



THINKING
SCHOOLS
ACADEMY TRUST



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THINKING
SCHOOL

Plymouth High School for Girls

"For life, not school, we learn"

3rd July 2026

Dear Parents and Carers,

All schools in the Thinking Schools Academy Trust are 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 PHSG to support new Department for Education guidance and ensure our students receive the best possible school experience. **Please note that from 1st September 2026, in addition to phones, the DFE have said that smartwatches, earbuds, and similar devices that allow communication or recording should not be permitted in school. We will follow this advice.**

In line with DFE guidance (January 2026), which states that schools should be mobile phone-free by default, all schools within Thinking Schools Academy Trust will operate as mobile phone-free environments during the school day, with no use of mobile phones permitted (although there is a small amendment for Sixth Form students detailed below).

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 means that from 1st September 2026, smartwatches, earbuds and similar devices that allow communication or recording are not permitted to be worn in school. This expectation applies to all students, including those in Sixth Form. There will be exceptions where young people need a smart device for medical reasons.

What this means in practice

- Students do not need a mobile phone in school.
- We recognise that some parents and carers wish their child to have a phone for safety on the journey to and from school and/or to pay for bus/train travel. This is fully understood. However, mobile phones must not be seen, heard or used anywhere on the school site (there is a small amendment for Sixth Form students detailed below).
- If a phone is brought into school, it must be switched off and securely stored in the school bag on arrival and must remain inaccessible until the end of the school day. Year 7 hand their phones in at the start of the day and the devices are stored safely until the end of the day.
- Smartwatches, earbuds and similar devices that allow communication or recording are not permitted (this includes Sixth Form students). This is consistent with public examination regulations.
- Sixth Form students are only permitted to use their phones in the Sixth Form Study Centre (pending any further DFE updates).

- Sixth Form students only are permitted to use their own tablet for making notes in class if they wish, but only after the 'bring your own device' BYOD agreement has been signed by the student and their parent(s) carer(s). Please see the [Student BYOD policy here](#) along with the [TSAT ICT Acceptable Use policy](#).
- Our policy of issuing an after-school detention (C3) for not adhering to the rules outlined [here](#) for phones and smart devices (also including watches, earbuds etc from 1st September 2026) remains in place.

At PHSG we are researching additional measures to support students and families with maintaining a phone free day. More details will be shared with students, parents and carers in due course.

Daily routine:

Students arrive at the school gate and switch their devices off and put them in their bag before entering the school grounds.

Additional site-specific expectations (if applicable):

Sixth Form students are currently permitted to use their phones (smart watches and ear buds etc not permitted from 1st September 2026) in the Sixth Form Study Centre only.

Sixth Form students will be permitted to use their own tablet for note taking providing the BYOD agreement has been signed.

Year 7 will hand their phones in at the start of the day and collect them at the end of the day.

Expectations and consequences

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

Any device that is seen, heard, or used will be confiscated (unless a Sixth Former is using their own device having agreed to the BYOD policy). In the unlikely event there are repeated breaches, parents and carers will be invited into school to discuss and plan a way forward.

As a mobile phone-free school, students bring mobile phones (and any devices under the BYOD agreement) 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.**

There are some concessions for Sixth Form students and these have been outlined above.

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.

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 maintain a calm, safe and focused learning environments across our school.

Very best wishes,



Simon Underdown
Headteacher

Mobile Phones in School – 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. Smart watches and ear buds etc are not permitted, whether or not they have cellular connection.

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. *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.

5. *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.

6. *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.

7. *Will phones ever be used for learning?*

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

8. *What if my child refuses to follow the rules?*

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

9. *How can I support this policy?*

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