



18th June 2026

Dear Parents/ Carers,

Important changes to mobile phone policy in school

As a school we are proud that we have always had a strong stance on mobile phone use. This has ensured that students' focus remains on their learning when in the building. We have very few mobile phone confiscation incidents, so we understand that most of our young people support the benefits of time in school away from devices.

You may be aware through the media that there is increasing awareness of the negative impact mobile phone use (and with that social media use) are having on young people's mental health and wellbeing. Internally we have seen an increase in support for this message from our parent body and know that our local primaries are pushing the message around a 'Smartphone free future' for young people.

New DfE statutory guidance states that: "Schools should develop a mobile phone policy that prohibits the use of mobile phones... throughout the school day."

Therefore, in light of increased support from parents and the stronger DfE statutory guidance our stance at our school around mobile phones is required to be tightened further. Aspects of the changes being introduced were discussed with parents/ carers at the recent Parent Carer Consultation Evening and have been developed with members of the student council. The rest of this letter outlines the changes we are adopting and our expectations from September.

Changes to routines from September:

If students choose to bring a mobile phone into school, it must be SWITCHED OFF and NOT ON THEIR PERSON (i.e. it must be in their bag) from the moment they cross the line painted on the entrance footpath.

Students must not retrieve and switch on their phones until AFTER they have crossed the line painted on the entrance/ exit footpath.

Changes to sanctions from September:

Mobile phones found **on a person (whether used or not)** will be confiscated in the first instance **for 24 hours**, with the student able to collect it at the end of the next day. In the second instance it will be confiscated until the end of the school week. There will be no exceptions to this.

To minimise the chance of damage, parents/ carers/ students may wish to consider an appropriate hard case for a phone to be placed inside of when in a student's bag ahead of September.

Our stance is therefore clear – A phone seen on a person **anywhere** on site from the moment a student crosses the painted line outside will be confiscated for at least 24 hours and maybe longer.

Further steps:

We do not feel the above changes are enough to meet the new national guidance and furthermore fully remove the temptation, pressure to be 'contactable' and distraction of mobile phones from our young people during the school day. We are therefore going a stage further by outlining what phones are acceptable to have in our school building (placed in a student's bag).

We will be moving to a clear stance that means your child's mobile phone needs to fit into one of three clear categories:

- 1) Your child does not bring a mobile phone to school at all.
- 2) Your child has a 'brick' or 'non-smart' phone.
- 3) Your child has a smartphone on them, **but this has the 'Blackout' App on it.**

The Blackout App is a technological solution to support students to avoid temptation and therefore see their phone confiscated which we know can cause wider issues.

From September, if your child is required to bring a smartphone into school, they are expected to download and activate the 'Blackout' App to the device. This App will then render a child's smartphone the equivalent of a brick phone (with only limited basic functionality) during specific hours (for us, that will be 8:30am until 3pm).

The Blackout App does not take any personal details about your child, view any information from the child's phone and does not monitor their location. The only information we provide to the App is the child's name, their school email address and year group. This App has been successfully rolled out in a number of schools across the country.

A list of FAQs and support guides are attached alongside this letter. To further help you understand how this App works Blackout will be running a Webinar for parents. The Webinar will take place on Thursday 25th June at 5:30pm and it can be accessed through a link that will be sent in the 24 hours prior to the meeting start time.

Ahead of that webinar we would ask you to check through the attached information about the Blackout App. Having reviewed that, if you still have a question about the App we would be grateful if you could submit it via this Forms [link](#) before Tuesday 23rd June. Questions will be collated and responded to during the webinar.

In the week commencing the 29th June students will be given further information about this process in school and will be sent an email to their school email address. The email will contain a link to download the Blackout App and a code that is unique to them. By the following Monday (6th July) we would expect a student bringing a smartphone into school to have the App on their phone. During that week we will be testing that the system works ready for official launch and use in September. The further changes (e.g. the expectation that phones are in bags from crossing the line outside) will start in September.

Other points:

Those students with a medical need that require a phone to enable monitoring of that ailment (e.g. A student with diabetes) will be exempt from the above, however their Year Manager should be made aware and that child's use of a phone will be carefully monitored to avoid misuse.

With KS5 students there is no change to the previous system. That means mobiles can be used in the **6th Form Quad** and **Library only**. If phones are seen anywhere else in school (carried or used) they will be confiscated and a 'Standards for Learning' point will be added to the system.

The above applies to mobile phones in school only, ipads will continue to be used and monitored via the strict in school device management.

If a student is seen wearing headphones on the site it will be assumed that these are connected to a phone and as such their phone will be confiscated.

Staff will know who has the App on their phone and will be notified if it is removed. We will not conduct physical checks for the Blackout App. However, if there is a concern or suspicion raised around a mobile phone being used, we reserve the right to search a student. If, during that search, a phone is found on their person, OR a smartphone is found *without* the Blackout App on it, it will be confiscated in line with the sanctions outlined above.

We are keen to support our young people to develop healthier digital habits and support their own mental health. Removing the temptation to look at their phone during the day is a key part of this.

If you have any questions about the changes we are introducing, please initially review the attached documentation and/ or attend the webinar. Should you still have a question please email info@princehenrys.co.uk marking the subject line as Mobile Phones.

It is important to note that for (the vast majority of) our students, those who positively comply with the systems, the change will have minimal impact to their school experience.

Over the next year, we will evaluate the impact of our in-school changes alongside the anticipated national restrictions on social media use for under-16s.

Yours faithfully,



Stephen Clarkson – Deputy Headteacher (Behaviour and Attitudes)