

# High Tunstall College of Science



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## Students Mobile Electronic Devices Policy

|                           |   |                     |
|---------------------------|---|---------------------|
| Revised                   | - | April 2026          |
| Stakeholder Consulted     | - | Resources Committee |
| Review Date               | - | April 2028          |
| Responsibility for Review | - | Headteacher         |

V2.0

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## Statement of intent

Mobile phones, tablets and other personal electronic devices have become widely available and accessible to students and the college recognises current government guidance that schools should be mobile phone free.

High Tunstall College of Science accepts that personal mobile phones and tablets are often given to students by their parents to ensure their safety and personal security and understands that such devices pose inherent risks and may jeopardise the learning environment, disrupt teaching, add to social angst, poorer sleep, lower wellbeing, and lower academic outcomes.

As a college, we must strike a balance between the perception of personal safety and a suitable educational setting. Therefore, in line with government guidelines we are introducing this policy to use the lockable JUST FOCUS pouches which each student would use to store their own device whilst in the college until home time.

This policy establishes how mobile phones and personal electronic devices should be used by students in college to ensure both personal safety and an appropriate learning environment.

Mobile phones and personal electronic devices include, but are not limited to the following items:

- Mobile phones, smartphones, smartwatches, smart glasses with communication, earbuds with independent connectivity
- Personal digital assistants (PDAs)
- Handheld entertainment systems, e.g. video game consoles, iPods
- Portable internet devices, e.g. tablets, laptops
- Wireless handheld technologies or portable information technology systems, e.g. devices used for word processing, wireless internet access, image capture and/or recording, sound recording, and information transmitting, receiving and/or storing.

Staff use of mobile phones within the college environment is documented in the staff code of conduct policy.

# 1. Purpose

This policy sets out the college's rules for bringing mobile phones and other personal electronic devices onto the college site and the arrangements for securing such devices in approved lockable pouches during the college's school day.

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Support a calm, safe and focused learning environment
- Reduce distraction and disruption during the school day
- Protect students from misuse of devices, including recording, messaging and online activity during school hours
- Provide a clear and consistent framework for students, parents / carers and staff.

This policy should be read alongside the college's policies listed in section 3 below.

Current DfE guidance for England supports a phone-free school day and says schools should clearly communicate expectations and sanctions to students and parents or carers.

# 2. Scope

This policy applies to:

- All students on the college admissions roll
- Mobile phones, smartphones, smartwatches, smart glasses with communication capability, tablets, earbuds with independent connectivity, and other personal electronic devices capable of communication, recording, internet access, or data transmission
- The school day, including registration, lessons, movement between lessons, break, lunch, tutor time, assemblies, supervised activities, and any other time students are under the college's care on site and on any college organised trip.

# 3. Legal framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory and good practice guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- DfE 'Mobile phones in schools' Guidance February 2026
- DfE 'Behaviour in Schools'
- DfE 'Keeping children safe in education 2025'
- DfE 'Searching, screening and confiscation at school'
- Data Protection Act 2018
- The UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR)
- Voyeurism (Offences) Act 2019

- Protection of Children Act 1978
- Sexual Offences Act 2003
- DfE 'Cyberbullying: Advice for headteachers and school staff'.

This policy also has due regard to the college's policies including, but not limited to, the following:

- Anti-bullying Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Complaints Procedures Policy
- Child-on-child Abuse Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Online Safety Policy
- Records Management Policy
- Social Media Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Student Code of Conduct
- Supporting Students with Medical Conditions Policy.

## **4. Responsibilities**

The Governing Board will be responsible for:

- The implementation of the policy and procedures
- Evaluating the effectiveness of the policy and procedures.
- Ensuring that the policy, as written, does not discriminate on any grounds
- Reviewing the policy annually.

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- Handling complaints regarding this policy as outlined in the college's Complaints Procedures Policy
- The day-to-day implementation and management of the policy
- Informing parents and students of the Personal Electronic Devices Agreement
- Communicating this policy to the relevant staff members and the wider college community
- Communicating what devices can be brought to college and when they can and cannot be used.

Staff members will be responsible for:

- Assessing incidents of cyberbullying in conjunction with the Headteacher, in line with the Anti-bullying Policy and the Behaviour Policy.

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)/Inclusion Assistant (LAC) is responsible for:

- Initiating and managing responses to incidents of upskirting with relevant staff members and in line with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Liaising with and reporting the relevant information to children's social care and/or the police, when it is necessary to do so.

Students are responsible for:

- Understand the risks associated with being dependant on their mobile phones, social media and safeguarding issues
- For adhering to the provisions outlined in this policy
- Bringing their assigned JUST FOCUS pouch to college each day in compliance with this college policy
- Placing the phone into the JUST FOCUS pouch as instructed
- Keeping the locked JUST FOCUS pouch in their possession unless directed otherwise by staff
- Not attempting to open, tamper with, damage, bypass or defeat the JUST FOCUS pouch
- Not using any undisclosed secondary device
- Handing over a device to staff when directed under this policy.

Failure to comply will be treated as a breach of this policy and may also be treated as a breach of the Behaviour Policy.

Parents or Carers are responsible for:

- For supporting the college in the implementation of this policy by reinforcing the policy and contacting the college directly in cases of urgent need.

## **5. Core rule**

The college operates a mobile phone & communication devices free school day.

Students must not use a mobile phone or other covered personal electronic device during the school day unless:

- The student has been expressly authorised under a medical or other approved exemption
- A member of staff has given specific permission in exceptional circumstances; or
- Use is required under a safeguarding, health or emergency direction from staff.

If a student brings a mobile phone to college, it must be secured in an approved lockable JUST FOCUS pouch in accordance with this policy.

## **6. Ownership, liability and responsibility**

Students are responsible for their own belongings. The college accepts no responsibility for replacing property that is lost, stolen or damaged either on the college premises or travelling to and from college and at college events.

Staff will be protected against liability in any proceedings brought against them for any loss or damage to personal devices that have been confiscated as an appropriate sanction, provided that they have acted lawfully.

A mobile phone brought to college remains the property of the student and their parent or carer.

Where the college takes possession of a device or stores it under this policy, the college will take reasonable steps to store it securely. Any question of responsibility for loss or damage will be considered on the facts of the individual case, including:

- Whether the student complied with this policy
- Whether the device was stored in accordance with this policy;  
and
- Whether the college took reasonable care in the circumstances.

The college is not responsible for loss, damage, or unauthorised use arising from a student's failure to comply with this policy.

## **7. Acceptable use**

Students bringing a mobile phone or other personal electronic devices into college must make their parents aware of this.

The college will make reasonable adjustments for students to use their mobile phones in specific circumstances, e.g. to monitor a medical condition via an app or if they are a young carer. This will be agreed in advance based on evidence provided by the student, parent or carer.

Students may use a portable flash drive to transfer schoolwork from the college premises to their home. All staff members will adhere to the Data Protection Policy when sending work home with students.

## **8. Unacceptable use**

Mobile phones and personal electronic devices will not be allowed or used in any manner or place that is disruptive to the normal routine of the college. Unless express permission is granted by a member of staff, mobile devices will not be used to perform any of the following activities whilst on college grounds:

- Make phone or video calls
- Send text messages, WhatsApp messages, iMessages or emails
- Access social media
- Play games

- Watch videos
- Take photographs or videos
- Use any other application during college lessons and other educational and pastoral activities.

Students will not be permitted to use their mobile phones at any time throughout the course of the college day including between lessons, during break and lunchtimes. The college will, however, consider the risks that may be posed to students who do not have access to their mobile phone, e.g. when organising travel home at the end of the college day.

Staff members will also not be permitted to use their mobile phone for personal reasons in front of students throughout the college day.

Staff and students will adhere to the Social Media Policy at all times.

Files will not be sent between mobile devices, and Bluetooth and Wi-Fi functions will be disabled while on college premises.

If students fall ill during school hours, they will not use their mobile device to contact parents; they will use the agreed college communication procedures.

Under no circumstances will personal electronic devices be taken into examinations.

Under no circumstances will mobile devices be used in changing rooms or toilets.

Personal electronic devices will not be plugged into outlets on the college premises without the express permission of the Headteacher for safety reasons as they will not have been subject to a portable appliance test (PAT).

Any incidents of upskirting will be reported to the DSL and handled in accordance with the college's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

## **9. Prohibited conduct**

The following are prohibited:

- Using a phone during the college day without authorisation
- Opening a pouch without authorisation
- Carrying a phone outside the JUST FOCUS pouch during the school day
- Refusing to place a device in the JUST FOCUS pouch when instructed
- Refusing to hand over a device when instructed
- Using a second or substitute device to avoid the policy
- Photographing, filming, audio recording, messaging, gaming, browsing or online activity in breach of this policy
- Damaging or attempting to damage the JUST FOCUS pouch or unlocking mechanism.

## 10. Cyberbullying

All personal electronic devices will be used in line with our Online Safety Policy.

Incidents of cyberbullying will be dealt with and reported in line with the Anti-bullying Policy and the Behaviour Policy.

As part of the college's ongoing commitment to the prevention of cyberbullying, regular teaching and discussion about online safety will take place as part of PSHE lessons.

## 11. Search, confiscation and secure retention

The Headteacher, and other authorised staff members, will have the power to search a student or their possessions where they have reasonable grounds to suspect that a student is in possession of a prohibited item such as a mobile phone and similar devices as these will be deemed as prohibited items that may be searched for in line with the Behaviour Policy.

Authorised staff may require a student to hand over a phone or device where they reasonably believe that:

- This policy has been breached
- The device is being used in a way that is unsafe, disruptive, inappropriate, or contrary to college rules
- Inspection, confiscation, or further action is justified under the college's behaviour and safeguarding arrangements.

Where a device is retained by the college:

- It will be stored securely at the Admin office, Head of Year office, RISE, SHINE, CREATE or other designated secure point for the remainder of the school day
- Require collection by a parent or carer
- Record the incident on the college behaviour system
- Apply behaviour sanctions in line with the Behaviour Policy
- Require replacement or payment for deliberate damage to college-issued equipment.

## 12. Approved lockable JUST FOCUS pouch system

The college uses an approved lockable JUST FOCUS pouch system to prevent student access to mobile phones during the school day.

For the purposes of this policy:

- A "lockable pouch" means a college-approved pouch that is locked for the duration of the college- day and can be unlocked only by authorised college unlocking points or authorised staff
- When a phone is correctly placed inside a locked JUST FOCUS pouch, it is treated as inaccessible to the student for the duration of the school day.

The college's policy is based on secure containment and inaccessibility. Any reduction in wireless connectivity while a device is enclosed is incidental to the pouch system.

### **13. Bringing a phone to college**

A student may bring a mobile phone to college only if all of the following apply:

- The device is switched to silent before the school day begins
- The device is placed into the approved lockable JUST FOCUS pouch at the start of the school day or at the point directed by the college
- The pouch is locked before the student proceeds into the college.

Locked pouch must remain closed throughout the school day unless opened:

- At the end of the school day at an authorised unlocking point; or
- By an authorised member of staff in accordance with this policy.

### **14. Forgotten pouch procedure**

Where a student brings a phone to college but has forgotten their assigned JUST FOCUS pouch, the college will apply one of the following arrangements, as determined by this policy:

- Issue a temporary JUST FOCUS pouch for the day; or
- Require the student to hand in the phone for secure storage until the end of the school day.

Where the college uses secure storage:

- The device will be deposited at the college Admin office, Head of Year office, RISE, SHINE, CREATE or other designated secure point
- The student may be given a receipt, token, or collection reference
- The device will be returned at the end of the school day in accordance with this college policy.

The college may apply a sanction where a student repeatedly forgets their JUST FOCUS pouch.

### **15. Care of pouches and replacement costs**

Where the college issues a JUST FOCUS pouch to student:

- The JUST FOCUS pouch remains college property unless expressly stated otherwise;
- Student s must take reasonable care of the JUST FOCUS pouch;
- Parents or carers may be charged the reasonable replacement or repair cost where the JUST FOCUS pouch is deliberately damaged, lost, or damaged through misuse.

The college will set out replacement charges and processes separately.

## **16. Connectivity and location services**

Parents and carers should be aware that when a phone is enclosed within a lockable pouch, wireless connectivity and location-based services may be reduced or unavailable, depending on the device and pouch design.

The college does not guarantee that a device enclosed in a pouch will remain reachable, traceable, or locatable during the school day.

## **17. Accessing and storing data**

Downloading and accessing inappropriate websites and data on college-owned electronic devices is strictly prohibited.

Storing and using the personal data of any student or member of staff for non-work-related activity is strictly prohibited.

All data access requests will be handled in line with the college's Data Protection Policy.

## **18. Medical, safeguarding and exceptional access**

The college recognises that some students may require access to a phone or connected device for medical, disability, safeguarding, or other exceptional reasons.

In such cases:

- Parents or carers must notify the college and provide appropriate supporting information;
- The college will consider reasonable adjustments and individual arrangements;
- The college may authorise a modified pouch arrangement, medical pouch, supervised access, or another suitable control measure;
- The agreed arrangement will be recorded and communicated to relevant staff.

## **19. Emergencies and parent contact**

Where a student needs urgently to contact a parent or carer, or where a parent or carer needs urgently to contact a student, the normal route is through the college Admin office or another member of staff.

In an emergency, authorised staff may direct that a pouch be opened or may facilitate contact in another appropriate way.

## 20. Breach of policy and sanctions

Where a student breaches this policy, the college will:

- Confiscate or secure a device for the remainder of the school day
- Place the device in secure storage
- Require collection by a parent or carer
- Record the incident on the college behaviour system
- Apply behaviour sanctions in line with the Behaviour Policy
- Require replacement or payment for deliberate damage to college-issued equipment.

Any response will be proportionate, consistent, and in line with the college's Behaviour Policy and the DfE statutory behaviour guidance expressly links schools to the mobile phone guidance and the confiscation framework.

Students caught taking mobile phones or other devices into examinations will be banned from bringing any personal electronic devices into college until the end of term. They may also risk being disqualified from additional examinations.

## 21. Communication and implementation

The college will:

- Publish this policy or a summary of it for parents, carers and students
- Explain the policy to students in an age-appropriate way
- Publish this policy on the college website
- Train relevant staff in consistent implementation
- Review implementation regularly.

## 22. Monitoring and review

This policy will be reviewed on a biennial basis by the Headteacher and the DSL. The next scheduled review date for this policy is April 2028.

This policy will be published on the High Tunstall College of Science website.

Any changes to this policy will be communicated to all staff members, students and parents.

**APPENDIX A: Student & Parent Personal Electronic Devices Agreement (Below).**



## Student personal electronic devices agreement

I, \_\_\_\_\_, understand that bringing a personal electronic device to college is a privilege that may be taken away if I abuse it. I agree to abide by the policy and understand the consequences if I fail to do so.

I further agree that my child will use the HTCS JUST FOCUS pouch for use with their mobile phone when take to college, as directed in this policy.

### Signed by

|                     |             |  |               |  |             |  |
|---------------------|-------------|--|---------------|--|-------------|--|
| <b>Student</b>      | <b>Name</b> |  | <b>Signed</b> |  | <b>Date</b> |  |
| <b>Parent</b>       | <b>Name</b> |  | <b>Signed</b> |  | <b>Date</b> |  |
| <b>Head of Year</b> | <b>Name</b> |  | <b>Signed</b> |  | <b>Date</b> |  |

## Parent personal electronic devices agreement

I, \_\_\_\_\_, recognise that name of college bears no responsibility for personal electronic devices lost, damaged or stolen on college property or on journeys to and from college. I agree to the terms of this policy and will discuss the responsibility of owning a personal electronic device with my child (name) \_\_\_\_\_.

I understand that a teacher or other authorised member of staff may confiscate devices used in an unacceptable manner as detailed in the policy.

### Signed by

|                     |             |  |               |  |             |  |
|---------------------|-------------|--|---------------|--|-------------|--|
| <b>Parent</b>       | <b>Name</b> |  | <b>Signed</b> |  | <b>Date</b> |  |
| <b>Head of Year</b> | <b>Name</b> |  | <b>Signed</b> |  | <b>Date</b> |  |

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