



# SIXTH FORM MOBILE PHONE AND SMARTWATCH POLICY

## Introduction

St George's School is committed to fostering an environment that promotes academic excellence, personal well-being, and positive social interaction for all students. As our Sixth Formers transition towards university and professional life, we believe in cultivating **responsible digital citizenship** and **self-regulation**. This policy outlines the expectations for mobile phone and smartwatch use for students in Years 12 and 13, balancing the necessity of modern technology with our commitment to focused learning and holistic development.

This policy aligns with the school's overarching stance on student well-being and the growing consensus regarding the potential negative impacts of excessive screen time and unchecked social media access, as highlighted by recent research and our ongoing dialogue with parents, pupils, and governors. While we aim to equip our Sixth Formers with the independence required for their next steps, we also have a clear responsibility to safeguard their learning environment and promote healthy habits.

## Whole School Context (Years 7-11)

For many years, St George's has maintained a strict "no mobile phone use during the school day" expectation for students in Years 7 to 11. From September 2025, these expectations are being extended to mean phones must be **"off and away"** from the minute students cross the school boundary until they leave the school buildings at the end of the day. This means phones must be switched off completely, not just on silent. Smartwatches are also banned for all students in Years 7-11 from September 2025. This context informs the principles applied to our Sixth Form.

## Sixth Form Mobile Phone and Smartwatch Guidelines

While Sixth Form students are granted greater autonomy, their mobile phone and smartwatch use must align with the school's core values and commitment to a productive learning environment.

### General Principles: "Off and Away" Around the School Site

- **Throughout the School Day (from being on site to the end of last lesson/activity):** mobile phones should be **off and away** (switched off and out of sight) in all communal areas of the school, including corridors, the dining room, and general circulation spaces. This promotes face-to-face interaction and reduces distraction for all members of the school community.
- **Moving around the school site:** Sixth Form students should not walk around school with their phones visible or with headphones or similar in use.
- **Classrooms and tutorbase:** mobile phones must be **switched off and stored out of sight** during all timetabled lessons and registration periods.

- **Smartwatches:** Smartwatches are **banned for all students across the school** (including Sixth Form) during the school day (08:30 - end of last lesson/activity). This aligns with the whole-school policy to minimise distraction, uphold academic integrity, and promote wellbeing.

## Specific Rules for Sixth Form Areas

- **Sixth Form Study Areas (e.g., Refectory, Library, Sixth form Study Rooms, Art rooms):**
  - During timetabled lesson hours (e.g., 08:30 - 15:20), mobile phones may only be used for **academic purposes**. This includes research and accessing online learning platforms like UCAS Track, Unifrog, Edulink and Google Classroom.
  - Students are permitted to listen to music whilst studying but the screen should not be a distraction. ie. students are listening, not watching.
  - **Gaming, social media use, streaming entertainment, or non-academic communication (e.g., personal messaging, video calls)** is strictly prohibited during lesson times and study periods.
  - Students are expected to manage their own focus and digital discipline.
  - Mobile phone use for gaming and social purposes (e.g., messaging, social media) is permitted in the designated Sixth Form Refectory and outside Sixth form social spaces **only during break times and lunch periods**.
- **"Bring Your Own Device" (BYOD):**
  - St George's encourages Sixth Form students to bring their own laptops or tablets for academic work, supporting independent learning and digital literacy. The school also has Chrome books available for Sixth form students to borrow. Please see separate guidance on this.
- **Medical Reasons:** Exceptions will be made for students who require a mobile phone or smartwatch for legitimate medical reasons (e.g., diabetic monitoring). This will be at the discretion of the Head of House and parents/carers.

## Enforcement & Consequences

For mobile phone and smartwatch misuse in the Sixth Form, the following will apply:

- **First Instance:** Device confiscated by staff. Returned to student at the end of the school day. Discussion with student to reinforce policy.
- **Second Instance:** Device confiscated by staff. Returned to student only at the end of the school day by the Head of Sixth Form or a member of SLT. Communication with parents/carers.
- **Third and Subsequent Instances:** Device confiscated. Parents/carers required to collect the device from Goddard office. Further disciplinary action may be taken.

## Promoting Responsible Use & Digital Well-being

Beyond disciplinary measures, St George's is committed to educating our Sixth Formers on responsible digital citizenship. The Year 12 and 13 PSE and enrichment curriculum will incorporate training on digital detox, online safety, managing social media, and the impact of technology on mental health.