



HARROGATE
GRAMMAR SCHOOL
EXCELLENCE FOR ALL

Policy: Mobile Technology

Member of Staff Responsible

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1. Purpose

Harrogate Grammar School is committed to creating an environment where staff and pupils can focus on learning, build positive relationships and develop healthy habits around technology. While mobile phones can be useful for communication outside of the school day, their use during school can create distraction, impact learning and reduce opportunities for face-to-face interaction.

This policy sets out clear and consistent expectations for mobile phone use during the school day and aims to support pupils in developing a healthy and responsible relationship with technology. This policy should be read alongside the schools:

- Respectful Relationships and Behaviour Policy
- Safeguarding Policy
- Acceptable Use Policy
- Data Protection Policy

2. Aims

Harrogate Grammar School's approach to mobile phones/smart watches aims to:

- Reduce distraction and support pupils to focus on learning.
- Encourage healthy and responsible digital habits.
- Create clear and consistent expectations for pupils, staff and families.
- Support pupil wellbeing and positive face-to-face interaction.
- Help pupils develop greater independence and self-regulation around technology.
- Ensure appropriate arrangements remain available for safeguarding, medical and accessibility needs.
- Support staff in performing their duties.

3. Legislation and guidance

'All schools should be mobile phone-free environments by default; anything other than this should be by exception only. As part of this policy, schools should develop a mobile phone policy that prohibits the use of mobile phones and other smart technology with similar functionality to mobile phones (for example, the ability to send and/or receive notifications or messages via mobile phone networks or the ability to record audio and/or video) throughout the school day, including during lessons, the time between lessons, breaktimes and lunchtime. Where schools have a scheme to facilitate the use of tablets for learning, such devices should be used in accordance with the school's Acceptable Use policy. Such policies should not include mobile phones.' This publication provides statutory guidance to individual schools and trusts on how to implement a policy that prohibits the use of mobile phones throughout the school day, including during lessons, the time between lessons, breaktimes and lunchtime. [Mobile Phones in School DfE](#)

4. Expectations During the School Day

During the school day, pupils are expected to follow Harrogate Grammar School's mobile phone/smart technology rules. This applies from 8.50am – 3.35pm or 2.45pm pm on a Wednesday. This may also be used on school trips to ensure that whilst pupils can still use their phone in an emergency, they are still able to focus on the trip and gain the best experiences from it.

Unless permission has specifically been given by a member of staff (such as for medical apps):

- Mobile phones must not be used during the school day, including during lessons, break times and lunchtimes unless there is a medical need to use a pre agreed app. This includes using smart watches and glasses.
- Phones must remain on Blackout and be put away in students' bags.
- Pupils must not use their phones to access social media, games, entertainment, cameras or other distracting applications.

The use of Blackout does not replace these expectations. Where a pupil's phone is being managed by Blackout, the device should still remain away in bags at all times.

5. Using Blackout

Pupils are expected to have Blackout correctly installed and activated on their device during the school's agreed Blackout schedule. The Blackout schedule is 8.50am-3.35pm except for Wednesdays where the end period is 2.45pm term time only.

Blackout is designed to restrict access to distracting applications during agreed school hours, helping pupils remain focused and supporting Harrogate Grammar School's wider approach to mobile phone use. Please note that Blackout is time based and is not location specific, this means that the restrictions will begin if it is a scheduled school day irrespective of your child's attendance at the school site.

Blackout does **not** give the school or anyone else access to pupils' personal content. It does **not** allow school staff to view messages, photographs, files or browsing history, and it does **not** track a pupil's GPS location.

Pupils and families are responsible for ensuring that:

- Blackout is correctly installed and set up.
- The permissions required for Blackout to operate remain enabled.
- The app is not deliberately deleted, disabled or bypassed during the agreed schedule.
- Any technical problems are reported to the school rather than attempting to remove or bypass the restrictions.

Relevant Blackout status information is available to authorised school staff through the Harrogate Grammar School dashboard, allowing the school to identify where a device may not be correctly set up or following the agreed blocking schedule.

6. Monitoring and Daily Routines

Consistent routines are an important part of creating a successful phone-free school culture at Harrogate Grammar School. Staff may routinely check that pupils are following the school's mobile phone expectations and, where Blackout is being used, that devices are correctly set up and able to be blocked. Tutors, Pastoral staff and SLT will perform checks into tutor time or periodically to ensure compliance.

Where an issue is identified, pupils will be given an appropriate opportunity to resolve technical or setup problems. Deliberate attempts to disable or bypass agreed restrictions will be managed in line with the Respectful Relationships and Behaviour Policy. If phones are seen out or in pockets, they will be confiscated and returned at the end of the school day with a negative issued. Repeated issues will lead to phones only being returned to parents/carers and a contract being put in place between home and school. Alongside confiscation, deliberate misuse of phones or bypassing of Blackout may lead to suspension.

7. Communication During the School Day

If a pupil needs to contact a parent or carer during the school day, they should follow the usual procedures and speak to their Year Manager who can support with contacting home where it is warranted. If Parents and carers need to get a message to or speak to their child they must contact school directly during school hours and should contact the main reception on 01423 531127. A message will be given to their child and any arrangements that may be needed can then be put in place. This helps maintain consistent expectations and reduces the need for pupils to access their phones during the school day as well as ensuring that staff are better able to support students during the school day as they are aware of what is happening.

8. Alternative Arrangements

Harrogate Grammar School recognises that one approach may not be appropriate or technically possible for every pupil. Where a pupil's device cannot use the school's agreed mobile phone management approach, an alternative arrangement may be agreed with the school.

This includes:

- The use of a basic phone with limited functionality – i.e. a brick phone.
- Unrestricted phones may be handed in to reception, switched off where they will be locked away securely in Reflection and can be collected by parents at 3.45pm or 3pm on a Wednesday. If parents or carers need their child to hand in and/or collect this will need communicating to the relevant Year Manager in advance.
- Not bringing a mobile phone to school.

Alternative arrangements must be agreed with Harrogate Grammar School in advance.

9. Medical, and Safeguarding Exceptions

We recognise that some pupils may require access to a mobile phone or specific applications for medical, or safeguarding reasons. Requests for individual adjustments such as medical apps being available, should be discussed with the school and will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Any agreed arrangements will be clearly communicated to the pupil, their family and relevant members of staff.

10. Breaches of the Policy

All pupils are expected to follow the school's mobile phone expectations. Examples of a breach may include:

- Using a phone when this is not permitted.
- Having a phone visible when devices are expected to be stored away at all times (unless there is an exception agreed with HGS in advance).
- Deliberately disabling or deleting Blackout during the agreed schedule.
- Changing required device permissions to prevent Blackout from operating.
- Attempting to bypass the school's agreed mobile phone restrictions.
- Repeatedly failing to follow an agreed alternative arrangement.

Breaches will be managed in line with the school's existing [Respectful Relationships and Behaviour Policy](#).

The school will distinguish, where appropriate, between genuine technical issues and deliberate attempts to avoid the mobile phone expectations.

11. Working With Parents and Carers

Parents and carers play an important role in supporting the school's approach to mobile phones.

We ask families to:

- Discuss the school's mobile phone expectations with their child.
- Support their child in setting up Blackout correctly where applicable.
- Help ensure required permissions remain enabled.
- Encourage responsible and healthy use of technology outside of school.
- Contact the school if they experience technical difficulties or have concerns about the arrangements.
- Follow the school's communication procedures rather than contacting pupils directly on their mobile phone during phone-free hours wherever possible.
- Where staff meet with parents the use of mobile devices including smart glasses to record meetings is strictly prohibited. Devices may only be used in meetings with the express agreement of all parties involved and a clear agreement of how the information recorded will be used and who it will be shared with.

Clear and consistent expectations between school and home can help pupils develop healthier and more responsible relationships with their devices.

12. Sixth Form

- Sixth form students are not expected to have Blackout Technology on their mobile phone. They are only allowed to use their phones in the sixth form social areas.
- They are not allowed to have phones out in the main school building. If they are seen with them, they will be confiscated to be collected at the end of the school day.
- They are not allowed to use them during lessons and must not be seen or heard.

13. Review

This policy will be reviewed annually to ensure that it continues to reflect the needs of pupils, families and the school community.

The school may also review its approach in response to:

- Feedback from pupils, parents and staff.
- Changes in safeguarding or educational guidance.
- Developments in mobile phone technology.
- Evidence and data relating to the school's implementation.
- Changes to the school's wider behaviour or digital strategy.