

STUDENT MOBILE PHONE POLICY



HARTFORD
CHURCH OF ENGLAND
HIGH SCHOOL

Ratified by Governing Board:	February 2026
Date of Implementation:	2 June 2026
Next Due for Review:	Summer Term 2027

Mission Statement:

Our mission at Hartford Church of England High School is to provide an outstanding, inclusive and ambitious education for all. Children develop and thrive both within and beyond the classroom. They are known, with their talents embraced and promoted. They develop into young people who will make a substantial contribution to the world. They enjoy an education rooted in a shared set of Christian values that radiate the love and truth of Jesus Christ.

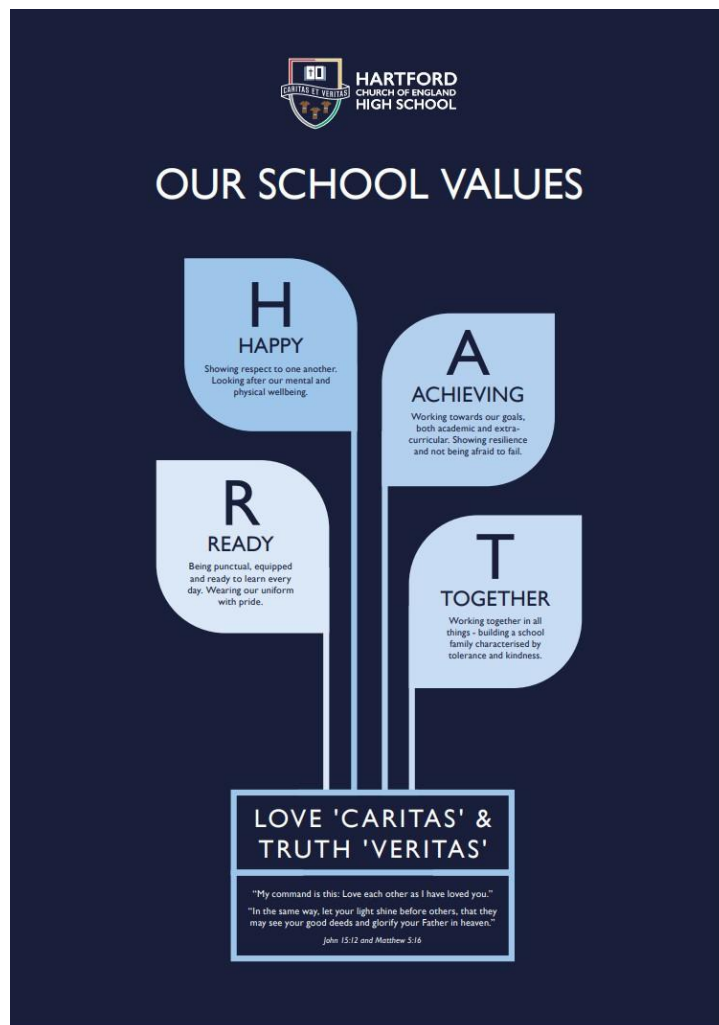
Everything we do at Hartford Church of England High School as students, staff, Governors and wider stakeholders, centres on the core values of our school:

Happy: Showing respect to one another. Looking after our mental and physical wellbeing.

Achieving: Working towards our goals, both academic and extra-curricular. Showing resilience and not being afraid to fail.

Ready: Being punctual, equipped and ready to learn every day. Wearing our uniform with pride.

Together: Working together in all things - building a school family characterised by tolerance and kindness.



"My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you."

"In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven."

John 15:12 and Matthew 5:16

Equally, the educational offer at Hartford Church of England High School is based on the Church of England's four key principles for education:

- Educating for wisdom, knowledge and skills
- Educating for hope and aspiration
- Educating for community and living well together
- Educating for dignity and respect

The Student Mobile Phone Policy for Hartford Church of England High School fully embodies our values, our mission statement and the key principles for education set out by the Church of England.

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I. Aims

At Hartford Church of England High School, we recognise that mobile phones and similar devices, including smartphones, are an important part of everyday life for our students, parents/carers and staff, as well as the wider school community.

Our policy aims to:

- Eliminate distraction from learning caused by mobile phones.
- Promote positive behaviour, engagement, and wellbeing.
- Prevent misuse of mobile devices, including bullying, filming, upskirting, and academic dishonesty.
- Create a safer school environment and reduce safeguarding risks.
- Reinforce a calm and focused school culture through consistent rules.
- Promote safe and responsible phone use.
- Set clear guidelines for the use of mobile phones for students.
- Support the school's other policies, especially those related to child protection and behaviour.

This policy also aims to address some of the challenges posed by mobile phones in school, such as:

- Risks to child protection.
- Data protection issues.
- Potential for lesson disruption.
- Risk of theft, loss, or damage.
- Appropriate use of technology in the classroom.

This policy sets out our expectations regarding student mobile phone use during the school day. In line with Department for Education guidance and our commitment to safeguarding and learning, students will no longer be permitted to use mobile phones at any point while on school premises.

To support this, we are implementing Secure Lockable Phone Pouches for every student.

This policy applies to:

- All students during the school day (including breaktimes and transition periods).
- All devices capable of communication (phones, smartwatches, etc.).
- All areas of the school site and all off-site, school-organised activities.

Note: Throughout this policy, 'mobile phones' refers to mobile phones and similar devices.

2. Legal Framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation, statutory guidance and good practice guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- DfE 'Mobile phones in schools'
- DfE 'Behaviour in Schools'
- DfE 'Keeping children safe in education 2025'
- DfE 'Searching, screening and confiscation at school'
- The Data Protection Act 2018
- The UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR)
- The Voyeurism (Offences) Act 2019
- The Protection of Children Act 1978
- The Sexual Offences Act 2003
- DfE 'Cyberbullying: Advice for headteachers and school staff'

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Behaviour and Attitudes Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Data Protection Policy

3. Roles and Responsibilities

The Governing Board will be responsible for:

- Evaluating the effectiveness of the policy and procedures.
- Ensuring that the policy, as written, does not discriminate on any grounds.
- Holding the Headteacher and Senior Leadership Team (SLT) accountable for the implementation of the policy.
- Reviewing the policy annually.

The Headteacher will be responsible for:

- The implementation and management of the policy.
- Communicating this policy to the relevant staff members and the wider school community.
- Communicating what devices can be brought to school and when they can and cannot be used.

Staff will be responsible for:

- Enforcing pouch use on entry to the school in the morning, including visual checks and supervised locking, if this is their assigned role.
- Where misuse is suspected, reporting this to the Senior Assistant Headteacher – Behaviour, Attitudes and Safeguarding or a member of the Pastoral team, who will conduct spot checks.
- Reporting damage, missing pouches or misuse to the Senior Assistant Headteacher – Behaviour, Attitudes and Safeguarding.
- Confiscating mobile phones from students where they are seen using them on school site and reporting this to the Senior Assistant Headteacher – Behaviour, Attitudes and Safeguarding.
- Unlocking pouches as students leave the school site if they are running an extra-curricular or revision session which goes beyond the end of the school day.
- Reporting incidents of cyberbullying, in line with the Anti-Bullying Policy and the Behaviour and Attitudes Policy.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL) will be responsible for:

- Initiating and managing responses to serious incidents of child-on-child abuse and any other misconduct that could be considered illegal regarding mobile phone use in line with the Behaviour and Attitudes and Child Protection and Safeguarding Policies.
- Liaising with and reporting the relevant information to children's social care and/or the police, when it is necessary to do so.

Students are responsible for:

- Adhering to the provisions outlined in this policy.
- Bringing their phone pouches to school every day and using them without exception.
- Placing their phone and any smartwatches in their pouch in line with this policy.
- Keeping their pouch secure and undamaged.
- Following all staff instructions regarding pouch use.
- Not bringing or using any item intended to bypass the system (e.g. second phone).

- Not damaging or defacing their pouch – this will be treated as deliberate misconduct.

Parents and Carers are responsible for:

- Ensuring their child brings their pouch to school each day.
- Reinforcing the message that phones must not be used during the school day.
- Accepting that any damage to a pouch or if a pouch is lost will need to be replaced by them.
- Using the school reception as the point of contact in emergencies – students are not contactable during the day via their own devices

4. Ownership and Responsibility

While mobile phones and smart watches must not be used by students at Hartford Church of England High School, we know that some students may wish to use them on the way to and from school. If students do bring their mobile phone and/or smart watch to school, it should be switched off and placed in their phone pouch on entry to the school site. The pouch must then be locked by a member of staff. Students will be able to unlock their phone pouch on exiting the school site, or earlier if deemed necessary by a member of school staff for investigatory or safeguarding reasons.

Students must secure their mobile phones as much as possible, including using passwords or pin codes to protect access to the phone's functions.

The school accepts no responsibility for mobile phones 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 phones will be stored securely in the student office.

Staff will be protected against liability in any proceedings brought against them for any loss or damage to personal devices that have been confiscated as an appropriate sanction, provided that they have acted lawfully.

5. Mobile Phone Use

Mobile phones are not permitted at Hartford Church of England High School; however, we recognise that students may wish to bring a mobile phone for use on the way to and from school, and we trust them to do so, with the knowledge that during the day this must be switched off and locked in their mobile phone pouch at all times.

All students are provided with a mobile phone pouch when they join the school in Year 7, or on their first day if they join the school later. This is theirs to keep and look after for the duration of their time at Hartford Church of England High School, and it is their responsibility to ensure that they bring it to school every day if they wish to bring their mobile phone. Where students forget to bring their pouch, their phone will be kept securely in the student reception for that day. If a student deliberately damages their pouch, they will be expected to pay for a new one and will be placed in Restore, in line with the Behaviour and Attitudes Policy. Pouches are robust and it would be very difficult to damage them accidentally.

Mobile phone use is prohibited at Hartford Church of England High School. Where a student states that they have not brought their mobile phone to school with them, this will be verified through use of a wand as part of a non-contact search.

If a member of staff sees a student with their mobile phone, **it will be confiscated and kept securely until the end of the day**, when it can be collected by a parent or carer. The phone will not be returned directly to the student. Bringing a mobile phone into school without placing it in a locked pouch is in direct contravention of school rules and any student found to have done so will be placed in Restore. Repeated offenses will lead to further escalated sanctions in line with the Behaviour and Attitudes Policy.

Under no circumstances will mobile phones be taken into examinations.

The DfE's [non-statutory mobile phone guidance](#) includes in the term 'mobile phones' all devices with communications and smart technology that the school chooses to include in their policy.

Smartwatches are wristwatches with smart technology in them. They can be used to tell the time, send and receive text and voice messages, make calls and listen to music. Some smart watches have wellness and health-related features.

As smartwatches can be used as both a means of communication and of retrieving information, at Hartford Church of England High School we do not permit students to wear them and they must be placed in the mobile phone pouches.

6. Exceptions for Special Circumstances

There are certain occasions where students are permitted to use their phone during the school day, such as:

- For medical reasons where access to an app is needed, such as type 1 diabetes.
- In medical emergencies, to contact the emergency services.
- Young carers who need to be contactable.
- Any other reasonable reason agreed by the school.

The school may permit students to use a mobile phone in school, due to exceptional circumstances. This will be considered on a case-by-case basis. To request such permission, students or parents/carers should contact the Senior Assistant Headteacher – Inclusion for medical purposes or the Senior Assistant Headteacher – Behaviour, Attitudes and Safeguarding for all other matters.

7. Sanctions

Mobile phones will be confiscated if seen in school. Schools are permitted to confiscate phones from students under [sections 91](#) and [94](#) of the Education and Inspections Act 2006.

As aforementioned, students who are in breach of this policy will receive a sanction, in line with the school's Behaviour and Attitudes Policy.

Staff have the power to search students' phones in specific circumstances, as set out in the [DfE's guidance on searching, screening and confiscation](#). The DfE guidance allows schools to search a student's phone if there is a good reason to do so (such as having reason to believe the phone contains pornographic images, or if it is being/has been used to commit an offence or cause harm to another person).

If a student, parent/carer or member of staff finds inappropriate content on a mobile phone, they should report it to the DSL or DDSL.

Where this policy is breached, in each case the school will also consider whether:

- There are any relevant special circumstances (for example, age, religious requirements, special educational needs, disability).
- The student's behaviour may indicate they may be suffering, or at risk of, harm. If this is suspected, staff will follow the appropriate procedure set out in Part 1 of [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#).

Certain types of conduct, bullying or harassment can be classified as criminal conduct. The school takes such conduct extremely seriously and will involve the police or other agencies as appropriate.

Such conduct includes, but is not limited to:

- Sexting (consensual and non-consensual sharing nude or semi-nude images or videos).
- Upskirting.
- Threats of violence or assault.
- Abusive calls, emails, social media posts or texts directed at someone on the basis of someone's ethnicity, religious beliefs or sexual orientation.

Under the Voyeurism (Offences) Act 2019, the act known as "upskirting" is an offence. Any incidents will not be tolerated by the school. Despite the name, anyone (including both students and teachers) of any gender, can be a victim of upskirting.

A "specified purpose" is namely:

- Obtaining sexual gratification (either for themselves or for the person they are enabling to view the victim's genitals, buttocks or underwear).
- To humiliate, distress or alarm the victim.

Any incidents of upskirting will be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL) and handled in accordance with the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

8. Searching Students

School students have a right for their private life to be respected under article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR). This right is not absolute, and the school can interfere with this right as long as it is justified, proportionate, and aligns with the powers to search in the Education Act 1996.

All searches will be conducted in line with the school's Behaviour and Attitudes Policy and the [DfE's guidance on searching, screening and confiscation](#).

The Headteacher, and other authorised staff members, will have the power to search a student or their possessions where they have reasonable grounds to suspect that a student is in possession of a prohibited item. Mobile phones and similar devices are deemed prohibited items that may be searched for in line with the Behaviour and Attitudes Policy.

In all cases there will be two members of staff, who will always:

- Seek the co-operation of the student before conducting a search.
- Ensure the student understands the reason for the search and how it will be conducted.
- Give the student the opportunity to ask any questions so that their agreement is informed.
- Have due regard to the DfE's '[Searching, screening and confiscation](#)' guidance.

Staff may search a student's outer clothing, pockets, possessions, desks or lockers. Staff conducting a search must not require the student to remove any clothing other than outer clothing - outer clothing means any item of clothing that is not worn wholly next to the skin or immediately over a garment that is being worn as underwear and includes hats, shoes, boots or scarves. Possessions means any goods over which the student has or appears to have control - this includes desks, lockers and bags. When searching for mobile phones and other prohibited items, staff at Hartford Church of England High School may use a wand to detect these items on a student's person as part of a non-contact search.

A staff member may ask a student to show them what they are doing on their mobile phone or smart device if they reasonably believe that the student is using the device to cause harm. If it is judged reasonable, the staff member may inspect the files or data on a student's electronic device and delete them if necessary.

Staff members will ensure they have a good reason to examine and delete data on a student's electronic device. When determining a good reason to examine data, staff members will ensure they reasonably suspect that the data has been, or could be, used to cause harm, undermine the safe environment of the school and disrupt teaching, or be used to commit an offence.

When determining a good reason to delete data, staff members will consider whether the material found may constitute evidence relating to a suspected offence and if so, choose not to delete the data. The data may be deleted if it is found likely to cause harm to any person, and the student and/or parent/carer refuses to delete the data themselves.

If a search uncovers a device that is being used to cause harm, or which contains prohibited material such as pornography, a staff member can confiscate the device. If a staff member finds child pornography, they must report this to the Headteacher and DSL immediately. The phone must be given to the police as soon as reasonably practicable. Where staff find stolen items like mobile devices, they must be given to the police as soon as reasonably practicable.

The staff member conducting the search must be the same sex as the student being searched. There must also be a witness present while the student is being searched.

Students are required to comply with any request to check their electronic device.

Students are required to comply with any request to disable the screen lock function of their electronic device and show any staff member what they are doing. Any student who refuses to comply with these requests will be disciplined in line with the Behaviour and Attitudes Policy.

At Hartford Church of England High School the ban on mobile phones for students and the use of lockable mobile phone pouches helps to mitigate the necessity to perform the searches outlined above and supports the safeguarding of young people.

9. 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 take into account:

- Feedback from parents/carers and students.
- Feedback from staff.
- Records of behaviour and safeguarding incidents.
- Relevant advice from the Department for Education, the local authority and any other relevant organisations.

Date approved by Governing Board: 09/02/2026

Applicable from: 02/06/2026

Signed by

Headteacher:

Date: 09/02/2026

Chair of Governors:

Date: 09/02/2026