



# Midhurst Rother College

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23 June 2025

Dear Parent/Carer

I am writing to inform you of some adjustments we are making to strengthen our mobile phone policy. These changes will come into effect in the new academic year, with a trial in July.

It has been well documented that mobile phone usage contributes to feelings of anxiety in young people. Social media is the main cause of this and the prevalence of smartphones and watches is increasing. There is strong evidence to suggest that this has a negative impact on mental health.

With this in mind, we will alter our approach towards mobile phones from September this year and insist they must be switched off and in bags. An internal survey in some classes showed that students have their phones switched on and on their person. This means that notifications will disturb them in class and the temptation to look is high. Many children also follow celebrities on social media who post new content frequently. This means they receive messages / updates during the day from social media platforms, which then appear simultaneously on smartwatches. This disrupts their attention in lessons.

We have seen an increasing number of cases where parents / carers are messaging their children during the day. I would ask parents / carers to please refrain from doing this. In emergencies, you can contact main reception to relay a message to your child. Thank you for your support with this.

I understand that parents / carers often want their child to have a phone for safety reasons, in particular for journeys to and from school. I am encouraging parents / carers to purchase a 'brick phone' for their child instead of a smart phone. They will still be contactable after school, but without the disruption smartphones and watches cause.

We currently operate a 'not seen or heard' approach to phone use. If a phone is seen or heard, it is confiscated and a sanction applied for repeat occurrences. We will strengthen this approach with some key amendments. The purpose of this is to act as a deterrent to phones being on. These changes are as follows:

- Students seen with a mobile phone / 'airpods' (or similar) anywhere on the school grounds will have them confiscated. We will not permit phone use once students are inside the school grounds – **'phones off at the school gate'** is the approach we will take.
- If a mobile phone is seen or heard during the school day, it will be confiscated and the student will be sent to our link room for the remainder of the day.
- Should a student's mobile phone be confiscated for being seen or heard, they will be required to hand their phone in at the start of every day and collect at the end of the day for one half-term.

The current system we have operates well and it is rare that phones are seen or heard in school. We are, however, increasing our response and sanctions for this to discourage their use further. Our break

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and lunchtimes are always busy with children talking, laughing and playing. We want to encourage more of this and help children to move away from the need to check their phones at any point. We have decided against an outright ban at this stage but may move to this in the future.

We know that some students need to access a mobile phone for medical reasons – monitoring blood sugar levels, for example. Students who may need their phone for medical reasons should contact their Head of Year to discuss what flexible support will be needed for them.

Your sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Stuart Edwards', followed by a period.

Stuart Edwards  
Principal