

Mobile Phone Approach - Frequently Asked Questions



Why is the school changing its mobile phone policy?

We are making this change in response to strengthened government guidance regarding mobile phones from the government. The Secretary of State for Education has said **'I have always been clear that mobile phones have no place in schools. All schools should be phone-free environments for the entire school day. That includes lessons, time between lessons, breaktimes and lunchtime'**. On reflection we also feel that a 'phone-free school' will help with student focus, positive social interactions, minimise distractions, further improve wellbeing, and engagement in learning.

What has the school done to reach this decision?



We have not taken this decision lightly and have considered several approaches to best fit our ethos. Some of the steps we have taken to reach this decision include:

- Visited several schools who adopt different approaches;
- Met with our school Safeguarding advisory team;
- Met with the Local Authority;
- Met with the student council;
- Consulted with pastoral and curriculum leaders;
- Consulted and liaised with our governing body.

What is the new approach?



If students choose to bring a phone to school, they will be required to hand in their phone to their tutor at the start of the school day. Each student will place their phone in an allocated, numbered foam slot in a cabinet. Cabinets will be locked securely all day. Phones will be returned to students at the end of the day during tutor time.

What if my child arrives late to school?



- If a student doesn't arrive to school on time, they should enter school via main reception where they will hand their phone into the senior member of staff for safe keeping. Their phone will be stored in a locked cabinet in main reception. Students will receive a ticket with a number - students will need this to collect their phone at the end of the school day (after tutor time) from the main hall.
- If a student arrives after tutor time, they should still enter via main reception and hand in their phone for safe keeping all day as outlined above.
- If a student arrives late, they may have to stay back to collect their phone from a member of the Senior Leadership Team after they have finished their after-school duty. This will be 15 minutes after the end of the school day.
- If a student arrives late because of a legitimate reason such as a medical appointment, they will still need to hand in their phone to reception but will be able to go straight to reception to collect their phone at the end of the day.



What about travel arrangements from school?

Phones will be returned to students before they leave school, so they will have access to them for their journey home.

What do students need to do before handing their phone?



Students should make sure their phone is **switched off or on airplane mode** before giving it to their tutor.

How will students access their timetable, TEAMS and other school resources without their phones?

Students will be issued a paper copy of their timetable at the start of the academic year. They should keep their timetable safe, in a school bag with them at all times. Students will be offered the opportunity to use an A5 wallet to store their timetable, ID card, and other resources. Students may also wish to bring in an academic diary.

All homework will still be added to TEAMS by class teachers, and students will need to access this in their own time as this is work to be completed at home.

Staff will support students in adjusting to these changes.

What will happen in lessons where students have previously used phones as part of their learning?



Technology remains an important part of learning. Lessons where students need access to technology will be provided for students either by using iPads or computers.

What about using phones to pay for lunch?

- In school, payment can be made using the facial recognition / biometric system with the ParentPay top-up system. For those who are yet to register, please email accounts@whitleybayhighschool.org for application guidance.
- Bank cards are also accepted at all catering points in school.
- Out of school, students will need cash or a debit card.

Is my child still able to leave the school site at lunchtime?



Students will still be able to leave the school site at lunchtime with your consent, but they will not have their phone during this time. Please be assured that we will be increasing our duty staff and Senior Leadership Team presence in the local community at lunchtime. We are also planning 'safety awareness' tutorials/assemblies for all students in preparation for this change. We advise that any students who wish to leave the site do so with a friend or group of friends.

If you or your child does not feel comfortable leaving the school site at lunchtime without a phone, they are very welcome to stay on site and use our canteen or bring a packed lunch.

What happens on assembly days?

Or if a student is leaving to go on a school trip?

If students are going out on a trip, the trip leader will coordinate the collection and return of phones before students leave the school site.

What if my child doesn't want to bring a bag to school?



We advise ALL students bring a bag to school to carry their timetable and other school resources in.

What happens if there is a fire or damage to my child's phone?

Students are not required to bring a mobile phone into school, therefore, should they choose to do so, this will be at their own risk. School insurance does not provide cover for personal items.

Additional FAQs following parent/carer feedback:

Will there be congestion at the Deneholm/Valley Gardens Junction with the new school day timings?

With the start of the WBHS school day from September (tutorial begins at 8.40 with students on site from 8.35am) being closer to the VGMS start of the day (8.45am) we will be adding to our duty rota team to have at least one member of our leadership team on duty at this junction in the morning.

We would ask that parents/carers encourage their children to walk or cycle to school or, if this is not possible, park slightly further away from the school to avoid the congestion at this junction.

We will continue to liaise with the Local Authority to look at traffic calming measures in this area as we have done in the past.

Paying for lunch - Clarification Point

Students will not have access to their phones over lunch. Please refer to the comments earlier in this document relating to this.

Therefore, students will not be able to pay for food either in school or in the community with a phone.

Payment can be made in school using –

- Our biometric system, linked to the ParentPay top up system. If you have not already registered with the ParentPay System, you will have received details on how to register if you would like to.
- Bank cards, which are accepted at all catering points on site.

Outside of school, students will need to use cash or a debit card.

For those who have not yet opted into the biometric system, we will provide another opportunity for biometrics to be taken in the week following May half-term.