Hotwells PRIMARY SCHOOL

Mobile Phone and Smart Watch Use (2026-2027)

From September 2026, new statutory Department for Education guidance says that schools should be mobile phone-free environments by default, with children not having access to mobile phones or similar smart devices during the school day.

At Hotwells, we recognise that some older children may need a phone for safety when travelling independently to and from school. Therefore, **children should only bring a mobile phone to school where they walk to or from school independently and have permission from their parent or carer to do so.**

Smart watches or other connected devices that can send or receive messages, calls or notifications should not be worn or used during the school day.

Any phone brought into school must be switched off before entering the school premises, handed to the child's teacher at the start of the day and stored safely. Children will not have access to their phone during the school day.

If you need to contact your child during the day, please continue to do so through the School Office.

Where a child requires access to a device because of a medical need, disability, SEND or another exceptional circumstance, appropriate arrangements will be agreed with the school.

Parents and Carers should:

- Decide whether their child genuinely needs to bring a phone to school. This should normally only be where they travel to or from school independently.
- Ensure that smart watches or similar connected devices are not worn to school unless this has been agreed with the school for an exceptional reason.
- Talk to their child about using mobile phones, smart watches and online technology safely and responsibly.
- Support their child in following the school's expectations around safe and respectful online behaviour.
- Use appropriate parental controls and check the age recommendations for apps their child wishes to use.
- Contact the School Office if they need to communicate with their child during the school day.

Children should:

- Only bring a phone to school if this has been agreed with their parent or carer because they travel independently.
- Not wear or use a smart watch or other connected device during the school day.
- Keep their phone switched off and in their bag while on the school premises, including on the playground before school.
- Hand their phone to their teacher at the start of the day and collect it at home time.
- Communicate with others online safely and respectfully.
- Tell a trusted adult if something they see or receive online worries or upsets them.
- Ask a parent or carer before downloading apps.
- Understand that if these expectations are not followed, their phone, smart watch or other device may be confiscated and their parent or carer may be contacted.

Adults at school should:

- Ensure children's phones are stored securely during the school day and returned at home time.
- Ask children to remove smart watches or similar connected devices if they are brought into school and ensure they are stored safely until home time.
- Share relevant concerns about a child's use of a phone, smart watch or other connected device with parents or carers and, where appropriate, the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead.
- Not routinely access or inspect the content of a child's mobile phone or connected device.
- Refer any concern that may require a device or its contents to be examined to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or a Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead.
- Follow the Department for Education's Searching, Screening and Confiscation guidance and the school's safeguarding procedures where examination or confiscation of a device is considered necessary.