



# THE ORATORY

## The Oratory School (OS)

### Mobile Phone Policy and Guidance

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## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 The Oratory School is committed to educating its pupils in the appropriate use and behaviour with respect to mobile phones and digital devices. We recognise that such technology can provide a crucial link to home for those who live in a full boarding environment; it can provide a level of safety for pupils on a large campus or in town; and it can be used for in school communication and organisational purposes.
- 1.2 The School's approach to the use of mobile phones and other technology is an educational one. By setting clear boundaries and providing education through tutorial time, the PSHE programme, and School-wide initiatives, pupils are empowered to make informed decisions, use technology positively and safely, and develop self-regulation skills. We aim for pupils to leave our school with the experience, skills, and habits to enable them to make positive choices in their online lives beyond school.
- 1.3 We believe that our physical and online controls, combined with parental restrictions on data and screen/app time, help pupils develop into well-informed, responsible and self-regulating digital citizens. The Assistant Head (Safeguarding) is responsible for, and oversees the restrictions, and co-ordinates and helps deliver education and guidance relating to online wellbeing to all members of the School community. We recognise how appropriate use of mobile phones supports pupil safety on a large boarding campus (in particular, how access to a mobile phone when moving around campus after dark helps pupil confidence and independence).
- 1.4 We also know that many parents, especially those abroad, value the ability to contact their children at times which suit modern working patterns and time zone differences. Nothing about these guidelines prevents pupils, who need access to their mobile phones to contact parents, from having it. Pupils also have access to Teams for video calls with home, and email through their Surface Pro device.

## **2 The Guiding Principles of Mobile Phone Use**

- 2.1 Given our school campus, it is advantageous for residential and senior staff to be able to contact pupils at all times. During the School Day this is facilitated through email and the use of Teams. When pupils are off campus or during the evening they are allowed (although not required) to carry mobile phones with them.
- 2.2 Mobile phones are not allowed to be used during mealtimes, lessons (unless instructed to do so), co-curricular activities or while walking around the school campus or travelling to fixtures (unless in an emergency).
- 2.3 We consider the use of mobile phones in social settings to be antisocial, and this is discouraged.
- 2.4 Teachers manage mobile phones during lessons to avoid distraction, and all pupils are expected to follow teacher direction in this regard.
- 2.5 If a pupil is found to be in breach of the rules above, the member of staff should follow this procedure:
  - confiscate the mobile phone from the pupil
  - inform the pupil they may collect it from Reception following the end of the school day
  - The pupil may go to Reception to collect their mobile phone at the times listed above and must sign the book indicating that they have collected it. Reception will email

Housemasters and the Assistant Head (Safeguarding) to inform them who has had their mobile phone confiscated. This information will be logged on iSAMS.

- If a pupil cannot get to Reception at the times above, they may go the following morning, to collect their mobile phone.
- In the event of a confiscation, pupils can always contact home or be contacted by home on the main school phone.

### **3 Physical and Digital Controls**

3.1 All devices which use the School's Wi-Fi network, including smartphones, must have Securly™ certificate installed. This certificate allows pupils' use of the internet to be filtered and monitored, meaning inappropriate content will be blocked and key staff, including the Second Master, will be alerted to concerning activity and trends in pupils' internet use.

3.2 A smartphone is not a necessary accessory at school, and parents may choose to send their children to school with a phone without 'smart' features. All pupils who bring a smartphone must have the SchoolsMobile™ app always installed and keep the app fully operational 'protected'. This allows pupils' smartphones, even when on 4G and 5G mobile data, to be protected from online threats, as well as enabling School rules on streaming and social media usage to be in place for Lower School pupils.

3.3 Additional information and support regarding SchoolsMobile™ can be found at

3.3.1 [Our School - Digital Safeguarding](#)

3.4 SchoolsMobile™ restrictions can be controlled by the Assistant Head (Safeguarding) and parents. During the academic term, SchoolsMobile™ restrictions, in line with School policies, must always remain in place. During exeat weekends and holidays, parents may set SchoolsMobile™ software to "Holiday mode" if they wish, which removes time restrictions on social media and streaming services for the Lower School, and content restrictions for the Upper School, but continues to protect all pupils from harmful online content.

3.5 We value our partnership with parents very highly and advise them to put in place effective restrictions, including applying content filters and placing limits on screen time and the amount of data available to their children. As part of this partnership, parents will have SchoolsMobile™ access for their child and be able to maintain School policies in holidays, if they wish. In addition, when a pupil is on an exeat weekend, we ask that parents maintain the school restrictions throughout their time at home. Parents are advised to ensure that they have parental controls in place with their child's mobile phone network provider and home broadband provider to ensure content is age appropriate at home and devices are used responsibly.

3.6 Any smartphone which does not have SchoolsMobile™ installed, or have School policies, will be kept by the pupil's Housemaster at all times. The pupil may ask House staff to use the device to call home or make necessary calls, but it must be returned afterwards.

3.7 Ensuring pupils can get into healthy sleep habits is also crucial, and therefore boarders in Years 1-L6th will not have access to mobile phones overnight.

#### 4 1st-4th Form

<b>Monday - Friday</b>	Physical Smartphone Controls
08:00 – 08:30	Pupils may collect mobile phones at this time, but they must be returned to be stored in House before leaving House.
08:30 – 16:15	Lessons and Activities: Pupils leaving the campus may have access to their mobile phones, but they must use them in line with the school's rules and return them immediately on their return.
08:30 – 18:00	Mobile phones should not be seen or used while moving around the campus or on school buses (unless in an emergency).
16:15 – 19:15	Mobile phones should not be seen or used while moving around the campus, during meals, co-curricular activities or at fixtures (unless in an emergency).
Evenings	Boarders' Prep: Chill-time will restrict access to all streaming and social media platforms. Before bedtime: Mobile phones will be collected and stored in boarding houses, timed to coincide with House check-in.
<b>Saturday</b>	Pupils may collect their mobile phones by arrangement with their HsM, if they are leaving the campus for a fixture.  Mobile phones will be collected at the final House roll call.
<b>Sunday</b>	Pupils will return their phones before lights out. Social media use and streaming during the day is restricted.
<b>Overnight</b>	Pupils in Years 1-L6th must hand in all mobile phones during this time. Those in U6th will be able to keep their phones unless they request it to be handed in to their house parent

4.1 Mobile phones will remain in the House mobile phone storage area during restricted times (including overnight), unless the pupils are making a call home or a necessary call elsewhere. In such cases they must ask a member of House staff and once finished with the device they must inform House staff and return it immediately to the mobile phone storage area. If a pupil requires their mobile phone to go offsite (fixtures, school trip or visit to town) during restricted times, on return they must inform house staff and return it immediately to the mobile storage area.

4.2 If mobile phones are used inappropriately, for example a VPN is in operation or SchoolsMobile™ software has been tampered with, the School's Behaviour and Sanctions Policy will apply. A Housemaster may temporarily remove a pupil's access to a mobile phone for pastoral reasons. In such cases, the pupil's parents and Assistant Head (Safeguarding) must be informed of the reason and the duration of removal.

4.3 Year 1-4 pupils are permitted one hour of streaming content or social media per day Monday to Friday, and for a boarder two hours per day on Saturday and Sunday.

## 5 5th Form:

As for the younger years (above), they will have a gradual and controlled additional period allocated to the year group as the academic year progresses, if it is felt they are managing the use of their devices well as a year group.

## 6 Sixth Form:

As for Lower School pupils (above); however, Sixth Form pupils will be allowed their phones in House during the day and during prep. Lower Sixth pupils will place their mobile phones in the House storage at 22.00, collecting them at morning check in. Upper Sixth pupils are permitted to keep their mobile phones overnight unless they choose to hand it in.

## 7 Social Media and Streaming Services - Access Times

School Network and SchoolsMobile™ Chill Times for 1st-5th Form (social media and streaming allowed during these times, total time restricted to one hour of content per day).	
<b>Monday - Friday</b>	
Lower School	18:00 – 19:00
	21:00 – 21:30 (1st and 2nd Form)
	21:00 – 21:45 (3rd and 4th Form)
	21:00 – 22:00 (5th Form)
Upper School	07:00 – 08:00
	13:30 – 16:30
	18:30 – 19:30
	21:00 – 22:00
<b>Saturday</b>	
Lower School	14:00 – 21:30
Upper School	13:00 – 22:00
<b>Sunday</b>	
Lower School	11:00 – 19:00
Upper School	08:00 – 19:00

## **8 Virtual Private Networks (VPNs)**

8.1 Virtual Private Networks (VPNs) must not be installed or in operation on pupils' devices, including smartphones. VPNs allow pupils to access unfiltered online content and expose them to online threats and harmful content. There is no reason for pupils to have a VPN while at the school where the School Wi-Fi network (or 4G or 5G mobile data when offsite) should be used. Pupils found to have a VPN installed on their device will be dealt with in line with the Behaviour and Sanctions Policy and may face a Digital Gating.

8.2 Where software indicates that a VPN may be in use by a pupil, the Assistant Head (Safeguarding) will inform the pupil's Housemaster and the phone will be checked for the presence of a VPN.

## **9 Group Chats**

The school advises against whole year, whole House or large group social media chats (including, but not limited to, Snapchat and WhatsApp). Teams chats for boarding houses may be set up by Housemaster and will have staff oversight. If chats are required for other groups of pupils, these will be set up by a member of staff and have staff oversight.

## **10 Smart Watches**

Pupils are permitted to have a smart watch, but this must not be used for communicating in and around the school. Misuse of a smart watch will be dealt with in line with misuse of a mobile phone and the Behaviour and Sanctions Policy will apply.