



The Cowplain School

Work Hard. Enjoy Learning. Achieve Highly.

Mobile Phone Policy.

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1. Introduction and Rationale

The Cowplain School is committed to ensuring disruption-free learning for every student, every minute of every lesson. We believe that calm, focused learning environments are essential for high standards of behaviour, safeguarding, wellbeing, and academic achievement. Students are supported to understand the rationale for a mobile phone-free environment through assemblies, Personal Development lessons and behaviour education.

This policy has been developed with reference to the Department for Education (DfE) guidance Mobile phones in schools (January 2026), which states that schools should be mobile phone-free environments by default, with any reasonable adjustment applied only where necessary and appropriate. The guidance recognises that unrestricted access to mobile phones during the school day can negatively impact concentration, behaviour, social interaction, and pupil safety.

It is not a right for any person to bring an electronic device on to the school premises and to do so is at the discretion of the school. Therefore, the Principal or Head of School may remove the privilege for a student or adult to bring such a device to school temporarily or permanently. Failure to comply with the withdrawal of this privilege is likely to result in the imposition of a serious sanction.

This Mobile Phone Policy supports and operates alongside the school's Behaviour Policy. It sets out clear expectations, rules, and procedures regarding the possession and use of mobile phones and other personal electronic devices on the school site. The policy reflects our shared values of respect, responsibility, and kindness, and our belief that students learn best in an environment that is safe, calm, and free from unnecessary distraction.

2. Scope of the Policy

This policy applies to all students on roll at The Cowplain School and sets out clear rules governing student possession and use of mobile phones. It also outlines expectations for staff, visitors and contractors in relation to modelling appropriate use and safeguarding.

The policy applies:

- During the school day (08:25–15:00 (15:40 for year 11))
- At break and lunchtime
- In all buildings and outdoor areas on the school site
- During school-organised activities where students are under the supervision of school staff

3. Links to Other Policies

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

- Behaviour Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Searching, Screening and Confiscation Guidance
- Online Safety Policy
- SEND Policy
- Equality Act 2010 obligations

4. General Principles

- The Cowplain School operates as a mobile phone-free environment by default, in line with Department for Education guidance. Mobile phones are not essential for learning during the school day and are not required to support high-quality teaching and learning.
- All students are entitled to a calm, safe and focused learning environment, free from unnecessary distraction. The presence and use of mobile phones during the school day can undermine concentration, behaviour, social interaction and learning.
- The school places a high priority on safeguarding, privacy and wellbeing. The inappropriate use of mobile phones can increase the risk of online harm, bullying, harassment, and the misuse or sharing of images, audio or video.
- To support safeguarding and minimise disruption, parents and carers should not contact students directly during the school day. Where communication is necessary, parents should contact the school office, which will ensure messages are passed on appropriately.
- Bringing a mobile phone or personal electronic device onto the school site is entirely at the student's and parent's own risk. The school accepts no responsibility for loss, damage or theft of devices brought into school.
- For the purposes of this policy, a phone ban refers to a period during which a student may not retain possession of a phone during the school day and must hand any phone brought onto site into Reception on arrival and collect it at the end of the school day.

5. Rules on Mobile Phones and Electronic Devices

Students may bring mobile phones to school at their own risk. Any mobile phone, smartwatch or similar personal electronic device brought onto the school site must be switched off and secured within a school-issued Yondr pouch throughout the school day.

Students must:

- Bring their Yondr pouch to school every day.
- Ensure their phone and smartwatch are switched off before being secured.
- Secure their phone during the morning pouching routine.
- Keep the pouch on their person throughout the school day.
- Present the pouch when requested by a member of staff.

Phones and smart devices must remain secured until the end of the school day unless an authorised reasonable adjustment applies.

6. Daily Procedures.

Arrival

- Students should not use phones from arrival onwards.
- During Period 1 registration students will:
 - ensure the pouch is unlocked
 - switch off their phone
 - place phone and smartwatch into the pouch
 - secure the pouch under staff supervision

End of Day

- Students may unlock their pouch using authorised school unlocking stations.
- Students must close the pouch after retrieval of their phone.
- Students remaining on site must continue to follow school phone expectations.

Forgotten Pouches

- Students who forget their pouch must hand in their phone immediately.
- The phone will be returned at the end of the day following a detention.
- Students who forget their pouch on more than two occasions in a term will receive an SLT detention.

Lost or Damaged Pouches

- Students are expected to take reasonable care of their Yondr pouch.
- Each student will be issued with one Yondr pouch for the duration of their time at The Cowplain School.
- Where a pouch is lost, deliberately damaged, or damaged beyond normal wear and tear, a replacement pouch will normally be required. Replacement pouches will be issued through the school and may incur a charge.

- Until a replacement pouch has been obtained, any phone brought onto the school site must be handed into Reception immediately on arrival and collected at the end of the school day.
- If a replacement pouch is not obtained within 10 school days, the student will lose the privilege of bringing a mobile phone or smartwatch onto the school site until a replacement pouch has been provided.
- Deliberate damage to a pouch will also be treated as Circumvention of the Yondr System and sanctioned accordingly.

Late Arrivals and Early Leavers

- Students arriving late or leaving school early must secure or unlock their phone through Reception.
- Reception staff will maintain records and ensure procedures are followed.

Students Without Phones

- Students who do not own or carry a mobile phone, smartwatch or similar device must still bring their assigned Yondr pouch to school each day.
- Parents and carers may notify the school in writing that their child does not bring a mobile phone, smartwatch or similar device to school. The school may require completion of a declaration form for this purpose.
- The school reserves the right to verify declarations that a student does not own or bring a mobile phone to school.
- Students who state that they do not have a phone may be subject to searches in accordance with the school's Searching and Screening procedures where reasonable grounds exist to suspect a breach of this policy.
- If a student who has been declared as not bringing a phone to school is subsequently found to be in possession of a phone, the sanctions outlined within this policy will apply.

7. Procedures for Confiscation:

A phone may be confiscated where:

- A phone is seen, heard or used during the school day.
- A student is found in possession of a phone outside of their Yondr pouch.
- A student is found using a second or alternate phone.
- A student is found using a dummy phone.
- A student is found in possession of an unauthorised unlocking device or high-strength magnet.
- A student is found in possession of a smartwatch or similar device outside of their Yondr pouch.
- A member of staff reasonably suspects that a student has breached this policy.

Confiscated phones:

- Will be stored securely by the school.
- Will be returned in line with the sanctions outlined below.
- May be retained until collected by a parent or carer where required by the policy.

The school accepts no responsibility for loss or damage to phones brought onto site.

8. Sanctions for Misuse

Phone Outside Pouch

First Incident

- Phone confiscated until collected by a parent or carer.
- 1 hour SLT detention.

Second Incident

- Phone confiscated until collected by a parent or carer.
- Parent meeting.
- 2-week phone ban.
- 1 hour SLT detention.

Third Incident

- Phone confiscated until collected by a parent or carer.
- Parent meeting.
- Removal of the privilege to bring a mobile phone or smartwatch onto the school site for a period determined by the Principal or Head of School
- 1 hour SLT detention.

Circumvention of the Yondr System

Circumvention is any deliberate attempt to avoid, defeat, manipulate or undermine the school's mobile phone procedures.

Examples include, but are not limited to:

- Using a second or alternate phone.
- Using a dummy phone.
- Deliberately damaging a pouch.
- Unlocking a pouch without permission.
- Possessing or using an unauthorised unlocking device, including a high-strength magnet.
- Swapping pouches with another student.
- Presenting a pouch which does not contain the student's own phone.
- Any other deliberate attempt to avoid the requirements of this policy.

Circumvention is considered a serious breach of trust and will result in more significant sanctions than simply having a phone outside of a pouch.

First Circumvention Incident

- Phone confiscated until collected by a parent or carer.
- 1 hour SLT detention.
- Parent meeting.

Second Circumvention Incident

- Phone confiscated until collected by a parent or carer.
- 1 hour SLT detention.
- Parent meeting.
- 2-week phone ban.

Third Circumvention Incident

- Phone confiscated until collected by a parent or carer.
- 1 hour SLT detention.
- Parent meeting.
- Removal of the privilege to bring a mobile phone or smartwatch onto the school site for a period determined by the Principal or Head of School

Where a student is subject to a phone ban, any phone brought onto the school site must be handed into Reception at the start of the school day and collected at the end of the school day.

Failure to comply with a phone ban may result in further sanctions, including suspension.

Refusal to Comply

Refusal to hand over a phone, present a Yondr pouch for inspection, secure a phone within a pouch, or comply with a reasonable instruction relating to this policy will be treated as serious defiance.

First Refusal

- 2-day suspension.
- 3 days in TLR, Rose or Federation provision.
- Parent meeting.
- 2-week phone ban.

Second Refusal

- 3-day suspension.
- 3 days in TLR, Rose or Federation provision.
- Parent meeting.
- 4-week phone ban.

Third Refusal

- 4-day suspension.
- 3 days in TLR, Rose or Federation provision.

- Parent meeting with SLT.
- Removal of the privilege to bring a mobile phone or smartwatch onto the school site for a period determined by the Principal or Head of School.

Where a student loses the privilege to bring a phone to school, any phone brought onto site must be handed into Reception immediately on arrival and collected at the end of the school day.

Failure to comply with these arrangements is likely to result in further sanctions, including suspension and the student being directed to attend another school for a period of time (Directed Offsite Provision)

Serious Misuse

Serious misuse includes, but is not limited to:

- Filming or photographing students or staff without permission.
- Sharing images or recordings taken on the school site.
- Accessing, creating or distributing inappropriate content.
- Bullying, harassment or intimidation using a mobile device.
- Any use of a device that places the safety, wellbeing or privacy of another person at risk.

Serious misuse will result in:

- Immediate confiscation.
- Parents required to collect the device.
- A full investigation.
- Sanctions in accordance with the Behaviour Policy, which may include suspension.
- Referral to external agencies where appropriate.

9. Pouch Checks.

The Cowplain School will conduct both planned and unannounced pouch checks throughout the academic year.

Pouch checks form an important part of maintaining a phone-free school environment and ensuring that all students follow the same expectations.

Students may be required to present their pouch to a member of staff at any point during the school day.

During a pouch check, staff may verify:

- That the student is in possession of their assigned pouch.
- That the pouch contains a mobile phone where appropriate.
- That the phone is switched off.
- That the pouch has not been damaged, tampered with or circumvented.

Staff will also look for signs that a pouch has been deliberately damaged or manipulated, including:

- Ripped or cut fabric.
- Bent or cut pins.
- Signs of force to the locking mechanism.
- Pen or pencil marks within the locking mechanism.
- Damage to the locking ball or button.
- Evidence that the pouch has been opened without an authorised unlocking station.

Where concerns arise, students may be subject to further investigation, searches, confiscation of devices or sanctions in accordance with this policy.

Students who refuse to present a pouch for inspection will be dealt with under the Refusal to Comply section of this policy.

The school may conduct whole-school pouch checks or targeted pouch checks where concerns arise regarding compliance with this policy.

10. Searching and Screening

Students may be searched where a member of staff has reasonable grounds to suspect that:

- A mobile phone has been used during the school day.
- A student is in possession of a mobile phone that has not been secured within a Yondr pouch.
- A student is in possession of a second or alternate phone.
- A student is using a dummy phone.
- A student is in possession of an unauthorised unlocking device, including a high-strength magnet.
- A student is attempting to circumvent the Yondr system.
- A student is otherwise in breach of this policy.

Students will be required to hand over phones when entering the Learning Room, Resilience Centre or Rose Centre.

If a student denies possession of a phone, refuses to present a pouch for inspection, refuses a search, or otherwise obstructs the implementation of this policy, sanctions will be applied in accordance with this policy and the school's Behaviour Policy.

Searches will be carried out respectfully, proportionately and in accordance with statutory guidance.

Staff will not access the contents of a device unless authorised to do so under relevant statutory guidance. Any safeguarding concerns will be referred immediately to a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).

All significant incidents, searches and confiscations will be recorded using the school's reporting systems.

11. Roles and Responsibilities

Students are responsible for:

- Bringing their assigned Yondr pouch to school every day.
- Ensuring that their phone and any smartwatch or similar device are switched off and secured within their pouch during the morning routine.
- Keeping their pouch with them throughout the school day.
- Presenting their pouch when requested by a member of staff.
- Following all instructions relating to the use of Yondr pouches.
- Reporting accidental damage to a pouch immediately.
- Taking reasonable care of their pouch and returning it in good condition.

Staff are responsible for:

- Enforcing this policy consistently.
- Supervising the daily pouching routine.
- Challenging any breaches of this policy.
- Reporting incidents through school systems.
- Conducting pouch checks when required.
- Referring significant incidents to pastoral leaders or SLT.
- Modelling appropriate mobile phone use around students.

Staff may carry and use mobile phones for professional purposes. Personal use should be kept to a minimum when in the presence of students and must not undermine the expectations placed upon students.

Pastoral Team and Senior Leaders are responsible for:

- Supporting the implementation of the policy.
- Managing significant incidents and repeat offenders.
- Conducting random pouch checks.
- Monitoring compliance and trends.
- Leading communication with parents and carers where required.
- Maintaining records relating to phone bans, confiscations and serious breaches of the policy.

Reception Staff are responsible for:

- Supporting late arrivals and early leavers with pouching and unpouching procedures.
- Securely storing confiscated phones where required.
- Supporting communication with parents and carers.
- Maintaining records associated with phone collection and return.

Parents and Carers are expected to:

- Support the school's mobile phone policy.
- Ensure their child brings their Yondr pouch to school each day.
- Avoid contacting students directly during the school day.
- Contact the school office if urgent communication is required.
- Attend meetings and collect devices where required under this policy.
- Support sanctions applied in accordance with this policy.

Trustees and Senior Leaders are responsible for ensuring that this policy is implemented fairly, consistently and in accordance with statutory guidance.

12. Reasonable Adjustments

The Cowplain School recognises that, in exceptional circumstances, a small number of students may require a reasonable adjustment to this policy where this is necessary to meet a specific medical need, fulfil the school's safeguarding responsibilities or comply with its duties under the Equality Act 2010. The existence of a special educational need or disability does not automatically give rise to an exception to this policy.

Any reasonable adjustment under this policy must be approved by the Principal or Head of School following consultation with the SENDCo and/or other relevant professionals, where appropriate.

Medical Needs

Students whose medical condition requires access to a mobile device as part of an agreed healthcare plan may be issued with a medical Yondr pouch.

This will normally apply only where access to a mobile device is clinically necessary during the school day to clinically safeguard the health of a child.

Decisions will be based on medical evidence and, where appropriate, the student's Individual Healthcare Plan.

SEND and Disability

A diagnosis of SEND, Autism, ADHD or any other special educational need or disability does not, by itself, require an exception to this policy.

Where a student's SEND or disability creates a specific and evidenced need that cannot reasonably be met whilst complying with this policy, the school will consider whether a reasonable adjustment is required in accordance with the Equality Act 2010.

Any adjustment will:

- be based on individual evidence and context rather than diagnosis alone;
- be the minimum adjustment necessary;
- be agreed by the SENDCo and a member of the Senior Leadership Team;
- be recorded and reviewed regularly.

Regarding the above, the decision of the school is final.

Safeguarding Considerations

Temporary adjustments may be authorised where this is necessary to safeguard a child or to comply with statutory safeguarding duties. Such arrangements will be time-limited and reviewed regularly.

Review of Adjustments

All reasonable adjustments:

- Must be formally agreed by the school.
- Will be recorded appropriately.
- Will be reviewed regularly.
- May be amended or withdrawn if circumstances change.

The existence of a reasonable adjustment for one student does not create an entitlement for other students to receive a similar adjustment. The Principal or Head of School's decision regarding any reasonable adjustment under this policy shall be final.

13. Trips, Visits and Extra-Curricular Activities

The expectations outlined within this policy apply during all school-organised activities where students are under the supervision of school staff.

Where students attend educational visits, sporting fixtures, residential visits, performances, enrichment activities or other school-organised events, mobile phone arrangements will be determined by the Trip Leader in consultation with senior leaders.

In some circumstances, alternative arrangements may be authorised to support:

- Student safety.
- Educational activities.
- Travel arrangements.
- Residential visits.
- Communication requirements.

Any variation to the normal school-day expectations will be communicated to students and parents in advance.

Where no alternative arrangements have been communicated, students should assume that the expectations contained within this policy remain in place.

The school reserves the right to require phones to remain secured in Yondr pouches throughout any school-organised activity.

14. Monitoring, Review and Evaluation

The effectiveness of this policy will be monitored through:

- Behaviour and confiscation data
- Safeguarding records
- Student and staff feedback
- Parent feedback

The policy will be reviewed annually or sooner if required to ensure it remains effective and compliant with statutory guidance.

The policy is monitored by Trustees and the Senior Leadership Team. The effectiveness of the policy (against the Objectives) will be reviewed by Trustees and the Senior Leadership Team every year.

Date Reviewed:	Summer 2026	Written by:	JCK	Next Review:	Summer 2027
Summary of changes made:	New policy				
Approved by Academy Trustees on:	7 th July 2026				