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Date: 29th June 2026
Our Ref: DGW
Reply to: Mr Williams
At: Waterleat Road Centre

Dear Parent/Guardian,

The Thinking Schools Academy Trust is committed to providing calm, focused learning environments where all students can succeed. I am writing to inform you of some changes that we will be making at Paignton Academy to support the new guidance and ensure our students receive the best possible school experience.

In line with Department for Education guidance (January 2026), which states that schools should be mobile phone-free by default, all schools within the Thinking Schools Academy Trust will operate as mobile phone-free environments during the school day, with no use of mobile phones permitted. Our current policy aligns with the majority of this guidance; however, it has become clear that a more robust and consistent approach is now required.

You can read the full guidance here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/mobile-phones-in-schools>

This applies to the entire school day, including before school, break and lunchtime, movement between lessons, clubs, trips and visits unless directed otherwise by a member of staff. It also includes smartwatches, earbuds and similar devices that allow communication or recording. This expectation applies to all students, with any specific arrangements communicated separately by the school where appropriate.

What this means in practice

- Students do not need a mobile phone in school.
- We recognise that some parents and guardians wish their child to have a phone for safety on the journey to and from school. This is fully understood. However, mobile phones must not be seen, heard or used anywhere on the school site.
- If a phone is brought into school, it must be switched off and securely stored in student bags on arrival and must remain inaccessible until the end of the school day.

At Paignton Academy we are exploring the introduction of secure mobile phone pouches. This will be implemented during the next academic year, following consultations with parents/guardians, staff and students. Further communication will be sent home once we have a timeline for further changes.

Current Daily routine:

Mobile phones and smart devices - TSAT PRINCIPLE ROUTINES | RESPONSIBILITY | RESPECT

The Academy has a clear expectation that all electronic devices are switched **'off'** and put **'away'** in pupils' bags for **"the whole day"** until 3pm. Pupils may use phones in the House office with permission.

Any phones or smart devices that are seen or heard by staff will be confiscated and taken to the House Office or Main Reception.

Device confiscated on the –

- 1st occasion - phone collected by pupil at 3pm on the same day
- 2nd occasion - pupils hand their phone to House Office for each morning for 5 days
- 3rd occasion - phone held by the Academy until collected by parents

Constant use of mobile phones will result in a 60 minute detention after school.

Refusal to hand in a phone/smart device could result in internal suspension or fixed term suspension.

Staff have the ability to log on Arbor via *Mobile phone use (Level 0)* or *Refusal to hand in mobile phone for confiscation (Level 2)*

Expectations and consequences

Phones and similar devices must be secured at all times while on site.

Any device that is seen, heard or used will be confiscated. Parents will be required to collect the device at a convenient time after school. Confiscation will follow an escalating approach, in line with the school's updated behaviour policy [pa behaviour and culture policy march 2026 1-1.pdf](#)

As a mobile phone-free school, students bring mobile phones onto site at their own risk. The school cannot accept responsibility for the loss, theft or damage of mobile phones at any time, including while they are held following confiscation.

Any attempt to tamper with or bypass the system will result in more serious consequences.

Communication and safeguarding

If you need to contact your child during the day, please do so via the school office. Messages will be passed on promptly. Contacting your child on their mobile will compromise your child and the behaviour policy will still apply.

To support this, we will be introducing a clear communication commitment on our website, outlining the most effective ways to get in touch with us. - [Paignton Academy | Thinking Schools Academy Trust](#)

Students will have access to all necessary resources and support; mobile phones are not required for learning.

We appreciate your support in reinforcing this approach, which will help ensure calm, safe and focused learning environments across our school.

Yours sincerely



D Williams

PRINCIPAL

Mobile Phones in Thinking Schools Academy Trust Schools – Parent FAQ

1. Why are TSAT schools introducing this policy?

The Department for Education states that schools should be mobile phone-free environments by default.

This supports better focus and learning, improved behaviour, and reduced distraction and online risks.

You can read the full guidance here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/mobile-phones-in-schools>

2. Can my child still bring a phone to school?

Yes. We understand that some parents and carers wish their child to have a phone for safety on the journey to and from school.

However, phones must be switched off, secured and not used at any point on the school site. They must not be seen or heard at any time.

3. Why can't students use phones at break or lunchtime?

The guidance is clear that restrictions should apply throughout the entire school day.

This helps encourage social interaction, reduce pastoral issues and online conflict, and ensure consistency and fairness.

4. How will the school manage phones during the day?

Each school will use its own system, such as pouches, lockers or secure storage.

Please refer to your school's letter for details of the system used and the daily routine.

5. What happens if a phone is seen or used?

The phone will be confiscated, and sanctions will be applied in line with the school's behaviour policy. Repeat or serious breaches will result in further consequences.

6. What if I need to contact my child during the day?

Please contact the school office, who will ensure messages are passed on quickly and safely.

Students can also request to contact home via staff if needed.

7. What if my child needs a phone for medical or exceptional reasons?

In a small number of cases, adaptations may be made. Please contact the school directly to discuss this.

8. Will phones ever be used for learning?

No. Students will be provided with everything they need to learn effectively without a phone.

9. What if my child refuses to follow the rules?

Schools will follow their behaviour policy to ensure consistency and fairness. This may include further sanctions until expectations are met.

10. How can I support this policy?

You can help by reinforcing that phones must not be used in school, avoiding contacting your child during the school day, and supporting the school's expectations.