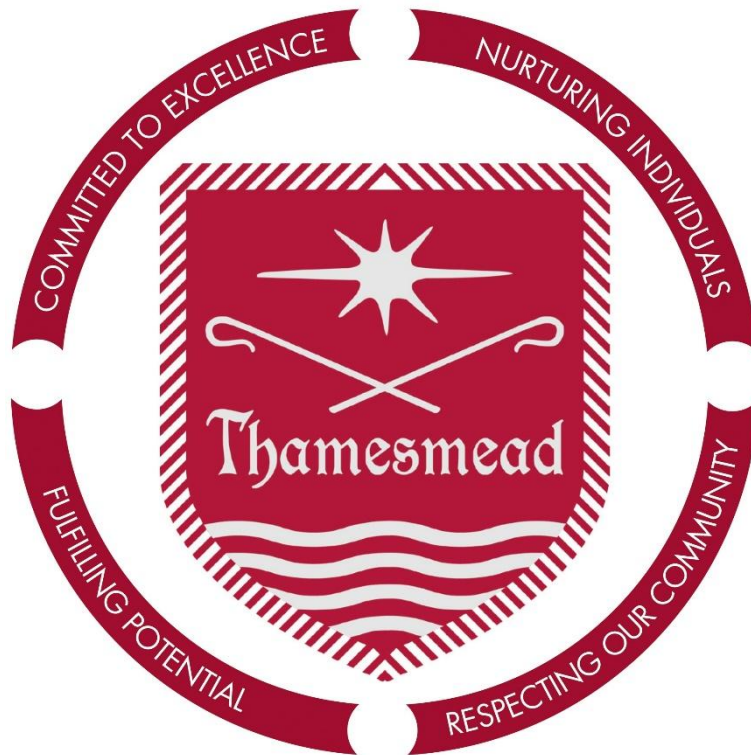


THAMESMEAD SCHOOL



MOBILE PHONE POLICY

Person Responsible	Head Teacher
Governors Committee	Personal Development, Behaviour and Welfare
Review Period	Annually
Date of Review	Autumn 2026
Date of Next Review	Autumn 2027

1. Purpose

At Thamesmead School, we're committed to creating a learning environment where every student can thrive. Our young people are growing up in an increasingly complex world, living their lives on and offline. This presents many exciting opportunities – but also academic, emotional and social challenges. Our goal is to promote a focused and distraction-free learning environment whilst encouraging responsible use of technology. To support this, we have introduced a mobile phone policy that incorporates mobile phone pouches.

Pouches provide a simple, secure way of supporting a phone free approach across our school. This approach provides a balanced solution, ensuring young people retain possession of their phones while minimising distractions during school hours. The pouch helps foster social interaction, improve focus on learning, and reduce stress associated with phone use, all while maintaining communication for families during travel to and from school.

The terms phone, and smart technologies refers to any personal device that has network, Wifi, internet or other wireless connectivity capability and connects to the internet. This includes smart glasses, headphones and earbuds, and smart watches and any future wearable device. Tablets and laptops are covered by our ICT & Internet Acceptable Use Policy and Trusted Device Policy.

2. Scope and Expectations

Thamesmead School is a phone-free community and operates in accordance with the Department for Education (DfE) *Mobile Phones in Schools* (29 June 2026) statutory guidance. The guidance requires schools in England to establish a mobile phone-free environment by default and to prohibit access to mobile phones throughout the school day, including during lessons, between lessons, breaktimes and lunchtime.

To support this requirement, all students will be assigned with a personal Yondr pouch. Students are responsible for bringing their pouch to school each day and maintaining it in good working condition. Mobile phones must be secured in the pouch upon arrival at school and must remain inaccessible throughout the school day. The pouch may only be unlocked at the end of the school day in accordance with the school's procedures.

The DfE guidance also states that references to mobile phones should be understood to include other communications and smart technology with similar functionality. Accordingly, students are not permitted to use or wear smart technology, including smartwatches and smart glasses, during the school day.

The school will apply this policy consistently and fairly. All students and parents/carers are expected to understand and support the school's expectations. The DfE specifically identifies the role of parents in reinforcing the school's mobile phone policy and supporting a mobile phone-free environment.

The school will also make appropriate adaptations where required to meet its legal duties, including reasonable adjustments for disabled students and arrangements for students who need access to a mobile phone or any assistive technologies that have connectivity to manage a medical condition. Any such arrangements will be agreed on an individual basis and will specify the circumstances, purpose and permitted times and locations for phone or technology access.

3. Daily Process

Students must bring their pouch with them to school each day.

School entrance

Upon arrival, students will:

- 1) Turn their phone off or switch it to airplane mode.
- 2) Open their pouch by tapping against the unlocking base.
- 3) Place their phone inside their Yondr Pouch and lock it in the presence of school staff. Tutors will then check this in tutor time.
- 4) Keep the pouched phone with them throughout the school day and store it in a school bag or locker.

At dismissal, students will unlock their pouch, retrieve their phone and re-close the pouch to protect the locking mechanism from damage. Pouches must be brought to and from school each day.

Note: Students arriving late or leaving early will pouch/unpouch their phones in the main office.

4. Procedures and Sanctions

Purchase of pouch

The pouch is available to purchase through SCOPay at a cost of £16 and remains the property of the student. When a student leaves the school, the pouch may be returned for a £10 buyback refund, provided it is in good, clean and reusable condition.

Forgotten pouches

The student's phone will be collected and securely stored in the office until the end of the day. Parents/carers will be contacted and reminded of the procedures. If the pouch is repeatedly forgotten, this will be treated as lost and a replacement fee of £16 will be charged.

Student does not have a phone

If a student does not bring a phone to school you must inform us by completing the form [here](#).

Student is temporarily not bringing a phone to school

If a student who usually brings a phone to school is not bringing it in for a temporary period of time (e.g. the phone is lost / parents have confiscated the phone) we ask you to let the school know by emailing info@thamesmead.surrey.sch.uk to make us aware. This will mean we do not need to perform a phone check. We will also not need to contact you.

Phone Use During the School Day

If a student is found in possession of a phone outside their pouch on school site, the following sanctions will apply:

Stage 1 – First occasion

The phone will be confiscated and returned only to the parent/guardian.

Stage 2 – Second occasion

The phone will be confiscated and will only be returned to a parent/guardian after a meeting has been held with one of Pastoral Manager / Head of Year / Member of Senior Leadership Team.

Stage 3 – Third occasion – fifth occasion

The phone will be confiscated and held for one night. Any subsequent confiscation will see the number of nights increase by one from the previous confiscation.

For stage 3, if the confiscation period goes over a weekend, the phone will be returned to the student on Friday afternoon. The same phone with the working SIM card must then be handed into the main office on Monday morning so that the confiscation period can be completed.

Stage 4 - Sixth occasion+

The phone will be confiscated for 5 nights which could include the weekend and will only be returned to a parent.

Any subsequent confiscations will see the period of confiscation increased by 5 nights including weekends.

Please note that while a student's phone has been confiscated, we will take steps to ensure that they are not at risk. We will also be happy to store a phone during the day if a student struggles with managing their phone use during the school day.

Parents and carers will be notified of a confiscation and need to come and collect a phone via the school's messaging services.

Compliance

Compliance with the pouch system is the responsibility of every student.

As part of the daily tutor-time equipment checks, tutors will check that students have their Yondr pouch and that it is being used appropriately. Students may be required to demonstrate that their phone is secured within the pouch.

Staff will also conduct random compliance checks throughout the school day. These checks may include visual checks of pouches and, where appropriate, requests for students to demonstrate that their mobile phone is securely stored within the pouch.

Where there are reasonable grounds to believe that a student has a mobile phone or other prohibited device that has not been secured in their pouch, the school may conduct a search in accordance with the school's Behaviour Policy, and the school's Student Search Policy and the Department for Education's statutory guidance on searching, screening and confiscation.

Students who are found not to be complying with the pouch system will be dealt with in accordance with the school's Behaviour Policy. Repeated or deliberate breaches may result in further sanctions.

Damaged pouches

Any attempt to tamper with the Yondr system, including use or possession of high-strength magnets will be treated as a serious offence. Regular pouch checks will be carried out to check for damage. If accidental damage occurs, students must report it immediately. If damage is discovered during checks and has not been reported, it may be considered intentional.

The following examples may indicate intentional damage:

- Ripped or cut fabric
- Bent or cut pin
- Signs of force to the black locking mechanism
- Pen marks inside the pouch
- Pouch opening without a station
- Scuff marks on the black ball

The pouch should not be used as a replacement for a protective case and/or screen protector on a mobile device.

5. School trips and activities

Students may be requested to use their phone pouches while on school trips and activities that run out of school.

On day trips this may be for the duration of the visit and may include any journey.

On residential trips, students will be asked to pouch up their phones/smart technologies while they are in private spaces such as bedrooms or dormitories. They may also be asked to pouch up their phones/smart technologies during other parts of the trip / activity.

Staff leading trips / activities will take unlocking magnets with them so that if there is a period when students need to use their phones/smart technologies or are permitted to use them they can be easily accessed.

6. Emergencies and Safeguarding

Communications During the School Day

Parents/carers who need to contact their child during the school day should do so via the school office on 01932 219400. We will then pass this message onto your child.

Medical Conditions

Students who require access to their mobile devices for specific medical purposes will be provided with a medical pouch.

Emergency Procedures

In an emergency, the priority is for students to follow school safety procedures under staff guidance. Unauthorised phone use during such situations may:

- ✗ Delay emergency responses
- ✗ Spread misinformation
- ✗ Put students and staff at increased risk
- ✗ Disrupt coordinated safeguarding measures

Emergency communications will be managed through the school as outlined in the Emergency and Business Continuity policy.

7. Sensitive areas

The following areas are sensitive zones of the school where mobile phones and other technologies with recording, filming and photographic capabilities are not permitted to be accessed by students, staff or visitors: toilets, changing rooms, and medical rooms. During school trips, bedrooms, sleeping accommodation and dormitories are included.

8. Visitors to school

Visitors to Thamesmead School may bring mobile phones, smart watches and other wearable technology onto the school premises. However, these devices must not be used to record, photograph or film any individual, activity or personal data without explicit permission. Any individual who uses a device in this way may be considered to have breached data protection and privacy requirements, and the incident may be reported to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO), where appropriate. If recording, photography or filming takes place within a designated sensitive area of the school, the device may be confiscated and placed in a shielded location to prevent further recording or transmission, and the police may be contacted where appropriate.

9. Staff Mobile Phone Use

There are legitimate reasons for staff to need to use their phones within the school day. Expectations for staff use of mobile phones and wearable technologies are contained within the Staff Handbook.

10. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed annually and may be updated in line with practical operational requirements.

11. Linked policies

- Behaviour for Learning Policy
- Search Policy
- Charging & Remissions Policy
- Staff Handbook
- ICT & Internet Acceptable Use Policy
- Trusted Device Policy
- Data protection policy
- Child protection and safeguarding policy