FOXFORD
Community School

22 June 2026

Dear Parent/Carer

As Headteacher at Foxford from September 2026, I am writing to you to explain a number of changes that will affect all students. You will receive a further letter regarding arrangements for the start of the new academic year; however, I ask that you begin to prepare for the following:

1. Changes to the school day
2. Uniform expectations and 'bus pass' timetables
3. Maximising learning time, including lateness and use of toilets during lessons
4. Parent/carer communications
5. Changes to the school's mobile phone policy

Changes to the school day

From September, the school day will continue to begin at 8.45am for all students. We strongly encourage all students to be on site by 8.35am to ensure a calm, punctual start to the day. The refectory will be open for supervised breakfast from 8.15am.

Daily structure

8.15am	Breakfast available in school refectory
8.35am	Student arrival
8.45am	Tutor (morning standards check)
8.55am	Lesson 1
9.55am	Lesson 2
10.55am	Break
11.15am	Lesson 3
12.15pm	Lunch for Years 8, 10, 12 and 13 Tutor (personal development) for Years 7, 9 and 11
12.45pm	Lunch for Years 7, 9 and 11 Tutor (personal development) for Years 8, 10, 12 and 13
1.15pm	Line up followed by lesson 4
2.15pm	Lesson 5
3.10pm	Tutor (phones returned)
3.15pm	End of the day

After-school activities, interventions (including Year 11 *Elevate*) and detentions will continue to run as required.

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As outlined in DfE behaviour guidance, schools are not required to give advance notice of same-day detentions, although we will continue to make every reasonable effort to inform families.

Uniform expectations
Our uniform expectations remain clear and in line with current DfE statutory and non-statutory guidance. Students are expected to arrive in full correct uniform and remain in it throughout the school day. We will work with families where there are genuine difficulties; however, we will not agree to informal compromises that undermine consistency.

To support organisation, all students will be issued with a Foxford 'bus pass' timetable holder, which must be carried at all times. This will include timetables and authorised passes (e.g. medical/toilet passes).

Maximising learning time
Every minute in school matters. Lost learning time has a direct impact on student progress, confidence, and wellbeing. While we will always allow access to toilets in genuine need, we have seen a significant increase in lost lesson time through avoidable movement around school.

Therefore:
- Students out of lessons must have a staff-issued red slip
- All toilet use during lessons will be logged
- Parents/carers will be informed where patterns of lost learning emerge

This is not about restricting students unnecessarily—it is about building routine, resilience, and readiness to learn, which are essential for both academic success and emotional wellbeing.

Parent/carer communications
A strong relationship between home and school is essential. I ask that all communication with staff remains respectful and constructive. If concerns arise, please contact your child's Year Leader. We aim to respond within 48 hours.

Where communication becomes inappropriate (e.g. offensive language), staff have been instructed to end the interaction, with follow-up from a senior leader to ensure resolution.

Mobile Phone Policy from September 2026
At Foxford, we are committed to ensuring that all students can learn in a calm, safe and distraction-free environment, where their mental wellbeing is protected and prioritised.

In line with the DfE's February 2026 guidance *Mobile phones in schools*, which states that schools should be "mobile phone free environments for the duration of the school day", we are implementing a clear and consistent approach across the school.

Our expectation
From September, students must not be in possession of a mobile phone or smart device during the school day.
- Phones must be handed in during morning registration
- Devices will be stored securely in tutor group boxes in locked storage
- Phones will be returned during afternoon tutor time

This applies to all devices capable of communication, including smart watches.

Why this is important – protecting wellbeing as well as learning
The decision to adopt this approach has been made following careful consideration and reflects both national guidance and growing evidence about the impact of smartphones on young people. Removing phones during the school day helps to:

- Reduce anxiety and social pressure, particularly linked to messaging and social media
- Improve focus and concentration, supporting better academic outcomes
- Protect students from online conflict, bullying and safeguarding risks during the day
- Encourage face-to-face interaction, building confidence and social skills
- Support healthier habits, including reduced screen dependence

As outlined in my previous letter, research consistently shows that even when unused, the presence of a phone can negatively affect attention, emotional regulation, and overall wellbeing. Our aim is simple: school should be a place where students can switch off from the pressures of the online world and fully engage in learning and positive relationships.

Why we have chosen this approach
We have carefully considered alternative systems used by other schools, including:

- Lockable pouches
- Automatic multi-day confiscations

We have chosen not to implement these because:

- Cost: Pouch systems place a significant financial burden on schools and, ultimately, families
- Proportionality: Extended confiscations can create unnecessary conflict and anxiety, particularly for families who rely on phones outside school hours
- Practicality: Our system allows secure storage while maintaining consistency and minimising disruption

Our approach is firm, fair and proportionate, ensuring clarity for all students while maintaining strong relationships with families.

If a student brings a phone
Students may bring phones for travel or safety reasons, but this is at their own risk. The school cannot accept liability for loss or damage.

Consequences for misuse

- Refusal to hand in a phone will be treated as a serious behaviour issue
- Phones found during the day will be confiscated
- Devices must be collected by a parent/carer
- Repeated breaches will result in escalated sanctions in line with the behaviour policy

Contacting your child

- Contact reception: 02476 369200
- Messages will be passed on promptly
- Students can request to contact home via Year Leaders or reception where needed

Working together
We ask for your support in:

- Reinforcing expectations at home
- Discussing the benefits for wellbeing and learning
- Considering whether your child needs to bring a phone at all

Frequently Asked Questions (Mobile Phones)

Will this increase my child's anxiety if they cannot access their phone?
In the short term, some students may feel uncomfortable, as they are used to regular access. However, evidence and the experience of other schools show that students quickly adapt. Over time, this approach reduces anxiety, as students are no longer exposed to continuous notifications, social pressures, or online conflict during the school day.

How does this support mental wellbeing?
Removing phones creates a protected space where students can focus on learning, build friendships, and engage socially without digital pressure. Many students report feeling calmer, more focused, and more confident when phones are not present.

What if there is an emergency?
Contact the school office. We will ensure your child receives the message immediately.

What if my child needs to leave during the day?
The phone/ device will be brought to reception in order for your child to leave site. If there is a pre-planned medical appointment or agreed earlier leaving time for your child, please ensure that they hand their phone into reception on arrival rather than to their tutor- this will make the return of the phone speedier during the busy school day. If they are doing this, reception staff will request evidence of the appointment- they will then be issued with a pass to indicate to their tutor that they have handed their device in; this pass also acts as permission to leave lesson at the appropriate time later in the day.

What if my child arrives late?
When your child signs into reception, they must hand their phone/device to reception staff who will store it securely; they will receive a slip indicating that their phone/device is in reception. Your child must still attend afternoon tutor time for their registered mark.

What if my child has detention or a club?
The phones/ devices will be taken in their secure boxes to the detention hall for collection after the duration of the detention. If there is a pre-planned club, they must attend tutor time before the activity commences to collect their phone.

Why not just allow silent phones in bags?
Experience nationally shows this is ineffective. Even when phones are not visible, students remain distracted, and issues such as messaging, social media use, and safeguarding concerns continue.

Is this approach fair to all students?
Yes. A universal system ensures consistency, fairness, and clarity, removing ambiguity and avoiding unnecessary confrontation.

Is it legal for the school to take my child's phone?
Yes. Schools have a clear legal power to confiscate items from students under Section 91 of the *Education and Inspections Act 2006*, provided this is reasonable and part of the school's behaviour policy. Our mobile phone procedures are consistent with DfE guidance, which explicitly supports schools in restricting or prohibiting phone use during the school day.

Is it legal for the school to require students to hand in phones?
Yes. Schools are permitted to set rules about what students can and cannot have with them during the school day. The DfE has made clear that schools can require phones to be handed in or not brought onto site at all. Our approach ensures clarity and consistency for all students.

What happens if my child refuses to hand their phone in?
Refusal would be treated in the same way as any other failure to follow a reasonable school instruction. This is important to ensure fairness for all students and to maintain a calm, safe environment.

Will the school take responsibility for phones while they are stored?
We take reasonable steps to store devices securely (e.g. supervised collection, locked storage areas). However, as outlined in our policy, phones are brought to school at the owner's risk, which is consistent with standard practice in schools**.**

What if my child's phone is lost or damaged while in school?
Such incidents are rare, as we have clear and controlled systems in place. If an issue does occur:

- It will be investigated thoroughly
- We will communicate openly with parents/carers
- Any findings will be addressed appropriately

However, the school cannot guarantee against loss or damage where personal items are brought onto site, which is why we encourage families to consider whether phones are needed each day.

How secure is the storage system?
Phones will be:

- Collected in a structured and supervised way
- Stored in clearly labelled tutor group boxes
- Placed in locked storage areas during the day

Access is controlled and limited to appropriate staff to ensure a high level of security.

Why not allow students to keep phones to avoid risk of loss?
Allowing students to keep phones significantly increases the likelihood of:

- Loss or theft within school
- Damage during the school day
- Misuse leading to safeguarding concerns

Our system actually reduces overall risk, while also protecting learning and wellbeing.

What if my child's phone is expensive?
We strongly advise that students do not bring high-value items to school unless absolutely necessary. The same principle applies to all personal belongings.

Can I request that my child keeps their phone for safety reasons?
We understand concerns about travel and safety. Students can still bring phones for before/after school use, but during the school day the system must apply to all students consistently. This consistency is essential to ensure fairness and avoid disruption.

What if my child has a medical or safeguarding need linked to their phone?
In exceptional circumstances, we will always work with families to make appropriate adjustments. Please contact your child's Year Leader so that we can consider this on an individual basis.

If you have any questions about any of the above, please do contact the school.

Thank you for your continued support.

Yours sincerely



Mr T Jordan
Associate Headteacher