



**PORTOBELLO
HIGH SCHOOL**

Portobello High School

Mobile phone policy

2025

**SWITCH
OFF.** 

 **POUCH
UP.**

**SWITCH ON
TO LEARNING.**



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Mobile Phone Use Policy – Brief Overview

At Portobello High School, our commitment to "Achieving Together" drives our continuous efforts to enhance the educational experience for all young people. Guided by our core values of respect, confidence, learning, opportunity, and community, we focus on key priorities: raising attainment and achievement, fostering inclusion and wellbeing, and advancing learning, teaching, assessment, and skills.

To support this, we have introduced a mobile phone use policy that incorporates the innovative **Yondr Pouch** system. <https://www.veryondr.com/>

Under this policy, young people are allowed to bring their mobile phones to school, acknowledging the importance of connectivity for safety during travel to and from school. Upon arrival, they will place their phones into a **lockable Yondr Pouch**, which they will keep with them throughout the school day. The pouch remains locked at all times within the school building.

This approach provides a balanced solution, ensuring young people retain possession of their phones while minimising distractions during school hours. The Pouch helps foster social interaction, improves focus on learning, and reduces stress associated with phone use, all while maintaining communication for families during travel to and from school. All other emergency contact should be received and supported through the school office.

In line with our inclusion policy, this work seeks to reflect our commitment to creating a respectful, distraction-free, and equitable environment for all young people. It combines innovative technology with clear guidelines to support learning, well-being, and personal responsibility.



ARRIVAL



SECURE



OPEN

Rationale

At Portobello High School, we aim to provide a focused, inclusive and safe learning environment where our young people can thrive academically, socially, and emotionally. We are engaged in an ambitious improvement journey as we work to further improve the quality of learning and teaching, positive destinations for young people and equity outcomes.

In line with our Party Learning Promise, we are committed to improving and enriching the learning experiences of all learners. We want our young people to enjoy their learning and to be actively involved and participating in engaging learning activities.

Our mobile phone policy is being implemented to support us in reaching these outcomes, recognising that the level of phone usage is only going to increase - we are trying to 'future proof' the learning experience for all young people and protect the core business of our school. Research consistently supports the benefits of mobile phone-free schools, highlighting their positive impact on reducing distractions, improving academic performance, and fostering meaningful face-to-face interactions.

The aspiration to create a mobile phone free learning environment is supported by both the Scottish and UK Governments who have empowered and encouraged schools to proactively address challenges associated with mobile phone use through tailored school policies.

[Scottish Government](#)

[GOV.UK](#)



Aims

The mobile phone policy at Portobello High School is designed to support a focused, inclusive and safe school environment. The overarching goal is to minimise distractions, promote meaningful social interactions, and create a culture that prioritises learning and well-being. Below are the key aims of the policy:

1. Enhance Learning and Academic Focus

- **Purpose:** To reduce distractions during teaching and learning times, ensuring that young people can fully engage with their education.
 - **Explanation:** Mobile phones, even when not actively in use, can impact cognitive capacity and focus. By removing access to phones during the school day, we aim to create an environment where learning is prioritised and young people can maximise their academic potential.
-

2. Promote Social Connections and Interpersonal Skills

- **Purpose:** To encourage face-to-face interactions and build stronger social bonds among young people.
 - **Explanation:** Research shows that mobile phone use can inhibit the quality of social interactions. The policy fosters a culture where young people engage in meaningful conversations, participate in shared activities, and develop essential interpersonal skills during break times. Understanding that families may wish for their young person to have access to their phone, should they leave the school site at lunch, this access will be supported. However, the school is keen to further develop the social opportunities available to young people over lunchtimes, with the hope of encouraging young people to stay in school and off their phones.
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3. Support Mental Health and Well-being

- **Purpose:** To create a calmer and less stressful school environment by minimising the pressure and distractions associated with constant phone connectivity.
 - **Explanation:** Studies link excessive phone use to increased anxiety and stress levels. The phone-free policy offers young people a mental break from the demands of digital communication, promoting mindfulness and present-moment awareness.
-

4. Foster Responsibility and Self-Regulation

- **Purpose:** To help young people develop responsible habits and a healthy relationship with technology.
 - **Explanation:** By retaining possession of their phones in a pouch, young people learn to manage their devices respectfully and understand the importance of balancing digital and offline engagement.
-

5. Support Equity and Inclusion

- **Purpose:** In line with our inclusion policy we want to ensure that the learning experience for all young people is grounded in equity and inclusion.
 - **Explanation:** Mobile phones can exacerbate inequalities, particularly if some young people have access to newer or more advanced devices. The policy ensures that the focus remains on learning and personal growth, rather on comparisons of technology or social media influence.
-

6. Build a Safer and More Respectful School Environment

- **Purpose:** To reduce the potential for online bullying, inappropriate content sharing, and other challenges associated with unsupervised phone use during school hours.
 - **Explanation:** By limiting access to phones during the school day, the policy reduces opportunities for harmful online interactions, ensuring a safer and more respectful environment for all young people.
 - This policy will significantly reduce the number of negative interactions between young people and teachers, as teachers currently report that supporting young people to manage their phones can often lead to unnecessary confrontation.
-

7. Strengthen Community Trust and Collaboration

- **Purpose:** To work in partnership with families and staff to support the shared goal of a focused and inclusive learning environment.
- **Explanation:** The policy acknowledges pupils' and families concerns about safety and accessibility as communicated through our consultation process.

Scope

This policy applies to all young people, staff, and visitors within the school during operational hours. It reflects Portobello High School's vision of ensuring all learners can access the highest quality of learning and teaching. Working in partnership with our whole school community we strive to create a nurturing and inclusive environment where every young person can excel.

Who is covered by the Policy?

1. Young people

- All young people are required to comply with the guidelines set out in this policy, ensuring that their mobile phones are placed in Yondr Pouches or handed into the office if their pouch is unavailable.
- Exceptions for medical or accessibility-related reasons will be considered on a case-by-case basis, with arrangements made through consultation with families and the school's support team.

2. Staff

- Staff will be encouraged to use a pouch and will be expected to model appropriate phone use
- Staff may use phones in staff-only areas, such as offices and break rooms, or in their classroom, when student interaction is not taking place.

3. Visitors

- Visitors, including parents/carers, and external partners will be offered a pouch at sign-in and reminded that we operate within a phone-free learning zone.

Where Does the Policy Apply?

1. School Premises

- The policy applies to all indoor and outdoor learning spaces within the school grounds, including classrooms, hallways, and the cafeteria.

2. Lunchtimes

- Phones must remain within a pouch at all times within the school building. The only exceptions to this will be the S6 area and emergency contact areas which will be staffed in the support team corridor.

Young people may choose to unlock their phones over lunch if they are leaving the building. The phone must be back in the pouch before re-entering the building.

This approach ensures a focused learning environment whilst acknowledging learner and parental desire for lunchtime access to their phone. This balances their need for connection and safety when leaving the school building, whilst meeting the overall aims of the policy – (page 5).

3. Extra-Curricular Activities and Trips

- During school trips, extra-curricular activities, or events, this policy will apply unless specific exemptions are granted for educational or logistical purposes.

Exemptions and Special Circumstances

1. S6 Privilege

- Recognising the age and stage of S6 young people, they are permitted to unlock and use their phones in the designated S6 social area. However, phones must remain secured in pouches when outside this area.

2. Medical and Accessibility Needs

- Young people with medical conditions or other additional support needs who require phone access will have accommodations made following discussions with the school's support team and families.

3. Emergency Situations

- In rare emergency situations, young people may request permission to access their phones. Staff will determine whether access is appropriate and supervise use as required. In most instances we will use school office phones for making and receiving calls.

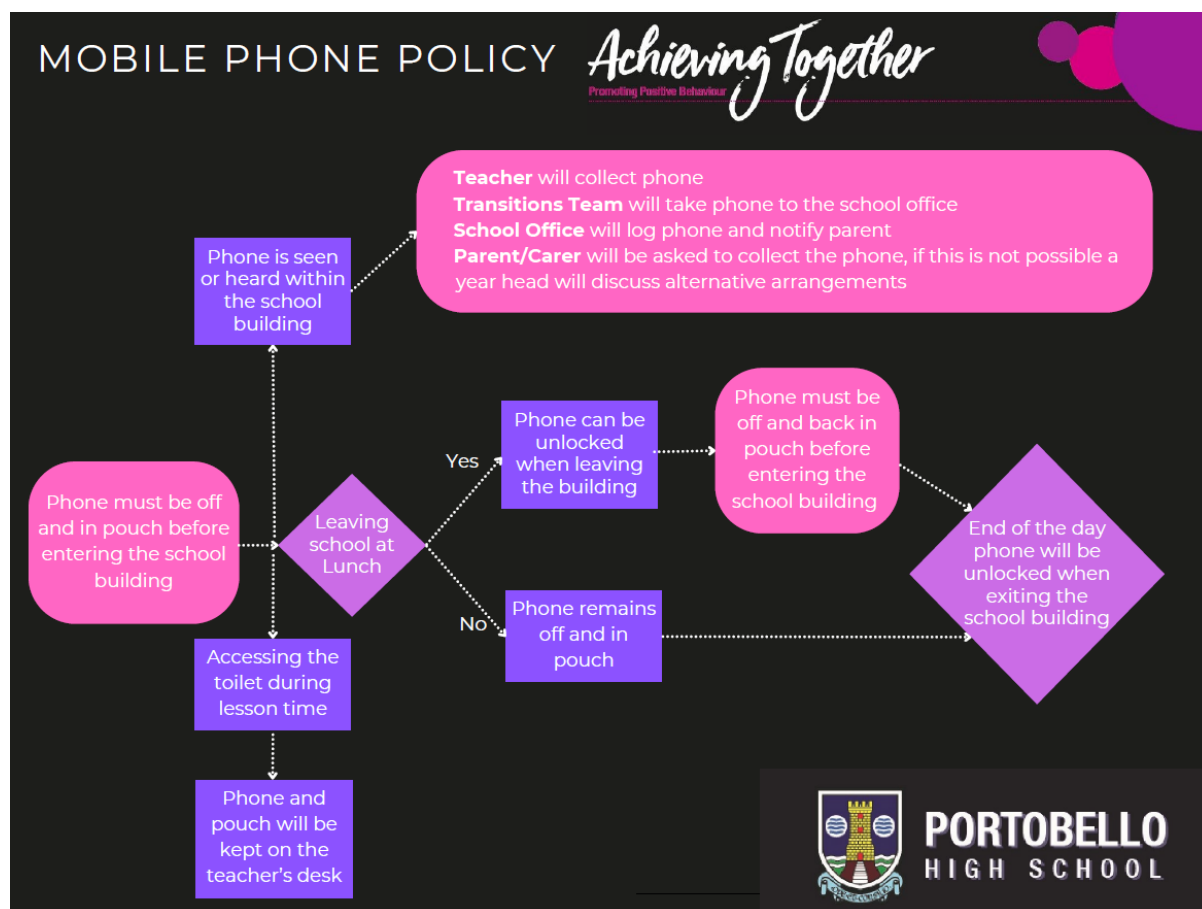
Policy Guidance

Improper phone use

- If a phone is seen within the school building for any reason, without staff permission, it will be handed into the school office, where it will be safely stored until the end of the day.
- In cases where phones are handed into the office, the school will reach out to parents/carers to share information about the situation and discuss ways to support their young person in adhering to the policy. Parents will be asked to support our policy by collecting the phone at their convenience.

Building Understanding

- The school will actively engage with young people and families to raise awareness about the benefits of the policy. Assemblies, parent communications, and discussions through parent and pupil council, will provide opportunities for everyone to share feedback and reinforce the shared commitment to creating a positive learning environment.



Travelling to and from school

Young people have access to their phones in case of emergencies before and after school. This reassures both young people and parents/carers, particularly during commutes, ensuring that they can be in contact if required.

Responsibility and Accountability

By carrying their phones in a locked pouch, young people develop a sense of responsibility and accountability. This approach teaches them to manage their devices respectfully within the boundaries of the school's expectations.

Reduced Anxiety Over Loss or Theft

Since young people keep their phones with them at all times, there is less risk of loss, theft, or damage compared to centralised phone collection systems. This fosters a sense of security and ownership.

Seamless Transition After School

At the end of the school day, young people can easily unlock their phones and reconnect with family or friends without delay. This supports efficient communication for after-school plans or urgent updates.

Promoting Trust and Partnership

Allowing young people to keep their phones in the pouch demonstrates the school's trust in young people to respect the policy while balancing their personal needs. This trust helps build a positive relationship between young people and the school.

Practical and Streamlined Solution

The Pouch eliminates the need for young people to line up to hand in or collect phones at the office, saving time and streamlining daily routines.

Shared Roles and Responsibilities

The successful implementation of the mobile phone policy at Portobello High School relies on collaboration and a shared understanding and commitment from all members of the school community. Each group has specific roles and responsibilities to ensure the policy's aims are met and its principles upheld.

Young people

- **Responsibilities:**
 - Ensure mobile phones are placed in the Pouch upon arrival at school and remain secured until the end of the school day.
 - Refrain from attempting to bypass or tamper with the Pouch system.
 - Respect the policy by not using mobile phones during school hours within the school building, unless within authorised areas such as the S6 designated area.
 - Comply with staff instructions if reminded about the policy or if phones need to be handed into the office.
 - Bring a bag to school to hold the pouch, as well as other essential items for school, such as iPad and jotters.
 - **Role:**

Young people play a key role in creating a focused and respectful school environment by adhering to the policy and understanding its benefits.
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Families

- **Responsibilities:**
 - Support the school by encouraging young people to follow the policy and discussing its benefits at home.
 - Ensure that their child brings the Yondr Pouch to school daily. If it is forgotten, provide support in addressing the situation.
 - Ensure that young people bring a suitable bag to school each day to store their pouch and other essential items, such as iPad, jotters, etc.
 - Support the school if contacted about policy breaches to reinforce positive behaviours.

- **Role:**
Parents and carers are vital partners in promoting the policy's success, helping to ensure consistent messaging between school and home.

Teaching and Support Staff

- **Responsibilities:**
 - Model appropriate phone use
 - Provide clear instructions and regular reminders to young people about the policy and assist them in securing their phones in the Pouch at the start of the day.
 - Transition Team will check phones are in pouches as young people enter the school building each morning and after lunch
 - Address breaches of the policy with a calm, consistent and supportive approach, explaining the reasons behind the policy and following the outlined procedures.
 - Ensure any phones handed into the office are logged and stored securely until the end of the day.
 - **Role:**
Staff are responsible for enforcing the policy consistently and fairly while maintaining a supportive approach that reinforces positive habits and prioritises learning and teaching.
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Senior Leadership Team (SLT)

- **Responsibilities:**
 - Deliver a coherent and robust mobile phone policy to ensure a mobile phone free environment which is supported by our school community.
 - Provide training and guidance for staff on the implementation and enforcement of the policy.
 - SLT will support the Transition Team with checking that phones are in pouches as young people enter the school building each morning and after lunch
 - Ensure the pouch unlocking stations are available at the correct times and in plentiful supply to ensure smooth exit from school.
 - Monitor the policy's effectiveness and address any challenges or inconsistencies in its application.
 - Communicate the policy to parents, carers, and visitors through clear and regular updates, ensuring transparency.

- Respond to significant breaches of the policy and oversee communication with parents or carers as required.
- **Role:**
The SLT is responsible for overseeing the policy's implementation, ensuring consistency, and addressing issues as they arise.

Office Staff

- **Responsibilities:**
 - Securely store any phones handed in by young people without Pouches or due to policy breaches.
 - Maintain a clear log of phones handed in and ensure they are returned at the end of the school day.
 - Communicate with parents and carers when directed by teaching staff or the SLT regarding policy breaches.
 - **Role:**
Office staff ensure the practical management and safe keeping of phones that are handed in, supporting the smooth operation of the policy.
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Visitors and External Partners

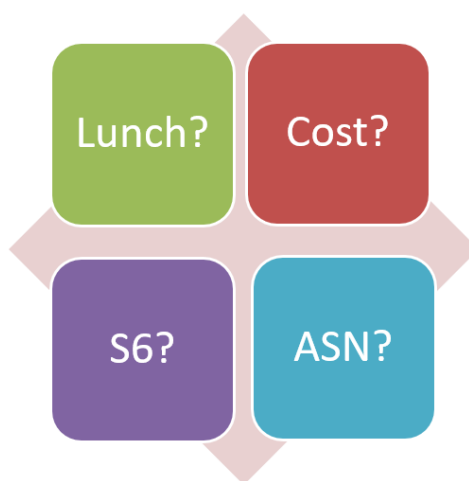
- **Responsibilities:**
 - Respect the phone-free environment by limiting phone use. Where possible, make use of pouch provided.
- **Role:**
Visitors and external partners contribute to the phone-free culture by modelling appropriate behaviour and respecting the school's guidelines.

Policy Review Teams – Pupil, Staff & Parent/Carer focus groups

- **Responsibilities:**
 - Gather feedback from young people, parents, staff, and other members of our school community to evaluate the policy's impact and effectiveness.
 - Propose updates or amendments to the policy based on consultation data, research findings, and school needs.
 - Report findings to the wider school community.
- **Role:**
The review teams ensure the policy remains relevant, effective, and aligned with

improving academic, social and well-being outcomes for the young people at Portobello High School.

Key themes of concern highlighted through the consultation process:



Lunch?

Through the consultation process, the restriction of phone access—particularly during lunchtime when young people may leave the school building—was the most prominent concern raised by both parents and young people. The following examples reflect the wide range of practical, emotional, and safety considerations shared:

Examples of specific concern include:

- **Maintaining Ongoing Family Communication:**

For some young people, brief contact with a parent or carer during the day offers reassurance and supports emotional wellbeing. In certain families, scheduled lunchtime check-ins are part of a longstanding strategy to help young people manage anxiety or transitions during the school day.

- **Use of Location Tracking for Safety:**

Many parents explained that the GPS tracking functionality of mobile phones provides them with reassurance when their child is outside school grounds. This is

particularly valued during lunchtime when young people are not under direct school supervision. For some, this feature is the primary reason their child owns a phone.

- **Ability to Seek Help in Emergencies:**

Concerns were voiced about young peoples' ability to respond to unexpected or emergency situations while off campus—such as a health issue, feeling threatened, or witnessing an incident. Parents want assurance that their child can quickly contact a responsible adult or emergency services.

- **Travel and Logistical Arrangements:**

Some young people use lunchtime as a window to coordinate travel arrangements—especially where older pupils may leave school early for work placements, appointments, or part-time jobs. In these cases, access to a phone supports independence and responsible planning.

- **Support for Young Carers:**

A number of young people have caring responsibilities at home. For these young carers, lunchtime may be the only opportunity to check in on a family member. Removing access to phones during this window can increase stress and limit their ability to fulfil these essential roles.

- **Peer Communication:**

Many young people indicated the need to stay connected with friends while offsite and that the phone helped them find their friends.

Response

Mobile phones must remain secured in a pouch at all times while within the school building. The only exceptions to this are the designated supervised areas in the Support Team corridor and the S6 social area, where limited, responsible use is permitted.

Young people who choose to leave the school building during lunchtime may unlock their phone before exiting. However, the phone must be returned to the pouch and locked before re-entering the school premises.

This balanced adaptation upholds our commitment to maintaining a focused and distraction-free learning environment, while also responding to the strong views expressed by learners and parents/carers during the consultation process. Allowing limited lunchtime access for those leaving the building recognises the importance of family communication, supports

pupil independence and safety, and helps ensure continued support for and compliance with the wider mobile phone policy.

S6?

Consultation feedback consistently recognised the maturity and increased responsibility of senior young people, particularly those in S6. Many staff, young people, and parents agreed that a degree of flexibility for this group would support trust, independence, and transition to post-school life. Examples of concern and reasoning included:

Examples of specific concern include:

Supporting Independent Learning and Study:

S6 young people often engage in independent study and flexible learning timetables. Having access to phones supports access to online research tools, learning platforms, and university or college application processes.

Preparation for Life Beyond School:

As young adults on the verge of entering higher education, employment, or training, many argued that S6 pupils should be supported to develop responsible phone use within real-life contexts. This includes managing digital calendars, emails, and notifications related to post-school transitions.

Promoting a Culture of Trust:

Staff and parents acknowledged that granting phone privileges to S6 could model responsible behaviour for younger young people and reinforce the development of mutual trust and accountability within the senior phase.

Flexible Timetabling and Offsite Movement:

Many S6 pupils leave the building throughout the day for flexible arrangements such as; college placements, volunteering, work experience, or to fulfil mentoring roles. Access to phones was seen as essential for coordinating these responsibilities and maintaining contact with school and home.

Response

In recognition of their age, maturity, and increased responsibilities, S6 pupils are permitted to unlock and use their phones within the designated S6 social area. This exception

acknowledges their need for flexible communication and independent access to learning tools, while maintaining the expectation that phones remain locked in a pouch in all other areas of the school. This approach supports their ongoing development as independent and responsible young adults.

ASN?

A key theme emerging from the consultation was the need to accommodate the diverse needs of young people with additional support requirements. Parents, support staff, and learners highlighted that for some young people, mobile phones play a vital role in regulation, communication, and routine.

Examples of specific concern include:

Use of Phones as a Regulation Tool:

Some young people have support plans which recognise specific apps or calming strategies on their phone to help them regulate anxiety or manage sensory overload. Removing this tool could negatively impact their ability to engage and participate in learning.

Digital Communication Support:

For a small number of young people, phones are used to assist with communication, especially where they may struggle with verbal interaction. Text-based communication or assistive apps can help bridge the gap between them and school staff or family.

Structure and Routine:

Young people with additional support needs may rely on phones to follow personalised schedules, visual timetables, or reminders. The absence of such tools could cause confusion, stress, or a breakdown in daily routines.

Parent and Carer Communication:

Parents of young people with ASN frequently expressed the importance of being reachable during the day in case their child needs reassurance, or if a known trigger has occurred.

Response

Portobello High School recognises that a one-size-fits-all approach is not always appropriate. For young people with additional support needs, exemptions to the mobile phone policy may be granted following discussion with the school's Support Team and the young person's parents or carers. These individual arrangements ensure that every young person is supported in a way that aligns with their personal needs, wellbeing, and learning goals.

Cost?

As part of implementing the mobile phone policy, families were asked to support the initiative by contributing in full or in part to the cost of their child's pouch. Survey data indicated that the majority of parents were willing to do so, recognising the long-term benefits of the approach. However, some families expressed concern about affordability and questioned whether cost should be a factor in accessing a policy that applies to all young people. Concerns included:

Examples of specific concern include:

Affordability and Financial Pressures:

Some parents shared that, due to financial circumstances, they would struggle to contribute to the cost of the pouch. For these families, any additional expense—even a modest one—can be difficult to manage, particularly if there are multiple children attending school.

Fairness and Inclusion:

A small number of respondents raised concerns about fairness and questioned whether young people whose families were unable to contribute would be treated differently or made to feel singled out.

Principle of Universal Access:

Feedback also included the view that if the policy is to apply universally, then the resources required to comply with it—such as the pouch—should be provided on a universal basis, regardless of individual family contributions.

Response

Portobello High School is fully committed to equity and inclusion. No young person will be disadvantaged or excluded from participating in this policy due to financial reasons. Every young person will be provided with a pouch, regardless of whether their family has made a

financial contribution. We are grateful to the many families who have indicated that are willing and able to support the cost of this initiative and as a school, we are equally committed to ensuring that financial circumstances do not create barriers to participation in what we believe is a beneficial and inclusive whole-school approach.

Summary:

This mobile phone policy has been developed in line with Portobello High School's commitment to creating a focused, inclusive, and safe learning environment where all young people can thrive academically, socially, and emotionally. It is shaped by extensive consultation with young people, parents, carers, and staff and reflects our shared goal of minimising distractions, supporting wellbeing, and fostering responsible digital habits.

The introduction of the Pouch system provides a practical and balanced approach that allows young people to retain their phones while preventing access to them throughout the school day. This system supports key aims of the policy — including enhancing focus, improving mental health, promoting social connection, and ensuring fairness — while maintaining access to devices for travel and emergency use.

This policy is underpinned by shared responsibility. Its success relies on strong collaboration between young people, staff, and families. Roles and expectations are clearly defined, and proactive communication, mutual respect, and consistent practice will remain central to its implementation.



The policy will be regularly reviewed by young people, staff, and parent/carers reference groups, ensuring that it continues to reflect the needs of our school community and remains focused on improving outcomes for all learners at Portobello High School.

FAQs – Mobile Phone Policy

Why are phones restricted during the school day, including breaks and lunch?

The policy aims to create a focused, calm, and inclusive learning environment. Restricting phone access during school hours, including breaks and lunch, helps reduce distractions, promote face-to-face interaction, and support student wellbeing. Young people may unlock their phone if they are leaving school at lunch, however, phones must be returned to the locked pouch before re-entering the school building.

What is the purpose of the Yondr Pouch system?

The Yondr Pouch system allows young people to retain physical possession of their phones while preventing their use during the school day. This helps minimise distractions, improve focus, and reduce anxiety or social pressure associated with constant phone access.

Can young people with additional support needs access their phones?

Yes. The policy makes accommodations for young people with medical conditions or other additional support needs. These are handled on a case-by-case basis in collaboration with the school's Support Team and parents/carers.

Will S6 young people have exceptions?

Yes. S6 young people are permitted to unlock and use their phones within their designated S6 social area. Phones must be re-secured in the pouch outside of this space.

What if a student needs to contact a parent or carer during the school day?

We have established two emergency access spaces which young people may access to use to contact home. Whilst these are supervised areas, there will be adequate meeting room space available to facilitate private conversations.

How will the policy be enforced?

Young people are expected to secure their phone in a pouch upon arrival. Phones that are not in a locked pouch will be taken to the office for safekeeping. Parents/carers will be contacted and invited to collect the device. If no one is available to collect the phone, exceptions can be made with parent/carer permission. In this instance the phone will be returned to the young person at the end of the day, as an exception.

What happens if a student forgets or tampers with their pouch?

Young people who forget their pouch must hand in their phone to the office. Tampering with the pouch will be followed up by the school and may involve a meeting with families to reinforce expectations.

Why are parents being asked to contribute to the cost of the pouches?

A voluntary contribution helps implement the system sustainably. However, no young person will be excluded or disadvantaged—pouches will be provided for all, regardless of ability to pay.

How does this policy promote equity among young people?

By reducing the visibility and use of mobile phones, the policy reduces comparison, competition, and exclusion. It fosters an environment focused on learning and positive relationships.

Will this policy stop phone misuse or bullying completely?

While no policy can eliminate these issues entirely, restricting phone access greatly reduces opportunities for harmful online activity. The school also maintains strong anti-bullying and safeguarding procedures.

Summary and Findings of Consultation Process on School Mobile Phone Policy

In-person & Online Discussions (October 2024):

Over 800 contributors from the school community (parents, young people, staff and partner agencies) participated in the consultation.

A shared concern around mobile phone use was established:

- **Mobile Phone Use:** There was a significant level of concern about mobile phone use within the school environment and its impact on learning and young people's wellbeing.
- **Age of Access:** Concerns were voiced about the early age at which young people gain access to mobile phones.
- **Pressure on Parents:** Many parents expressed concerns about the societal pressure to buy their children a phone, particularly around Christmas.
- **Monitoring phone use:** Parents and careers cited the challenge of monitoring phone use and in particular app usage.

Actions and Next Steps:

- **Mobile Phone Policy Exploration:** The school will explore and draft a mobile phone use policy.
- **Focus Groups:** Separate focus groups (parents, staff, and young people) will be established to discuss and contribute to the development of the proposed policy.
- **Media Campaign:** High school media young people will create a campaign aimed at discouraging parents from buying smartphones for younger children, targeting junior primary school parents. This campaign will focus on promoting the benefits of delaying smartphone ownership until children are older (14 years old).
- **Parent Group Initiative:** A parent-led initiative will promote a "SMARTPHONE-free childhood" in primary schools, encouraging families to pledge not to buy their children a smartphone before the age of 14. The aim is to reduce pressure on parents and delay smartphone access.
- **Parent/Carer support:** Awareness session ran with the aim of supporting and empowering parents and careers to monitor and phone use at home.

Key findings from Pupil Wellbeing Survey which support mobile phone policy (October 2024):

- **Screen Time vs. Wellbeing:** A correlation was found between higher screen time and lower sense of wellbeing.
- **Sleep Quality vs. Wellbeing:** Better sleep quality was associated with higher wellbeing ratings.
- **Screen Time vs. Sleep Quality:** Increased screen time correlated with lower sleep quality, indicating that excessive screen use is negatively impacting sleep.
- **Wellbeing supports linked to Sleep:** Our data indicated a strong link between young people accessing targeted supports within school and a poor quality of sleep.



SCREEN TIME VS. WELLBEING: A CORRELATION WAS FOUND BETWEEN HIGHER SCREEN TIME AND LOWER WELLBEING.



SCREEN TIME VS. SLEEP QUALITY: INCREASED SCREEN TIME CORRELATED WITH LOWER SLEEP QUALITY, INDICATING THAT EXCESSIVE SCREEN USE MAY NEGATIVELY IMPACT SLEEP.

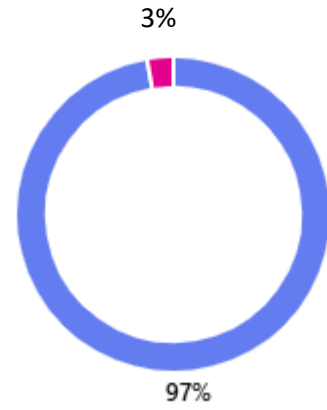


SLEEP QUALITY VS. WELLBEING: BETTER SLEEP QUALITY WAS ASSOCIATED WITH HIGHER WELLBEING RATINGS.

Key Findings from Staff Consultation (November 2024):

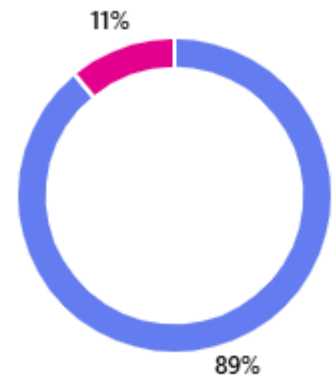
Do you feel there is a need for us to review our mobile phone policy?

- Yes
- No



Do you support the proposed mobile phone policy?

- Yes
- No



Key Findings from Parent Consultation (December 2024, repeated January 2025):

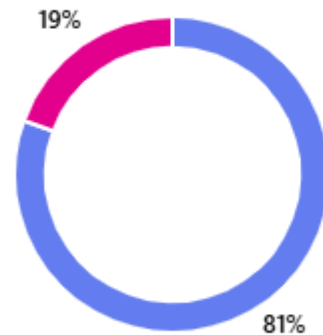
Do you feel there is a need for us to review our mobile phone policy?

- Yes
- No



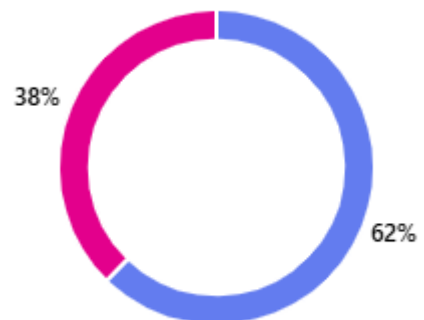
Do you support the proposed mobile phone policy?

- Yes
- No



Would you be willing to cover the cost of your child's pouch?

- Yes
- No



Portobello High School Pupil Parliament Motion

Motion Title: The Responsible Use of Mobile Phones in School

Proposer: G McDowall/ L McAllister

Date: 7th March 2025

1. How can we make sure the rollout of phone pouches goes smoothly?
2. What concerns do young people have about the new system? How can we address them?
3. How can the school support young people in adjusting to the new routine?
4. What alternative activities can we introduce during break times to make social time more engaging?
5. How can we regularly review how the policy is working and get feedback?

The main areas of concern that were raised mirrored other aspects of the consultation process and included:

- Access to phone at lunch, reasons include:
 - Safety and emergency situations
 - Contact with friends and family
 - Convenience of using their phone to purchase lunch from the shops
 - Greater chance of support and compliance of the phone policy if a lunch exception was given
- Supporting ASN, reasons include:
 - Supporting medical needs, such as using the phone to measure insulin levels
 - Mobile phone access used to regulate anxiety
- Year group approach:
 - There was strong feeling that there should be different rules for different year groups, specifically that there should be exceptions for S6.

Location of Unlocking stations

We are committed to ensuring there is an adequate number of unlocking stations to support the smooth exit of the building at lunch time and at the end of the school day. This will be reviewed on an ongoing basis with additional stations being made available, if required.

In addition to the unlocking stations at the two main entrance/exit points, there will be an unlocking station in the S6 area and two supervised unlocking stations at the access points within the support team corridor.

Finally, all departments will also have access to unlocking stations.



Referenced documents & research

Scottish Government Guidance

In August 2024, the Scottish Government issued guidance empowering headteachers to implement measures, including whole-school bans, to mitigate the negative effects of mobile phones on learning and teaching. This approach allows schools to develop policies that reflect their unique contexts and needs. [Scottish Government](#)

UK Government Guidance

Similarly, in February 2024, the UK Government released guidance supporting headteachers in prohibiting mobile phone use throughout the school day, including break times. The guidance aims to tackle disruptive behaviour and online bullying, thereby enhancing young people's focus during lessons.

[GOV.UK](#)

Improved Academic Performance

A study by the London School of Economics (Beland & Murphy, 2015) found that banning mobile phones in schools improved test scores, particularly for low-achieving and disadvantaged young people. The removal of distractions allowed young people to focus more on their studies, resulting in measurable academic benefits.

Enhanced Social Skills and Interactions Research by Przybylski and Weinstein (2013) highlighted the impact of mobile phones on face-to-face interactions. Their study showed that even the mere presence of phones can reduce the quality of interpersonal communication and empathy during conversations. By removing phones during the school day, young people are encouraged to engage in meaningful social interactions, fostering stronger peer relationships and a more connected school community.

Reduction in Anxiety and Stress

A study published in *Computers in Human Behavior* (Thorisdottir et al., 2019) linked heavy phone use to increased anxiety and stress levels in adolescents. By limiting phone use during the school day, we aim to create a calmer and more focused environment for young people.

Improved Focus and Cognitive Function

Research by Ward et al. (2017) in *The Journal of the Association for Consumer Research* demonstrated the “brain drain” effect, where the mere presence of a phone reduces cognitive capacity and attention, even when not in use. A phone-free school environment ensures that young people can fully engage in learning activities without the cognitive burden of nearby devices.

Support for Equity

A study by Kuznekoff and Titsworth (2013) found that phone use in classrooms disproportionately affected lower-achieving young people, exacerbating academic inequalities. By implementing a mobile phone-free policy, we promote equity and ensure all young people have the opportunity to focus and succeed.