MOBILE PHONE FAQs

1. WILL MY CHILD BE ABLE TO CONTACT ME IN AN EMERGENCY?

Yes. All students will be able to contact home in genuine emergencies through clear and supported school processes. Pupils have access to their head of year, in the pastoral office throughout the day.

2. HOW WILL THE SCHOOL DEFINE AN EMERGENCY?

An emergency includes situations involving illness, distress, safety concerns, or urgent changes to arrangements.

3. WHAT IF MY CHILD FEELS UNWELL DURING THE DAY?

If your child feels unwell, they should visit the Medical Room at break or lunch where staff will assess them and contact you directly if needed. They are also equipped to deal with medical emergencies and managing medical conditions in school. While staff are not qualified nurses, they have undergone medical training. Emergency first aiders provide urgent cover across the school if the room is closed for operational reasons

4. WHAT IF MY CHILD IS TOO ANXIOUS OR SHY TO APPROACH STAFF?

We recognise this concern and are strengthening support systems so students know who to go to and feel comfortable doing so. Most students can talk to their form tutor, or visit their heads of year, who are always happy to listen to their concerns. We also have a dedicated SEN department, working in the Learning Hub, Thrive and The Cloud, that work with students regularly who suffer from anxiety and other mental health issues. Many students will have adults working in these areas that they know well, as well as the teaching assistants who they spend a lot of time with. Children with anxieties can often identify who their “safe person” is in school and we encourage those students to talk to them.

5. WILL PHONES STILL BE ALLOWED BEFORE AND AFTER SCHOOL?

Yes. Students can use their phones outside of the school day, including for travel arrangements to and from school.

6. HOW WILL STUDENTS MANAGE BUS TICKETS IF THEY ARE ON THEIR PHONE?

Through parental voice, we were keen to implement a strategy that made sure students had their phones to and from school. Digital bus tickets will therefore be available to use when needed as long as the expectations in school are met. Physical bus tickets are still available to purchase from the drivers, with either cash or card.

https://tfgm.com/travelling-to-school

7. WHAT HAPPENS IF AFTER-SCHOOL CLUBS ARE CANCELLED?

Students will be supported in contacting home to arrange alternative transport if needed. This can be done via classcharts, issued by the teacher taking the activity. Our parents are excellent at using classcharts as the main communication line between school and home and we can help anyone to access it if needed.

8. CAN I SEND MY CHILD AN URGENT MESSAGE DURING THE DAY?

Yes. Parents should contact the school main office, and messages will be passed on promptly. Main reception will take the call, and we have communication lines in school that work already, to make sure the message is received.

9. HOW WILL THE SCHOOL IMPROVE COMMUNICATION RELIABILITY?

We are reviewing procedures to ensure calls are answered quickly and messages are delivered consistently. Our main reception is always staffed. For communication the other way, the pastoral office is available and we have a dedicated assistant there who can support with communication.

10. WHAT IF MY CHILD HAS MEDICAL NEEDS REQUIRING PHONE ACCESS?

Individual arrangements will be considered for students with specific medical or health requirements. These will be endorsed by a medical professional. An example of this is type 1 diabetes, in which a child uses the phone to monitor blood sugar levels, or their insulin pump. These pupils may keep their phone on them to use in a professional manner.

11. HOW WILL YOU SUPPORT STUDENTS WITH SEN, ANXIETY, OR ADDITIONAL NEEDS?

We recognise this concern and are strengthening support systems so students know who to go to and feel comfortable doing so. Most students can talk to their form tutor, or visit their heads of year, who are always happy to listen to their concerns. We also have a dedicated SEN department, working in the Learning Hub, Thrive and The Cloud, that work with students regularly who have additional needs and other mental health issues. Many students will have adults working in these areas that they know well, as well as the teaching assistants who they spend a lot of time with.

12. WILL STUDENTS STILL BE ABLE TO CONTACT PARENTS ABOUT PICKUP CHANGES?

Yes, there will be clear processes to support communication when plans change. If a communication needs to be sent home, there are many members of staff in school that are happy to facilitate. If it is a sports fixture, then it might be the PE department, or if it is a pastoral need, then the heads of year are available.

13. WHY IS THE SCHOOL INTRODUCING RESTRICTIONS ON PHONES?

To reduce distractions, improve focus on learning, and support positive social interaction. The government have issued a number of statements explaining that students "should not have access to their phones during the school day". Bramhall High is following suit of thousands of schools up and down the country that are employing different methods accomplishing this requirement.

Here are the links to the government guidelines and research around smartphone use in children:

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/mobile-phones-in-schools/mobilephones-in-schools

https://www.smartphonefreechildhood.org/the-issue/problem

14. WILL PHONES BE COMPLETELY BANNED?

Yes, however the intention is to limit use during the school day, not remove access entirely where needed. Students will have access to their phone to and from school, but not between the hours of 8:00 and 15:00. They have been added to the banned items list.

15. WHAT HAPPENS IF A STUDENT BREAKS THE RULES?

Consequences will be applied consistently, focusing on supporting responsible behaviour. The child will hand over their phone for 1 calendar week (5 school days), if they have their phone on them during the school day, after which a parent can pick the phone up. If a child refuses this, they will be issued with a 1 day suspension. In this event, if a child needs to take a bus home, and their pass is on their phone, we can ensure they have money for the bus and so can still access transport.

16. WILL THE SCHOOL TAKE RESPONSIBILITY FOR LOST OR CONFISCATED PHONES?

The school will follow clear procedures, but students bring phones at their own risk. In schools we have visited, many students leave their phones at home.

In nearly every working case (other than if a student takes ill during the day, or the phone has to be confiscated) the only person who will touch the phone, is the student.
The school keeps confiscated phones in a safe. However, via government legislation, the school accepts no responsibility for replacing lost, stolen or damaged mobile devices; this includes mobile devices confiscated by staff.

17. HOW WILL STUDENTS ACCESS THINGS LIKE LUNCH MONEY OR ACCOUNTS (E.G. SCOPAY)?

Students do not need to access SCOPAY during the day. If they need lunch money topped up, then they can visit their head of year, or main reception who can contact home. We ask that parents monitor accounts regularly to avoid the necessity of contact.

18. CAN MY CHILD USE THEIR PHONE AT BREAK OR LUNCHTIME?

No.

19. WHAT TIMES OF THE DAY DOES THE MOBILE PHONE POLICY COVER?

At all times on the school site between the hours of 8am and 3pm. This includes before form time in the morning.

20. HOW WILL THE SCHOOL ENSURE STUDENTS FEEL SAFE WITHOUT THEIR PHONE?

By strengthening supervision, staff support, and clear safeguarding procedures, all detailed above. All staff are trained in statutory guidance, "Keeping Children Safe in Education" and take reports of abuse or bullying very seriously. All children are listened to regarding allegations of this nature.

21. WHAT IF MY CHILD IS BEING BULLIED AND WANTS TO CONTACT ME?

Students will be supported to report concerns to staff, and serious issues will always involve parents. We are trained in school to monitor and intervene in bullying cases and are present to deal with changing circumstances quickly. Schools implementing the ban have reported a decrease in bullying.

22. HOW WILL YOU ENSURE MESSAGES FROM PARENTS ARE ACTUALLY DELIVERED?

We are reviewing systems to ensure accountability and consistency in message delivery. We have a system in place in school that already facilitates the delivery of messages.

23. WILL THERE BE EXCEPTIONS FOR INDIVIDUAL CIRCUMSTANCES?

Yes. The school will consider individual medical needs, endorsed by a medical professional. An example of this would be a diabetic monitoring blood sugar levels.

24. WILL STUDENTS BE INVOLVED IN DISCUSSIONS ABOUT THIS POLICY?

Yes. Student voice will be included to help shape a fair and workable approach.

25. CAN THE POLICY BE REVIEWED?

Yes. The school will monitor the impact and adjust where necessary. We are keen to work with parents and children to maximise the effectiveness of the procedure to achieve what we set out to and mitigate problems that appear as the process embeds.

26. I AM WORRIED ABOUT THE INCREASED USE OF SMARTPHONES, WHAT ARE THE ALTERNATIVES?

As a school we will support parents who want to reduce their child's use of smartphones. There are alternatives out there which have some technical capabilities, but without the overabundance of apps.

You can look here for more information:
https://www.smartphonefreechildhood.org/alternatives