

Thomas Telford School



Mobile Phone and Smart Device Policy

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Aims

In line with Government guidance (DFE, June, 2026) on prohibiting the use of mobile phones in school, this policy aims to:

- Set clear guidelines for the use of mobile phones, and smart technology, for students, staff, parents/carers, and visitors/volunteers
- Promote safe and responsible phone use
- Support the school's other policies, especially those related to safeguarding and behaviour

This policy also aims to address some of the challenges posed by phones in schools:

- Risks to child protection and safeguarding
- Data protection issues
- Disruption to learning
- Risk of theft, loss, or damage
- Appropriate use of technology

Use of mobile phones by students

The DFE's mobile phone guidance (DFE, June, 2026) states that phone use should be prohibited during the school day: during lessons, breaktimes, time between lessons, and lunchtime.

At Thomas Telford School, students should not use their mobile phones, or smart technology, during the school day (7.45am to 5.00pm), in lessons, at break or lunch, in the toilets or changing rooms, or during Session Three (3.30pm to 5.00pm).

If a student brings their mobile phone to school, it should be turned off and not accessed throughout the school day. The school accepts no responsibility for phones that are lost, damaged, or stolen on school premises, during visits or trips, or whilst students are travelling to and from school.

During lessons, if a student asks to be excused to use the toilet, mobile phones will be placed into a safe box at the front of each classroom, so it is not on their person. This prohibits the use of phones in toilet areas.

In the case of an urgent need to speak to parents during the school day, students should report to Reception or the Library where they can use the school telephone. Parents/carers should also ring Reception if they need to speak to their child during the school day.

For any student who may need special arrangements to use their mobile phone during the school day (such as students with diabetes), parents should inform the relevant Personal Tutor, Head of Year, and the School Nurse. A decision on this will be made on a case-by-case basis.

Confiscation Procedure

If a student uses their phone in school the following procedure should be followed:

1. The phone will be confiscated by a member of staff
2. The phone will be put into an envelope and left securely at Reception
3. Parents/carers will receive a call from Reception stating that the phone has been confiscated and the phone will need to be collected

4. Parents/carers will be expected to collect any confiscated phones at the end of the school day
5. Students will not be permitted to collect the phone themselves

All students are expected to comply with the requests of staff. Failure to do so will mean the matter will be managed in accordance with the school's Behaviour Policy.

Use of smartwatches by students

Smartwatches are wristwatches with advanced technology in them and can be used to send texts, make phone calls, and to access social media.

Students should not wear smartwatches to school.

If a student wears a smartwatch to school, it will be confiscated and the same procedure for confiscated phones will be followed (see above).

Use of mobile phones by staff

In line with DFE guidance, staff (including volunteers and anyone engaged by the school) are not permitted to use their personal mobile phone while children are present.

Use of mobiles phones should be restricted to non-contact time, and to areas of the school where students are not present.

There may be circumstances in which staff require access to their mobile phones during contact time for personal reasons. The relevant line manager must be made aware.

In consultation with the Headmaster, it will be decided, on a case by case basis, whether to allow for special arrangements depending on the circumstance.

Staff should always act professionally in accordance with Child Protection and Safeguarding policy.

Additionally, staff must not use their personal phones to take photographs or recordings of students, their work, or anything else that could identify a student. If it is necessary to take a photograph or recording it must be done with school equipment.

Use of mobile phones by parents/carers, volunteers and visitors

Parents/carers, volunteers, and visitors must adhere to this policy as it relates to staff if they are on the school site during the school day.

This means:

- Not using mobile phones around students
- Not taking pictures or recordings on site
- Not using phones in lessons or when working with students

Parents/carers, volunteers, and visitors will be made aware of the rules when they sign in at Reception or attend an event.

Parents/carers must contact the school Reception as the first point of contact if they need to speak to their child during the school day. They should not attempt to contact their child on their mobile phone.

School Trips/Visits

Some members of staff will at times require the use of the school mobile phone, so that they are contactable (for example on trips and visits).

Only authorised staff are permitted to use school phones, and access to the phone must not be provided to anyone without authorisation.

All requests for authorisation must go through the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Loss, theft, or damage

The school accepts no responsibility for mobile phones or smart technology that are lost, damaged, or stolen on school premises, during visits or trips, or whilst students are travelling to and from school. Lost phones should be returned to Reception. The school will then attempt to contact the owner.