



Smartphone-Free School Policy

From September 2026

Oaks Park Smartphone-Free School Policy Effective From: September 2026

1. Introduction and Aims

At Oaks Park High School, our mission is 'Learning Together, Achieving Together'. To fulfill this, we are committed to creating a calm, focused, and inclusive environment where every student can thrive, free from digital distractions.

We are proud to take a leading role in the national movement to reclaim childhood and protect students' focus. In line with the Department for Education's expectation that all schools become 'smartphone-free environments by default,' and supporting the government's wider initiatives to protect children online, we are updating our policy to protect learning time and support student wellbeing.

This policy is designed to support parents, protect students, and ensure our classrooms remain uninterrupted spaces for growth.

2. The New Expectations (What You Need to Know)

To maintain a safe and focused environment, the following rules apply to all students on the school site, during trips and visits abroad:

- **Years 7 to 11:** Students must not bring a smartphone (or any device with internet connectivity or apps, Smartwatches, Smart glasses, Wireless headphones, etc.) to school or trips.
 - *Travel Safety Allowance:* We understand parents want peace of mind during the commute. Therefore, **basic feature phones (calls and texts only) or simple tracking tags (like AirTags) are fully permitted**, provided the basic phone remains switched off and securely in school bags throughout the day.
- **Sixth Form (Years 12 & 13):** We recognise that our older students have increased independence, wider responsibilities, and different travel requirements. Therefore, Sixth Formers are permitted to bring smartphones to school; however, they must remain switched off and in their bags at all times while on the school site.
- **Smartwatches, Smartglasses or Earphones:** Students in Years 7 to 13 must not wear or bring smartwatches or wireless earphones to school.

3. Why We Are Taking This Step

Our decision is grounded in strong evidence and our professional experience regarding the adverse effects of smartphones on young people. By establishing a universal, school-wide standard, we also hope to remove the pressure parents feel to buy their children expensive smart devices just to "fit in".

Our Shared Concerns	The Benefit of a Smartphone-Free School
Attention & Focus: Constant notifications and screen-switching impair a child's ability to focus, retain information, and engage in sustained learning.	Academic Success: Eliminates a major source of distraction, strengthening cognitive skills and promoting sustained attention in lessons.

Mental Health & Wellbeing: Extensive smartphone use and social media are heavily linked to rising levels of youth anxiety, depression, and digital dependency.	Real Connections: Creates a sanctuary from online pressures, encouraging face-to-face friendships, empathy, and participation in the school community.
Safeguarding: Smartphones bypass school safety filters, increasing exposure to harmful content, cyberbullying, and the sharing of inappropriate imagery.	Safety First: Greatly reduces safeguarding risks and the potential for child-on-child abuse facilitated by smart devices.
Physical Safety: High-value smartphones make children a target for theft on their commute.	Safer Travel: Basic phones or trackers remove the risk of mugging while still allowing emergency contact with home.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

All staff (including teachers, support staff and supply staff) are responsible for enforcing this policy. Volunteers, or anyone else otherwise engaged by the school, must alert a member of staff if they witness, or are aware of, a breach of this policy.

The Headteacher is responsible for monitoring the policy, reviewing it every three years, and holding staff and students accountable for its implementation.

5. How We Will Uphold These Expectations Together

We ask for your full support in maintaining this phone-free environment. If a student is found using or in possession of a prohibited device, we will take the following steps. All incidents will be logged on the school behaviour database.

Note: If a device is confiscated shortly before a school holiday, the device will be retained by the school throughout the holiday period and returned only when school resumes.

Incident		Consequence: Action to Restore Focus and Safety
Seen with a Permitted Basic Feature Phone	→	Confiscated until the end of the next school day. Parent/Carer notified.
Seen with a Smartphone (1st Instance)	→	Confiscated for one school week. Parent/Carer notified.
Seen with a Smartphone (2nd Instance)	→	Confiscated for one calendar month. Parents/Carer must attend school in person to collect the device.
Possession of a "Second Phone" (e.g. handing in one device but secretly keeping another)	→	Confiscated for one calendar month. Parents/Carer must attend school in person to collect the device.
Smartwatches, Smart glasses, or Wireless Earphones (Years 7–13)	→	Treated as a prohibited device: Confiscated (Duration to align with smartphone sanctions above).

Photography or Filming (Staff or Students)	→	Confiscated for 6 school weeks. Potential for a further serious sanction in line with the Behaviour policy depending on the nature of the footage.
Bringing School into Disrepute (Sharing harmful footage or social media posts)	→	Confiscated for 6 school weeks. Potential for a further serious sanction in line with the Behaviour policy. The school reserves the right to involve the police for harassment or threats.
Refusal to Comply (Refusing to hand over a device or passcode)	→	Treated as a serious breach of the Behaviour Policy , leading to greater sanctions.
Exam/Test Environment Breach	→	Immediate confiscation. The incident must be reported to the exam board , which may result in disqualification from the qualification.
Sixth Form Misuse (Phone found not in bag or in use)	→	Confiscated until the end of the next school day. Depending on the severity of the incident, a further sanction may be applied in line with the Behaviour Policy.
Social Media Misuse (Participating in conversations/posts that cause upset to the school community, even during holidays or evenings)	→	Treated as a serious breach of the Behaviour Policy , leading to greater sanctions.

6. Loss, Theft, or Damage

The school accepts no responsibility for mobile devices that are lost, damaged, or stolen on school premises or transport, during school visits or trips, or while students are travelling to and from school. Confiscated devices will be stored securely in a locked cabinet. The school will not be liable for any loss or damage to that item. Any items, including mobile devices, found on the school premises should be returned to the Student Services Hub.

7. Monitoring and Review

The school is committed to ensuring that this policy has a positive impact on students' education, behaviour, and welfare. When reviewing the policy, the school will consider feedback from parents, students, teachers, and Governors, alongside records of behaviour and safeguarding incidents, and relevant advice from the Department for Education or the local authority.

8. Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) - Smart Mobile Phones and Devices

The Rules & Permitted Devices

1. So is a basic phone allowed to be brought to school, but a smartphone is not? Yes, but only a basic feature phone (calls and texts only). Smartphones and internet-enabled devices are not permitted on the school site.

2. What is a Basic/Simple phone? A basic feature phone is a simple device designed primarily for calls and text messages, with little or no internet access (for example, a Nokia 105 or similar model). There is no ability to download applications on a "basic" phone. Popular highly durable

examples include the Nokia 105, Nokia 110 4G, IMO Dash, and TTfone TT190.

3. Why does the school not allow smartphones? Oaks Park High School is a smartphone-free environment to promote a calm, focused, and safe atmosphere for all students in line with statutory guidelines.

4. Can my child use their phone during the school day? No. Any permitted basic phone must be switched off and kept securely in the student's bag for the entire time they are on the school site.

5. Can students carry their phone in their pocket? No. Phones must remain switched off and in bags at all times and must not be carried on the student's person (coat, blazer or trouser pockets).

6. Can my child bring a smartphone if it is locked in a magnetically sealed pouch? No. While some schools use magnetically sealed pouches to lock phones away, Oaks Park does not permit pouches for general student use. The policy requires basic phones only. Pouches for smartphones will only be considered on a strictly case-by-case basis (for example, if approved by the Headteacher for specific, documented medical or safeguarding exemptions).

Contact & Travel

7. What if I need to contact my child during the school day? If there is an emergency during the day, parents and carers should contact Student Services for a message to be passed on.

8. What if my child needs to contact home? Students can go to Student Services before school, during break, lunchtime or after school until 4.30pm to make a call home.

9. Can I use a tracking device instead of a phone? Yes. Simple tracking tags (such as Apple AirTags, Samsung SmartTags, or Tile) are allowed but must remain securely stored in your child's bag throughout the school day.

10. How will my child pay for their journey to and from school if they cannot use a smartphone? Because smartphones (and digital wallets like Apple Pay or Google Pay) are not permitted on the school journey, students must use alternative physical payment methods. Families should ensure their child carries a physical Zip Oyster card or a physical debit/bank card to pay for travel on buses and trains.

Exceptions & Medical Needs

11. Are there any exceptions to the rules? Yes, in specific circumstances: Medical needs (e.g. devices required to monitor health conditions such as diabetes), travel communication using a basic feature phone, and alternative tracking devices (such as simple tracking tags).

12. What do I need to do if my child requires a device for medical reasons? You must inform the school in advance and provide appropriate medical evidence so reasonable adjustments can be put in place.

13. Can my child use a smartphone for medical purposes? In accordance with legal duties under the Equality Act 2010 and the Children and Families Act 2014, the school will make reasonable adjustments for students with documented medical conditions who require a prescribed specialised device to monitor their condition. For example, students with diabetes may use a mobile device to record and monitor blood sugar levels via a continuous glucose monitoring sensor. Parents/carers must inform the school in advance to ensure these health needs are supported while maintaining the integrity of the school's wider policy.

Enforcement, Searches & Liability

14. What happens if a student brings a prohibited device? The device will be confiscated, and appropriate sanctions will be applied in line with the school's behaviour policy and sanctions as listed in the policy.

15. Can the school search my child for a phone? Yes. In accordance with the latest DfE guidance from February 2026, the Headteacher and authorised staff have a statutory power to search a student or their possessions where they have reasonable grounds to suspect the student is in possession of a prohibited item. To ensure maximum clarity and safety, Oaks Park High School explicitly identifies mobile phones and all "smart" technology as items that may be

searched for under this policy.

16. Can staff look at the contents of a phone? Yes, but only where there is a good reason, such as concerns about safeguarding, cyberbullying, or harmful content.

17. Can the school delete content from a device? Yes. Staff may delete data if there is a valid reason to do so, unless the device needs to be passed to the police.

18. Will confiscation always be the same for every student? No. Any sanctions will be proportionate and will take into account the student's age, needs (including SEND), and the circumstances. The sanctions in the policy above will be what is used.

19. Is the school responsible if a confiscated item is lost or damaged? School staff are protected by law when confiscating items, provided they act in accordance with school policy.

20. What happens if something serious is found on a device? If there are safeguarding concerns, the school will follow child protection procedures and involve the Designated Safeguarding Lead. In serious cases, the police may be contacted.

9. Support and Guidance for Families

We recognise that managing technology at home can be challenging. We highly recommend the following trusted resources to help you support your child with positive digital habits:

- **Smartphone Free Childhood:** Resources and parent communities dedicated to delaying smartphone use (smartphonefreechildhood.co.uk).
- **Internet Matters:** Practical guides on parental controls and managing screen time (internetmatters.org).
- **NSPCC Online Safety:** Support for protecting children from online harm (nspcc.org.uk).

Appendix 1

Statutory Alignment and Related Policies

This policy has also utilised the following guidance:

- [Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill 2026](#)
- [Searching, screening and confiscation at school](#)
- [Mental Health and behaviour in schools](#)
- [Supporting students with medical conditions at school](#)
- [The Equality Act 2010](#)
- [Behaviour in schools](#)
- [Education Act 2002](#)
- [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)
- [Working together to safeguard children 2026](#)