Mobile Phone and Smart Device Policy (Pupils)

Berkhamsted Prep and Pre-Prep

Berkhamsted Senior Schools & Sixth

Heatherton

Charlotte House

Berkhamsted Day Nursery Ltd.

Berkhamsted School Enterprises Ltd.

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Policy Scope and Introduction

1 Scope of this policy

1.1 This policy relates to the use by pupils of mobile phones (both smartphones and non-smartphones) and other smart devices (such as smartwatches and smartglasses).

1.2 The section of this policy relating to Boarding also covers the rules relating to boarders' school devices overnight in the Boarding Houses.

1.3 Exceptions may be made to this policy e.g. for pupils with medical conditions such as diabetes. Please refer to section 10 of the Policy below.

1.4 Staff use of mobile phones and other smart devices is outside the scope of this policy.

2 Introduction and aims

2.1 This policy is designed to provide clarity over the rules surrounding mobile phones and smart devices.

2.2 The school takes an age-and-stage approach to pupils' use of mobile phones with different rules in different key stages with pupils gaining greater autonomy as they progress through the schools.

2.3 The School aims to establish a calm, safe and supportive environment conducive to pupil wellbeing and teaching and learning and recognises that mobile phones can cause a distraction and be a source of online bullying.

2.4 A key aspect of this in creating this environment is to prohibit the use of mobile phones throughout the school day for pupils below the Sixth Form.

2.5 The prohibition of mobile phones (below the Sixth Form) is part of the School's overall strategic plan to improve pupil wellbeing and to address the risks associated with mobile phones in school, including negative impacts on concentration and mental health; the consequences of a loss of focus in lessons and classroom disruption; and the role mobile phones play in bullying and other safeguarding issues when misused. There are clear advantages associated with having a mobile phone-free environment, and pupils are encouraged to view such an environment as desirable and valuable, enabling them to engage actively with the full programme of learning, sport and extra-curricular activities and opportunities the School offers, and also to engage with each other.

2.6 The School also aims to take an educational approach to phone use and to teach pupils about responsible mobile phone use and the risks flowing from their misuse, both of which form part of the curriculum on online safety to support pupils in using mobile phones appropriately and safely.

3 Definitions

3.1 For the purposes of this policy, the "School Day" means from morning Registration until the end of timetabled lessons, which is 1540 at the Prep Schools and 1620 at Senior and Sixth.

3.2 The term "smart devices" means electronic gadgets that connect to other devices or

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networks (often via the internet or Bluetooth connection) and can perform tasks interactively, often using sensors, software, and connectivity features. They typically offer advanced functionality beyond their basic purpose by integrating computing power and communication capabilities. Examples include smartphones, smartglasses and smartwatches (including fitness trackers such as Fitbits).

Smart Devices

4 Smart Devices other than mobile phones

4.1 Smartglasses are prohibited in all schools.

4.2 Smartwatches (including fitness trackers) are prohibited in Berkhamsted Prep, Pre-Prep, Heatherton, and Berkhamsted Senior School. If a pupil brings a smartwatch to school for any reason, it must be handed in at reception (for Preps) or locked in the pupil's Yondr pouch at the start of the School Day and not be accessed until the end of the School Day.

4.3 Smartwatches may be worn in the Sixth , but they **must not** be used for sending, making or receiving calls or messages, taking photos of other pupils or staff or making video or audio recordings. **However, please note that watches of any type, including smartwatches, are <u>not</u> permitted during exams.**

4.4 Any other smart devices that enable pupils to take photos or recordings of other pupils or staff are also prohibited. Traditional cameras are, however, allowed for academic purposes e.g. in Art and Photography.

Mobile Phones

5 Berkhamsted Prep and Pre-Prep School and Heatherton School

5.1 No pupil is allowed to bring a smartphone to school.

5.2 Further to consultation and partnership work with parents, the School encourages parents not to buy a smartphone for their child until the age of 14.

5.3 Pupils below Year 5 are not permitted to bring any mobile phone to school.

5.4 Pupils in Years 5 and Year 6 can bring a non-smartphone to school which must be handed in at the School Office in the morning and can be collected before going home.

6 Charlotte House

6.1 The default position is that pupils are not allowed to bring a mobile phone to school.

6.2 As per section 10 of this policy, an exception may be made where a pupil's individual circumstances require it. The Headteacher will assess each case on its own merits.

6.3 Where the Headteacher has agreed to make an exception to allow a pupil to bring a

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mobile phone to school, it must be handed in at the School Office in the morning and can be collected before going home, so pupils do not have access to the mobile phone during the School Day.

7 Berkhamsted Senior School – Years 7 to 11

7.1 In the school year 2025-2026, Year 7 pupils are not allowed to bring a smartphone onto the school sites. In the school year 2026-2027, pupils in Years 7 and 8 will not be allowed to bring a smartphone onto the school sites. In the school year 2027-2028, pupils in Years 7, 8, and 9 will not be allowed to bring a smartphone onto the school sites. However, in all cases they are allowed to bring a non-smartphone to school.

7.2 For the sake of clarity, a non-smartphone is a phone without a camera and without access to the internet.

7.3 If pupils in Year 7 -11 bring a phone to school, it is required to be switched off and locked in the pupil's Yondr Pouch between 8:25 and 16:20.

7.4 The Yondr Pouch containing the switched off mobile phone remains the pupil's property and responsibility during the School Day, but the mobile phone cannot be accessed.

7.5 If a pupil arrives after morning Registration or leaves school early before the end of the School Day, they will need to lock their mobile phone into their Yondr Pouch at Reception when signing in / unlock their Yondr Pouch at Reception when signing out, as applicable. Routine checks to ensure that the Yondr pouches are being used are carried out.

7.6 For school trips which take place away from the School sites during the School Day, where pupils will be returning to the School sites afterwards, the general rule is that mobile phones will be locked away in the pupil's Yondr Pouch in the usual way.

7.7 When pupils are attending an event away from the School sites past the end of the School Day, such as an away fixture, either a portable unlocking station will be taken to that site, or at the discretion of the member of staff in charge pupils may be allowed to unlock their Yondr Pouches before leaving the School site.

7.8 For school activities outside the School Day – for example at the weekend, such as sports fixtures, music / drama rehearsals – pupils may be allowed to have their phones with them at the discretion of the member of staff in charge and may also be required to bring their Yondr pouches with them.

7.9 For school activities during the school holidays - such as residential / international trips, the use of phones is at the discretion of the Trip Leader and may depend on the nature of the trip and the age of the pupils on the trip. Pupils may be required to bring their Yondr pouches on the trip and will be required to follow the trip rules as outlined by the Trip Leader. The situation for the particular trip will be communicated to pupils and parents prior to the trip as part of the pre-trip information.

7.10 For more information about the use of Yondr Pouches, please see Appendix 1.

8 Berkhamsted Sixth – Years 12 and 13

8.1 The School's policy on mobile phone use during the School Day differs slightly for Sixth

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Form students, recognising their growing independence and responsibility as they prepare for life beyond school, while still upholding the expectations set for younger pupils.

8.2 There are specific rules relating to where Sixth Formers may use their phones as communicated by the Head of Sixth Form. Please see Appendix 2. However, as a general principle, Sixth Formers are not allowed to use their phones in front of younger pupils.

8.3 There may be exceptions when Sixth Formers have obtained prior permission from the Headteacher of Sixth to use their phones e.g. for medical reasons. Please refer to section 10 below for details.

9 Boarding

9.1 The School takes an age-and-stage approach to boarders' access to mobile phones and smart devices.

9.2 Pupils in Years 7, 8, 9, 10 and 11 must hand in their mobile phones, smart devices and any laptop/tablet devices each evening to the duty member of staff. Students can collect their mobile phones and devices the following morning before leaving for school.

9.3 Sixth Form students may keep their mobile phones and smart devices in their rooms but can also choose to store them elsewhere overnight.

9.4 Sixth Formers may not use their phones, laptop/tablet devices or other smart devices after lights out unless the pupil has the prior permission of a member of staff.

9.5 If a pupil breaks the rules, the school reserves the right to restrict the pupil's access to their phone and/or smart device for a period of time.

9.6 Individual restrictions may also be put in place if there are concerns about a pupil's progress.

9.7 Pupils will nonetheless be given a means of communicating with their parents of guardian.

10 Reasonable adjustments and adaptations to this policy

10.1 The School acknowledges that some pupils will require access to their mobile phone during the day, for example for pupils with certain medical conditions or SEND, pupils with caring responsibilities or due to individual circumstances for a pupil including at home, and that it has duties to:

10.1.1 make reasonable adjustments where necessary;

10.1.2 take such steps as is reasonable to avoid substantial disadvantage to a disabled pupil caused by the School's policies or practices;

10.1.3 have arrangements in place to support pupils with medical conditions to manage their condition effectively (e.g., a pupil with diabetes might require their mobile phone to enable them to monitor their blood sugar levels)

10.2 Reasonable adjustments and adaptations will be made for specific pupils who need them, with the relevant Headteacher assessing each case for adjustments or adaptations on its own merits (liaising with relevant colleagues such as the Nursing Team as necessary).

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10.3 Allowing flexibility for an individual pupil will not mean that the pupil would be exempt from all restrictions on mobile phone use; instead the pupil will be permitted to use their mobile phone for a specified purpose at specific times and locations. These will be agreed with the Headteacher when an exception is made to the normal rules.

10.4 A request for a reasonable adjustment or adaptation to be made to this policy for a particular pupil should be made in writing to the relevant Headteacher.

11 Sanctions

11.1 The School will use a range of sanctions to address breaches of this policy. These include confiscation, order marks or Blue Notes, detentions and, for repeat offenders, suspensions. The aim of sanctions is not only to enable the pupil concerned to concentrate at school, but also to prevent distractions for other pupils. It is also to reduce the likelihood for harm caused by the excessive use of social media.

11.2 In considering whether a sanction is reasonable, staff will assess whether it is proportionate on the facts of each case, and take into account any other relevant circumstances such as the pupil's age and any SEND.

11.3 If necessary, Headteachers and other staff authorised by them have power to search a pupil or their possessions where they have reasonable grounds to suspect that a pupil has a prohibited item in their possession, including any item identified in the School Rules as an item that may be searched for.

11.4 Headteachers and other staff authorised by them also have permission to confiscate a pupil's phone (or other smart device), either if the pupil is breaking the rules or there are reasonable grounds to suspect that the pupil's online behaviour has been inappropriate, illegal, or may cause harm to others. Please see appendix 6 of the Behaviour and Discipline policy for further information on searching pupils.

11.5 Staff will consider whether the behaviour breaching this policy gives cause to suspect that a pupil is suffering, or may be at risk of, harm. Where this may be the case, staff will follow the School's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and associated procedures.

11.6 Below are examples of sanctions which may be imposed in the Senior School:

11.6.1 If a pupil fails to bring their Yondr Pouch to school and has not gone to Reception of their own volition prior to Registration to borrow a spare pouch for that day, a sanction will be issued – an order mark on the first occasion, with sanctions escalating for repeat offences.

11.6.2 If a pupil has left their mobile phone switched on in the Yondr Pouch and somebody rings it, that pupil will have failed to follow the instruction to switch their phone off given at the start of the day. The Yondr Pouch and the mobile phone will be confiscated and handed in to Reception, and can be collected at the end of the day. The pupil will be issued with an order mark.

11.6.3 If a pupil is found during the School Day to have a mobile phone which is not locked in a Yondr Pouch, this will normally result in a Saturday detention and a restorative conversation.

11.6.4 If a pupil deliberately damages their Yondr Pouch (e.g., cuts it open), they will be issued with a detention and charged for a replacement Yondr Pouch.

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11.7 The following are examples of sanctions which may be imposed in the Sixth Form:

11.7.1 confiscation of the mobile phone and Blue Note

11.7.2 detentions

11.7.3 suspension for repeat offenders

12 Parents

12.1 Parents play an important role in enabling children to be protected from the disadvantages of smartphone use and in making the most of the academic, co-curricular and social opportunities on offer at school. They are encouraged to discuss and reinforce the policy with their children at home, including the risks associated with mobile phone use and the benefits of a mobile phone-free environment.

12.2 If parents need to contact their child during the School Day (or if a pupil needs to contact their parents), they should contact the relevant School Office or Headteacher's PA, and a message will be passed on as appropriate. Alternatively, pupils from Year 7 and above have access to their emails during break and lunchtimes so parents are also welcome to email them directly.

12.3 If parents wish to request that an adaptation or reasonable adjustment to this policy should be made for their child, they should contact the relevant Headteacher.

13 Communication of this Policy

13.1 This policy is published to current parents (and parents of children about to join the School) on the School Website and Parent Portal and to Senior & Sixth pupils on the Student Hub.

13.2 All staff, pupils and parents are made aware of, and regularly reminded about, this policy. For all staff and pupils it forms part of their induction when they join the School, and is regularly reinforced thereafter (at least annually). For parents, information about this policy is included in the Parent Handbook and reinforced regularly via the usual school communication channels (e.g., SchoolPost).

14 Monitoring and Review

14.1 The impact of this policy will be monitored regularly through pupil feedback e.g. the pupil wellbeing survey, school council meetings, and prefect meetings with staff.

14.2 This policy will be reviewed at least annually as part of the regular cycle of policy review, or sooner if required by updated legislation or guidance, or if the School's practices change.

14.3 The School recognises that technological developments happen quickly and reserves the right to make changes to this policy to respond to the changing landscape with agility.

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Appendix 1 – Yondr Phone Pouches – Details and FAQS for Parents and Pupils

Yondr Phone Pouches - Details & FAQs for parents & pupils

How does the system work for an individual pupil?

- Each pupil is issued with their own Yondr pouch. It is theirs to keep; it is their property and responsibility.
- They must bring it to school with them every morning. At the start of the day, the teacher/tutor will ask every pupil to switch their phone off and put it in their Yondr pouch and click the pouch shut.
- Every pupil does this, and the teacher/tutor will confirm that they have done this (e.g., pouches containing phones are placed on the desk; the teacher will do a quick walk-around the classroom, asking pupils to demonstrate that it is locked).
- The pupil keeps the pouch, and their phone, on them for the day. It remains their property and responsibility, but the phone cannot be accessed.
- At the end of the day, on the way out of school, the pupil touches their phone against an unlocking station, the pouch opens, and they are reunited with their phone.
- The pupil goes home, with their phone in their possession and the pouch in the "unlocked" position also still in their possession. Our recommendation is that the pouch goes straight in their school bag and stays there until the following morning.
- The following morning, they leave home with their phone in their possession and with their pouch in the "unlocked" position. They arrive at school - the day and the process start again.

How do we know whose pouch is whose?

- Pupils can name their pouches with a marker pen, or in any other way they choose. It is their property. As with uniform, a simple name tag or name written on in pen will make it clear.

What happens if a pupil comes to school without their pouch?

- If a pupil does not have their pouch with them, their teacher/tutor will send them to Reception to get a spare pouch.
- These pouches will be marked "SPARE" and must be returned to Reception at the end of the day.
- The pupil will be issued with an Order Mark for a first offence in failing to bring a pouch to school. Sanctions will escalate for repeat offences.
- If a pupil has gone to Reception of their own volition and collected a spare pouch before the start of the day, they will not receive a sanction, provided this is returned at the end of the school day.

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What happens if a pouch is lost or damaged?

- Accidental damage is unlikely, given the sturdiness of the pouches.
- If a pupil loses a pouch, they will be charged for a permanent replacement. Replacements can be obtained from their Head of House. The cost of a replacement pouch is around £20.
- If a pupil deliberately damages a pouch (e.g. cuts it open) they are issued with a detention and charged for a replacement.
- Though highly unlikely, if accidental damage renders a pouch obsolete, a new one will be issued free of charge.

What happens if a pupil leaves their phone turned on in a pouch and somebody rings it?

- The phone will ring as pouches do not block the signal.
- That pupil has failed to follow the instruction at the start of the day (which included the instruction to switch their phone off). Their pouch and phone is confiscated and handed in to reception, and can be collected at the end of the day.
- That pupil is issued with an Order Mark

What happens if a pupil arrives at the start of the day with their pouch already in the locked position, and therefore unable to put their phone in?

- Pupils will have it explained to them that it is a part of their responsibility to ensure they arrive at School with a pouch in the unlocked position.
- Unlocking stations will be available by the entrances to school at the start of the day for any pupil who needs to unlock their pouch when they arrive.
- Pouches are unlikely to accidentally default to the locked position, given they require a firm press to click into the locked position.

How do you prevent pupils accessing the unlocking stations during the day?

- Unlocking stations will have timers associated with them so that they are only accessible at the appropriate times of the day.

What happens if a pupil forgets to unlock their phone at the end of the school day and goes home unable to access their phone for a night, weekend, school holiday? (Or if a mischievous sibling locks their phone away)?

- This is comparable to a pupil forgetting their phone in their locker.
- That pupil will not be able to access their phone during that period of time. (In exceptional circumstances, it may be possible to arrange for a pupil to have access onto the site)

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- **What happens if pupils arrive at school early for swimming, rowing, etc?**
- They will bring their phone and pouch with them, as they would if they were arriving at the usual time. They will lock their phone in their pouch at the start of the School day, like any other pupil.

What happens if a pupil needs to leave school early for reasons of sickness, an appointment, other?

- There will be a supervised unlocking station available throughout the school day, at Reception.

What happens if a pupil arrives at School late, for example after an early appointment?

- That pupil will lock their phone in their pouch when signing in at Reception.

What happens if a pupil is leaving directly from a venue other than the main site, for example Chesham Road or Kitchener's?

- We will have an unlocking station at Chesham Road pavilion and Kitchener's pavilion.
- Where pupils are attending an event away from the Schools (e.g., an away fixture), we will either take a portable unlocking station to that site or allow pupils to unlock their phones before they leave the School.

How will you manage a large number of pupils wanting access at the end of the day to their phones?

- The unlocking stations are quick, and there will be enough provided to allow for a steady flow of pupils. Yondr have visited and assessed our site and envisage no obstacle to smooth running.

What if a pupil doesn't have a mobile phone?

- A parent must write to the Head of House to confirm their pupil does not bring a phone to school. The pupil's name goes on a spreadsheet that is shared with teachers/tutors, who will know not to expect that pupil to lock their phone away at the start of the day.

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What if a pupil says they didn't bring their phone to school that day?

- The Tutor will check and confirm this with parents. If found to be untrue, a sanction will be issued. Sanctions will escalate for repeat offences.

My pupil has a smartwatch - will that also need to go in the pouch?

- Smartwatches may be worn at school, but must not be used for sending, making or receiving calls or messages or video or audio recording.
- Please note that smartwatches are not permitted during exams.

What if a pupil decides to bring in another phone, purposefully damages the pouch or is seen to be undermining the rules?

- Pupils would face serious sanctions according to the School's Behaviour and Discipline Policy, this could mean a Saturday detention to a suspension, depending on the circumstances.

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Appendix 2 – Use of Mobile Phones in the Sixth Form

To support a focused, respectful and safe learning environment, the following rules govern the use of mobile phones by Sixth Form students on both the Castle and Kings sites during the School Day:

Castle Campus

- **Zaha Hadid Building:**
  Mobile phones may be used **only on the ground floor** of the Zaha Hadid Building.
- Use on any other floor of the Zaha Hadid Building, or in any other area of the Castle campus, is not permitted.

Kings Campus

- **Nash Harris dining room:**
  Mobile phones may be used in the Nash Harris dining room **except** during breaktimes (10:20am to 11:00am and 2:40pm to 3:40pm) and lunchtime (12:00pm to 1:40pm). During breaktimes and lunchtime, mobile phone use is not allowed anywhere in the Nash Harris dining room.
- Use in any other area of the Kings campus is not permitted.

Movement Between Sites

- Mobile phones **must not** be used while walking between the Kings and Castle campuses. This includes texting, calling, listening to audio, or any other form of device use.

Reasonable adjustments and adaptations to this Policy

- Reasonable adjustments and adaptations will be made for specific students who need them, for example students with certain medical conditions or SEND. A request for a reasonable adjustment or adaptation must be made in writing to the Headteacher of Berkhamsted Sixth. Please see section 10 of the Policy for more information.

Sanctions

- Any student found not adhering to these rules will have their mobile phone confiscated and a Blue Note will be issued.
- Confiscated phones will be taken to the nearest reception at either Kings or Castle.
- It is the student's responsibility to collect their phone from reception at the end of the school day.
- Where a student repeatedly fails to adhere to these rules, the sanctions will escalate - please refer to section 11 of the Policy for more information.

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