



Glenalmond College

Mobile Phone Policy

Glenalmond took an early stand on mobile phones¹, with our digital strategy acknowledging the need to harness the benefits of new technologies but, most importantly, to protect pupils from the harm posed by smart phones and uncontrolled access to social media.

Since then, concern about the impact of unmonitored smartphone usage has increased. Technology remains a vitally important part of modern life and digital learning is a key part of the Glenalmond curriculum. However, research, parental feedback, and our own experience suggests a growing trend of problematic phone use that mirrors that of behavioural addiction. A consistent relationship has been demonstrated between problematic smartphone usage and harmful mental health symptoms, including: depression, anxiety, high levels of perceived stress and poor sleep.

We want to work with parents to support our children to experience a world where they are not controlled by the pressures of social media, can understand and use technology wisely, but most of all, are free to have fun, to learn and to thrive.

Pastoral Policy on Pupil Access to Digital Media and Mobile Devices

The objective of our policy is to effectively manage an environment where pupils are not overexposed to digital social media whilst allowing them to fully engage with the benefits for learning and social interaction. The policy will be supported by education and discussion in classrooms and the tutoring programme.

Michaelmas 2024

- Smartphones must be stored securely in boarding houses before the 0815 roll call.
- All pupils should have no access to mobile phones during three periods of every school day: academic lessons (**0830 to end of Games or the final lesson, including Saturday morning**), prep times (**1900 to 2100**), and overnight (**2145 to 0800**).
- A general 'no blue light rule' after 2145 is beneficial for all, and this will be the norm for junior pupils.
- On Saturdays pupils can access their phones from 1600 until the evening roll call.
- On Sundays pupils can access their phones after Chapel until the start of prep.
- No phones are allowed at any point in the Dining Hall, Front and Back Quad.
- Boarders wishing to contact parents living in different time zones should talk to their HM.
- School wifi blocks social media (including Facebook, Snapchat, Instagram etc) during academic lessons and prep time. Wifi should continue to be disconnected overnight, including weekends.
- Pupil access to digital devices during academic lessons and prep time is limited to laptops and school computers. No mobile phones can be used as an alternative.
- Staff will not expect pupils to use their mobile phones during lesson activities or for receiving school or personal communication during the school day. Digital resources or activities should only be accessed using laptops or desktop computers. The school does not require pupils to have more than one device.

¹ [2018 Briefing Paper](#)

Sanctions

Phones will be confiscated if seen. These sanctions will apply if rules are broken in boarding houses.

- First instance:** the phone will be confiscated for 24 hours.
Second instance: the phone will be confiscated for 48 hours.
Third instance: the phone will be confiscated until the next Leave Out or half term.

Day pupils should be aware that they will not need their phones during the school day. Any phones confiscated will be placed either in secure storage in the boarding house or in the SCR.

Professor Jonathan Haidt has written extensively on his research into the negative impact of smartphones and social media on children. We encourage all parents to read his work and to consider his suggestions that

- No smart phones for pupils in the Second and Third Form. This is in general, not just at school.
- No social media for pupils below Sixth Form. Again, this is in general, not just at school.

There is a separate process for any pupil who needs access to their smartphone in order to monitor a condition or for medication.

An alarm clock will be required as no pupil will have their phone overnight .

In an emergency, parents should contact Reception or the House on the following numbers:

Reception	01738 842000	Matheson's	01738 842030
Goodacres	01738 842021	Patchell's	01738 842033
Home	01738 842024	Reid's	01738 842035
Lothian	01738 842027	Skrine's	01738 842039

Whilst we cannot uninvent the smartphone and are aware that technology is essential and at times hugely beneficial part of our life, we do encourage parents to not buy smartphones for their children before the Fourth Form and to monitor smartphone use when in the Fifth Form to ensure they do not install any social media apps (Snapchat/Tik Tok/X/Instagram etc).

The following websites are very helpful:

- <https://www.vodafone.co.uk/newscentre/smart-living/digital-parenting/>
- NSPCC advice
<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/parental-controls/>
- A parental control app - highly recommended is
<https://www.gustodio.com/en/why-gustodio/>

It is our intention that as adults, our pupils will live happier lives and spend more time with their families and friends, because they will have experienced life without being dependent on their smartphone.