

22nd June 2026

Dear Parent/Carers

CHANGES TO FAIRFAX ACADEMY'S MOBILE PHONE POLICY FROM SEPTEMBER 2026

At Fairfax Academy, our priority has always been to provide a safe, calm and focused learning environment where young people can thrive academically, socially and emotionally.

As many of you will know, Fairfax is already a mobile phone-free school. However, from **September 2026**, we will be introducing a strengthened mobile phone policy, with significantly increased sanctions for students who choose to use smartphones whilst on site.

This change reflects both our commitment to safeguarding young people and the growing national concern regarding the impact of smartphones and social media on children's wellbeing.

The Department for Education continues to support schools in creating mobile phone-free environments, with guidance stating that schools should prohibit the use of mobile phones throughout the school day. Recent government announcements have also outlined plans for stronger restrictions on children's access to social media and harmful online content, reflecting increasing concerns around online safety, mental health, cyberbullying, addictive technology and exposure to harmful material. Parents will be aware of the growing national debate regarding social media use by young people and the need for greater protection for children and teenagers.

(Please find attached a leaflet on the dangers and effects of social media usage to young people)

We fully recognise that many families choose to provide their child with a smartphone for practical reasons, including travel to and from school, communication with family members and other aspects of modern life, as well as specific medical needs. We are not seeking to remove those benefits and will continue to support all medical need usage related to smart phones.

However, while students are in our care, with regards personal usage on smart phones, we have a responsibility to protect them from the risks associated with excessive smartphone and social media use and to create an environment where they can focus on learning, develop healthy relationships and simply enjoy being children and teenagers without the constant pressures of the online world.

From September 2026 the following expectations will apply to all students:

- Smartphones must remain **switched off and out of sight at all times** whilst on the academy site.
- Smartphones should be **stored securely at the bottom of students' bags** throughout the school day.
- If a student is found using, displaying or accessing a smartphone during the school day, the device will be confiscated immediately.

- Confiscated smartphones will **not be returned to students**.
- A parent or carer will be required to attend the academy in person to collect the device.
- Any student who refuses to hand over a smartphone when instructed by a member of staff will receive an **immediate suspension from school**. There will be no negotiation or discussion regarding this expectation.

We strongly encourage parents and carers to purchase a simple phone pouch or storage case in which students can place their phone before arriving at school. Keeping devices secured at the bottom of bags significantly reduces the temptation to access them during the day and helps students comply with academy expectations.

Supporting Our Young People

We understand that some young people may initially find it difficult to be separated from their smartphones and social media platforms throughout the school day. Research increasingly highlights concerns regarding excessive social media use, including links with anxiety, low self-esteem, poor sleep, reduced concentration and online bullying. Young people today face pressures online that previous generations simply did not experience.

As an academy, we are committed not only to setting clear boundaries but also to supporting students in developing healthier relationships with technology. Where students find this transition challenging, our pastoral teams will be available to provide support, guidance and encouragement.

We believe schools should be places where students can learn, socialise face-to-face, develop resilience, build confidence and engage fully with the opportunities around them, free from the distractions and pressures that smartphones and social media can bring.

We appreciate your support as we implement these important changes. By working together, we can continue to create an environment that is safe, focused and supportive for every young person at Fairfax Academy.

Yours faithfully



SEAN CASTLE
Principal