

Sixth Form pupils are permitted limited access to mobile phones, reflecting their increased independence and responsibility. However:

- Access must not undermine the whole-school mobile phone-free culture.
- Mobile phones must not be visible to younger pupils.
- Sixth Form pupils must not have mobile phones out in the dining room, academic areas, or any location where they may be seen by members of the junior school community.
- At the start of every lesson, Sixth Form pupils must hand their mobile phones to the teacher. Phones will be stored securely and out of sight of the pupil for the duration of the lesson to avoid distraction and support focused learning.
- Misuse of mobile phones by Sixth Form pupils remains subject to sanctions in line with the School's behaviour policies.

## **Staff Use of Mobile Phones**

Staff should not use mobile phones for personal reasons in front of pupils during the school day. Professional use, where required for safeguarding, communication, or educational purposes, is permitted.

## **Communication with Parents**

This policy is communicated clearly to pupils and parents and is published by the School. Parents are asked to contact the School Reception or Houseparents during the school day rather than contacting pupils directly.

The policy explains both the risks of mobile phone use and the benefits of a phone-free environment, ensuring parents are aware of the rationale behind the rules and sanctions.

## **Trips, Travel, and Residential**

The School will set clear expectations for mobile phone use on trips and residential visits. Restrictions or prohibitions may apply depending on the nature of the activity, with parental consultation where appropriate.

## **Review**

This policy will be reviewed regularly to ensure compliance with national guidance and to reflect evolving technology, safeguarding practice, and the School's needs.