

Dear Parents and Carers,

Over the past twelve months, and in line with government guidance, the Potteries Educational Trust has undertaken extensive research into the move towards mobile phone free schools. I am writing to update you on our progress and to outline the next steps for Moorside High School.

During this period, Mr Goodwin and I have worked closely with four schools that have successfully implemented mobile phone free policies. This collaborative work has enabled us to develop a clear understanding of effective implementation, best practice, and how to anticipate and manage potential challenges.

As a result of this work, we are now in a position to confirm that Moorside High School will become a mobile phone free school from September 2026, when students return from the summer holidays.

National Guidance and Rationale

This decision aligns fully with the Department for Education's guidance (February 2026) and with the feedback provided by parents during our Parent Forum held earlier in the year which all parents and carers were invited to attend.

The DfE guidance states:

"All schools should be mobile phone free environments by default; anything other than this should be by exception only."

The guidance recommends that schools prohibit the use of mobile phones throughout the entire school day, including lessons, breaktimes and lunchtimes, as part of a strong behaviour policy that supports pupils' learning, wellbeing and safety. Ofsted has also confirmed that schools' mobile phone policies and their consistent implementation are now considered during inspections.

As an academy, we fully support this direction. We believe that removing mobile phones from the school day will have a positive impact on behaviour, academic attainment and — most importantly — the mental health and wellbeing of our students.

Evidence Base

We have reviewed a significant body of national and international research on the impact of smartphones on young people. The evidence consistently highlights two key concerns:

1. Learning and Academic Performance

The DfE guidance is clear that:

“Mobile phones risk unnecessary distraction, disruption and diversion. One in three secondary school pupils report that mobile phones are used in most lessons without permission.”

Research by Beland and Murphy (2015), examining schools in Birmingham, Leicester, London and Manchester, found that student performance in high-stakes examinations improved significantly following a mobile phone ban, with the greatest gains seen among lower-achieving pupils.

2. Mental Health and Wellbeing

National data shows that three in ten pupils identify mental health or friendships as a major cause of worry, anxiety or depression. Removing mobile phones from the school day enables pupils to spend more time interacting face-to-face, staying active and socialising positively — all of which are shown to improve wellbeing.

Research by psychologist Jean Twenge also found that:

- Around four hours of smartphone use per day is associated with lower psychological wellbeing
- More than seven hours per day dramatically increases the likelihood of:
 - Anxiety or depression diagnoses
 - Treatment by a mental health professional
 - Medication for behavioural or emotional difficulties

After careful consideration of this evidence, we believe we have a responsibility to remove unnecessary distractions, improve students' wellbeing and keep them safe during the school day.

Academy Process from September 2026

From September 2026, the following procedures will apply:

- Students will switch off and hand in their mobile phones at the start of morning tutor time
- All students must attend morning tutor time
- Each student will have an allocated, numbered slot in a secure phone box within their form room
- Phone boxes will be collected daily by staff and stored in a locked, secure location
- Phones will be returned during afternoon tutor time, at the end of the school day

Late arrivals

- Students who miss/truant morning Tutor time will hand in their phones at Main Reception or the Late Room
- Phones handed in late will be stored securely and collected from a separate location at the end of the day, these phones will be given to students later than everyone else
- Where a detention is issued, phones will be returned at the end of the detention; otherwise, they may be collected from Main Reception

Appointments, early departure and adapted timetables

- Students leaving school early, returning from appointments, or attending on an adapted timetable will hand in and collect their phones via Main Reception

While this system is carefully managed, parents and students should be aware that bringing a mobile phone into school is at the owner's own risk. The school cannot accept liability for any loss, theft, or damage to mobile devices as is the case in the current policy.

Next Steps

- A Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) document has been added to our website and can be accessed under the **PARENTS section – Mobile Phones.**
- Parents and carers are warmly invited to attend a Parent and Carer Information Evening:

Thursday 4th June, 5.00pm – 6.00pm

Venue: Werrington Primary School

At this event, the policy and procedures will be explained in detail and questions will be welcomed. Due to limited capacity and seating, attendance is by sign-up only. Please register using the QR code below; unfortunately, we will not be able to admit attendees who have not signed up in advance.



Students will be informed of this change through assemblies and tutor time W/C 22nd June, where they will receive a clear explanation of the rationale and practical arrangements. This change has been added to our home school agreement and behaviour policy from September.

There will also be **two full practice days** for staff and students on Monday 13th and Tuesday 14th July, to allow everyone to become familiar with the new processes before full implementation.

We appreciate that this represents a significant cultural shift and thank you, in advance, for your support. We firmly believe this change will help to create a calmer, safer and more focused learning environment for all our students.

Yours sincerely,



**Moorside
High School**

Member of the



**Potteries
Educational
Trust**

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