FOXFORD
Community School

27 April 2026

Dear Parents and Carers

I am writing to inform you of important changes to our mobile phone policy at Foxford, which will come into effect following the May half-term break, from **1 June 2026**. These changes reflect updated national guidance, growing concerns about the impact of smartphones on young people's wellbeing, and our commitment to ensuring a calm, focused learning environment for every student. Between now and 1 June, our usual procedures apply, which already include confiscation.

National guidance and expectations
In February 2026, the Department for Education (DfE) published updated non-statutory guidance *Mobile phones in schools*. This guidance applies to all schools in England and has been explicitly referenced by Ofsted in inspection activity since April 2026.

The DfE's position is clear:

- Schools should be mobile-phone-free environments by default.
- Mobile phone use should be prohibited throughout the entire school day, including lessons, transitions, breaktimes and lunchtime.
- The guidance applies not only to mobile phones but also to smart devices with messaging, notification, audio or video recording functionality.

Foxford School is aligning fully with this national expectation.

Why these matters: wellbeing, focus and academic achievement
There is now substantial evidence linking high levels of smartphone use with negative mental health outcomes in young people. Research highlights increased anxiety, disrupted sleep patterns, reduced emotional resilience, and heightened exposure to online conflict and social pressure. Many of these issues spill over into school life, affecting students' ability to concentrate, regulate their emotions, and engage positively with peers.

Studies also show that even when a phone is switched off or face-down, its mere presence can reduce attention span, working memory, and the ability to stay focused on learning tasks. In a school environment, this loss of focus can significantly affect academic progress. By removing mobile phones from the school day, we aim to protect students' wellbeing and maximise their capacity to learn.

Foxford School's policy from 1 June 2026
To ensure clarity and consistency, the following rules will apply:

- If a student is seen with their phone or similar device out at any point during the school day, it will be confiscated and returned at the end of the day.
- Repeated confiscations will result in the student being required to hand their phone in at the start of each day to prevent further disruption.
- If a student refuses to hand over their phone when requested, parents/carers will be contacted and the student will receive a one-hour after-school detention for defiance.
- Repeated refusal to follow staff instructions will lead to internal exclusion or suspension, in line with our behaviour policy.

These measures are designed to protect learning, safeguard students, and ensure fairness and consistency across the school.

Supporting students to succeed
We recognise that mobile phones are part of modern life, and many families rely on them for communication before and after school. Students may continue to bring their phones to school, but they must remain **switched off and out of sight** from the moment they arrive until they leave the premises.

If you need to contact your child urgently during the school day, please phone school reception, and we will ensure the message is passed on.

Looking ahead: September 2026
In line with the government's expectations and the direction of national policy, we are planning to introduce a more robust, whole-school measure from September 2026. Under this system, all students will be required to hand in their mobile phone (or similar device) at the start of each school day as a matter of course, regardless of previous behaviour.

This approach is increasingly being adopted by schools across the country and is strongly supported by the DfE as the most effective way to ensure a genuinely phone-free environment. We will share full details of how this system will operate before the end of the summer term.

Working together
We ask for your full support in reinforcing these expectations at home. Schools that have adopted similar approaches have reported calmer corridors, improved behaviour, better focus in lessons, and reduced anxiety among students. We are confident that these changes will have a positive impact on our school community.

Thank you for your continued support in helping us maintain a safe, respectful, and academically focused environment for all students.

Yours faithfully



Mr T Jordan
Associate Headteacher