



8 December 2025

Dear Parent/Carer

There has been a lot on the news recently about smart phones and the negative impact of social media. We know that some of you will be considering the purchase of a mobile phone or a smart watch over the Christmas period, particularly if you have a child in Year 5 or Year 6. Part of your decision will be affected by whether your child will need a mobile device at secondary school.

To help with your decision making, and at the suggestion of those in attendance at our recent Mobile Phone Parents Forum, we want to make it clear that your child will **not require a smartphone** to fully participate in our curriculum and extracurricular programme at Finham Park School.

Over the last half term, we surveyed parents as part of our annual survey in which 299 parents replied. **Overwhelmingly** parents/carers are saying they would welcome a stronger approach to smartphones in school (**75% agree or strongly agree to a stronger** approach compared to 7% disagreeing or strongly disagreeing). This strength of feeling was echoed in our Mobile Phones Parent Forum.

We are aware that smartphones are used in school in some lessons, and there are practical reasons for this. We also know that this has led to some families providing their children with smartphones against their wishes. We are looking at how we can phase this out over the next few months and provide alternative technological options.

It is important that discussions around smartphones and social media are separated from the use of technology. Our curriculum will continue to support students in developing their technological skills and all students will benefit from access to appropriate devices at home to use the variety of excellent online learning platforms, to carry out research and to help prepare for examinations. If there are families who require support with this access to a suitable device, we encourage you to contact the school.

We are still in discussion as both a leadership team, and with the MAT about our approach moving forwards, particularly from September '26. The feedback we have received from parents has been a valuable part of these discussions. The current guidance from our behaviour policy regarding mobile phones can be found below.

Thank you for your on-going support.

Best wishes

Mr D Bedford
Headteacher



Mobile communication technologies

- We advise students not to bring mobile phones into school, the loss of a mobile phone WILL NOT BE investigated in most cases.
- Phones should not be seen at all during the school day, unless a member of staff allows students to use them for learning purposes e.g. calculator, online quiz.
- If mobile phones are seen, they will be confiscated (and handed into reception for safe storage until the end of the day – with name, mentor group and year written clearly on it) students are expected to collect these at 3.15pm.
- During examinations students should give invigilators their mobile phones which will be returned at the end of the exam.
- Students found using mobile phones in a way that negatively impacts other members of the school community (staff and students) will receive sanctions including suspensions. Students risk being banned from bring devices into school and/or having to hand devices in at the start of every school day.
- Searching and confiscation of any items will be conducted in accordance with DfE guidelines outlined in the document below. This does not require student or parent permission. https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1091132/Searching__Screening_and_Confiscation_guidance_July_2022.pdf
- The DfE's guidance also sets out the specific rules that must be followed during searches (eg, the sex of the searcher, the need for a witness and their sex, the location of the search, and what may be searched).
- In some circumstances it may be reasonable for a member of staff to ask a student to reveal a message for the purpose of establishing whether cyber bullying has occurred, for instance, but if the student refuses then the member of staff should not enforce the instruction.
- The staff member can, however, legitimately issue a consequence for failure to follow a reasonable instruction.