



May 2026

Dear Parents and Carers

Re: **Mobile Phones**

I am writing to you to explain our strategy to align our mobile phone policy with national guidance, alongside the latest research and information on mobile phone use in schools.

What we know now

There's a growing shift in how families and schools are thinking about smartphones and young people. Increasingly, parents are choosing to delay giving children smartphones, while schools across the country are strengthening their phone policies to better support learning, well-being and real-world connection.

When smartphones were first introduced, their long-term impact was not fully understood. However, there is now a strong and growing body of research highlighting concerns. Studies in the UK have shown that early smartphone use is linked to higher levels of anxiety, disrupted sleep, increased risk of exposure to harmful content and reduced time for play, connection and creativity. Further research has shown that children who spend more than three hours per day on social media are significantly more likely to experience symptoms of anxiety and depression, with reduced sleep identified as a key contributing factor.

There is also evidence that reducing smartphone use can have a positive impact. A recent school-based study found that when smartphones were removed, students experienced improved sleep and a positive impact on learning, including schools with strong phone restrictions in place students achieved 1 to 2 grades higher at GCSE.

As educators, we see the day-to-day impact of mobile phones on focus, attention and readiness to learn. Even when not visible, phones can distract students and reduce their ability to fully engage with their learning.

Department for Education guidance

In January 2026, the Department for Education (DfE) published updated guidance on mobile phones in schools. This guidance is clear that all schools should be mobile phone-free environments by default, with phone use prohibited throughout the entire school day, including during lessons, movement between lessons, breaktimes and lunchtimes.

Schools were advised to begin implementing this guidance from April 2026, and Ofsted will consider how effectively schools enforce these expectations as part of inspections.

Our approach across Academy Transformation Trust

As a Trust, we are united in our belief that students should experience a genuine break from their phones during the academy day. This is about creating an environment where young people can focus, build relationships and engage fully in academy life.

At The Queen Elizabeth Academy, this commitment is closely aligned with our core values:

- **Pride** – taking pride in our learning, environment and achievements without distraction
- **Endeavour** – working with focus, determination and effort in every lesson
- **Resilience** – developing independence and the ability to manage challenges without reliance on devices
- **Kindness** – building meaningful, face-to-face relationships and positive social interactions

Our mobile phone policy is a key part of strengthening these values in daily academy life.

Arrangements for the academy day

We recognise that many parents value their child having access to a phone when travelling to and from the academy. This policy applies during the academy day only. From September, all students will be expected to place their phones in a secure, lockable pouch on arrival at the academy. These pouches will remain locked throughout the day, including during lessons and social times. Students will then unlock them at the end of the day as they leave the site.

To support a smooth transition, *phone pouches will be arriving at The Queen Elizabeth Academy before the summer*, and we will begin preparing students for this change in advance and introducing them prior to September 2026.

Medical and exceptional circumstances

We recognise that a small number of students may need access to their phones for medical reasons, for example to monitor diabetes. In such cases, appropriate arrangements will be made, and we will work closely with families to ensure individual needs are fully supported.

Supporting families

We understand that this represents a significant change. However, we also know that positive change is most successful when we work together. This is not about removing technology, but about using it more intentional - helping young people develop healthy habits, improve their wellbeing, and focus on what matters most.

Next steps

We will continue to communicate with parents and carers over the coming months to outline how this policy will be implemented in practice and how we will support students through the transition.

Thank you in advance for your support in helping us create the best possible environment for our students to thrive.

Yours faithfully



Alison Morris
Head of Academy