



# **Chetham's**

## **Mobile Phones Policy**

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# Chetham's

## Mobile Phones Policy

### Introduction

At Chetham's we recognise that mobile phones are an important part of everyday life in a boarding and music school. **The phrase 'mobile phones' whenever used in this policy also refers to other sim-enabled digital communication devices and smart technology which function like a mobile phone.** This policy seeks to define the potential risks, harms, and measures, to encourage healthy and productive use.

### Aims and Rationale

Chetham's has long recognised the potentially negative impact of mobile phone use on wellbeing and learning and has sought to manage this through education. We regularly explain both the risks of mobile phone use and the benefits of a phone-free environment to students, notably in tutor time and through PSHE.

This policy follows DfE [Mobile phones in schools 19/2/26](#) guidance and aims to benefit the school community by:

- safeguarding against risks to our students
- reducing any potential negative impact on mental health
- guarding against over reliance on mobile technology
- removing distractions in worktime
- encouraging face-to-face socialisation.

This policy should be read in conjunction with our *Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Procedures; Good Behaviour Manual; and Digital Safety and Acceptable Use Policy.*

### Lower and Middle School

Students in Lower and Middle School are not allowed to have a mobile phone on their person during the School day anywhere on site. The School day is Monday to Friday; 8:30am – 4:30pm, including between lessons and during break times. However, the Dining Room is always a phone-free zone, regardless of day/time.

In addition, students in Lower and Middle School must not bring an internet or sim-enabled smart watch, smart glasses, or any similar smart technology to School. See the *Acceptable Use Policy* for further information.

Students in Lower and Middle School will hand in their switched off phones & smart devices in the Houses before the working day:

- Boarders: by 8:15am
- Day students: by 8:25am

Phones will be kept securely in House offices (NCH/MH) or in the VH common room phone lockers.

**Note:** Houses will not charge mobile phones or other devices. It is the responsibility of the student to bring a fully charged device if they require a phone to arrange public transport/collection at the end of the day.

Phone sign-out will be from 4:30pm for everyone except Juniors who can collect their phones at 3:30pm. Students who have evening commitments in School will need to ensure that their phone is off and, out of sight in a bag, or instrument case for the duration of their rehearsal or other commitment.

## **Sixth Form**

The DfE Guidance says that Sixth form students may be permitted to have access to their phones at limited times/locations, reflecting their increased maturity and independence and responsibility.

Sixth Form students may have a mobile device (or other smart technology) on their person, but phones must be switched off and in bags or not visible including the time between lessons and at break times.

However, sixth formers must not undermine or compromise the whole-school policy and their phones should not be visible to younger students. For clarity, this will apply across the site except that devices may be used for educational purposes in study spaces only. These are:

- the sixth form area of the school library
- the sixth form Study Centre on the Art corridor (formerly Lower School Classroom).

Sixth form students are also permitted to use devices as part of their self-directed, independent practice where this is alone or in a group with other sixth form students.

Sixth form students are also permitted to use phones for appropriate leisure purposes in the sixth form common rooms in the Houses.

Year 11, subject to compliance, will be accorded sixth form phone privileges at the commencement of study leave.

## **Lower and Middle School Students Going Off-site During the School Day**

Occasionally students are given permission to leave the School site unaccompanied by an adult during the school day, under the guidance set out in the *Chetham's A-Z*. They must sign their mobile phone out from the House for that specific purpose, even if going off site in a group with other students, as a matter of safety.

Going off site without a phone is not allowed. It is a direct contradiction of our fundamental behaviour premise of safety, and a consequence will be issued to reflect this. Failure to return their phone immediately after swiping back into School will also result in consequences.

If a Middle School student needs to go into town during the School day they must sign their phone out from House between 1:00pm and 1:15pm and must sign it back in as soon as they return to school, no later than 2:15pm.

Students may also go off-site for medical appointments or School trips. These are usually chaperoned. Occasionally there may be a good reason for the student to sign their phone out for the duration.

## **Outside of the School Day: Events, Trips; and Excursions**

For all students phones must be out of sight and switched off during:

- Musical activities in the evenings, and at weekends
- Open Days
- School event days such as Founder's Day
- Music Courses
- Concerts and masterclasses outside of school hours.
- External concerts
- Educational and Activity Trips

The use of mobile phones during external concerts and trips will be subject to the requirements of the trip Leader and will form part of the risk assessment for that trip. For example, students might be permitted phones during travel but once rehearsals, performances or activities begin the phones will be handed over to a member of School staff or switched off and stowed in bags.

## **Medical and Other Exceptions**

Chetham's makes reasonable adjustments under the *Equality Act 2010*. Students may require phone access for managing medical conditions (e.g. diabetes monitoring). We would accommodate other individual circumstances (e.g. young carers) on a case-by-case basis. The Medical Centre or members of the Pastoral Management Team will give permission and a pass for any such need.

## **Adjustments for Boarders**

Children who need to contact home during the School day (planned or emergent) can liaise with Houses. The medical and safeguarding teams can also facilitate contact if necessary or in an emergency. Parents should contact the House in the first instance if they need to get in touch with their child during the School day.

## **Staff Roles and Responsibilities**

All staff (including teachers, support staff, and supply staff) are responsible for supporting the adoption and consistent application of this policy. It forms a core part of our behaviour principles: students should be ready, safe and show respect.

It is inappropriate for staff to make or receive calls, or send texts, while children are present and during contact time. Use of personal mobile phones is restricted to non-contact time, and to areas of the School where students are not present (such as the staff room). There may be rare circumstances, such as emergency contact, in which it is appropriate for a member of staff to use their phone during contact time, for example, emergency contact from or about a family member.

**Note:** some staff are required to use School mobile phones for operational reasons during the day. This includes staff on trips, and is permitted.

## **Parents, Visitors, Volunteers, Governors And Contractors**

Parents wishing to contact their child during the School day must contact the relevant House rather than the child's device.

Visitors, Volunteers, Governors and Contractors are required to follow this policy as if they were staff on the School site during the School day. This means:

- Not using their phone in front of students
- Not taking pictures or recordings of students or their own child
- Not posting on social media without consent

Parents, visitors and volunteers will be reminded of the rules for mobile phone use when they sign in at reception or attend a public event at School.

**Note:** visitors to Chetham's Library will not be prevented from taking photographs of the buildings unless their tour coincides with students' break or lunch times or there are children in shot.

## **Consequences For Improper Or Inappropriate Use**

### **Lower and Middle School**

If a mobile phone is seen or used outside of the agreed times and/or places:

- 1<sup>st</sup> instance: confiscation until the end of the school day & recorded on recon (low).
- 2<sup>nd</sup> instance: confiscation until the end of the school day and for the following day; Parents and House informed. Recorded on recon (med).
- 3<sup>rd</sup> instance: confiscation as above for 3 days plus detention with Head of Section and meeting requested with parents. Recorded on recon (med).

Persistent improper or inappropriate phone use could result in longer term restrictions in accordance with the *Good Behaviour Manual*.

### **Sixth Form**

If a mobile phone is seen or used outside of the agreed times and/or places:

- 1st instance: verbal warning & recorded on recon (low)

- 2nd instance: as per Lower and Middle School (confiscation and gating for an appropriate number of days)

Persistent improper or inappropriate phone or device use could result in a student's sixth form phone privileges being revoked on a short or long term basis.

### **All Years: Unsafe and Inappropriate Use**

If a phone is used unsafely/inappropriately, in contradiction with this or the *Digital Safety AUP* it will be confiscated immediately, and there maybe additional consequences as laid out in the *Good Behaviour Manual*. Examples of unsafe use include, but are not limited to:

- taking of photographs
- video or audio recording
- accessing inappropriate content
- a 6<sup>th</sup> form student allowing a younger student access to a phone

### **Confiscation Process**

Phones confiscated in lessons will be kept in the teacher's classroom until the end of the period or academic block, and then handed-in to the Music Office (for phones taken in the New School Building) or to Lesley Haslam (for phones confiscated outside of the New School Building). Teachers will inform the student's House and Head of Section. The teacher who confiscated the phone will add the incident to recon if a consequence is required.

Phones confiscated outside of academic lessons should be handed in to the Music Office or to Lesley Haslam's office as soon as possible.

### **Mitigating Device Theft, Loss, or Damage**

Students are encouraged to identify their phones (and other devices) e.g. by using a UV (ultraviolet) or "invisible" ink marker to write initials, phone number, or a unique ID on the internal or external components of the phone. Likewise they are reminded to take a screenshot of the phone's IMEI (International Mobile Equipment Identity) which will enable them to block the network if the phone is lost. Students should secure their phones as much as possible, including using passwords, facial/fingerprint recognition or pin codes to protect access to the phone's functions.

All reasonable steps will be taken to keep phones safely. The School is not responsible for loss of or damage to confiscated devices.

### **Monitoring And Review**

The School is committed to ensuring that this policy has a positive impact on students' education, behaviour and welfare.

This policy will be reviewed after one term in the first instance and annually thereafter.

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## **Appendix 1**

### **Frequently Asked Questions**

#### **Who was consulted?**

Prior to the writing of this policy, we consulted with students, parents and colleagues via surveys and Student Forum. Some concerns were raised by parents and students; many of these feature below.

#### **How will students know about timetable and on the day changes?**

Students identified the need to access StREAM as a reason to keep their phones. We recognise that they have become used to being able to consult a dynamic timetable. In response, we will ensure that computers are available at key points on Floor 1 of the New School Building (Timetabling Office, Music Office) and in Houses. All staff will ensure that they are logged on to deal with any queries through these terminals. Last minute changes on StREAM have drifted from being an exception to the norm, and we feel it's time to reverse the culture and minimise changes except in emergencies.

#### **How will students access their practice journal or prep diary?**

Students pointed out that access to these was usually provided by their mobile phones. On consultation with music and academic staff, we feel that they can, and should, have a working knowledge of what they need to focus on in practice and they can refresh their understanding overnight or whenever they are online on a computer or iPad. Prep is mainly done outside of the working day.

Audio recording during daytime practice and metronomes used to aid playing can be achieved through stand-alone voice recorders or electronic metronomes. The latter are also available to borrow from the Practice department.

#### **Why are Sixth Form different?**

The DfE guidance recognises that Sixth Form students have greater maturity and this should be reflected in what we stipulate for their phone use. We feel that giving sixth formers responsibility to keep their phones with them in the School day but switched off is a better preparation for adult life than an outright ban. Musicians in the digital age will undoubtedly need to be fluent in technology and able to use it without falling prey to the dangers of, for example, wasted time or reduced human contact.

#### **The guidance is all about reducing risk, what benefits are there?**

The big benefit is human interaction. Screens can be so absorbing that students can become unaware of their surroundings and other people. By removing phones from the School day, everyone can be more sociable, enjoy each-others' company, learn valuable people and communication skills, become more emotionally literate, and forge long-lasting and meaningful relationships. As such we hope that our young musicians will be more able to communicate the emotion of their performances to their audiences by being more socially aware.

And when it comes to using their phones again, it is hoped that students will use them in more positively, active and thoughtful ways.