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Co-op Academy
Manchester

Mobile phones from September 2026

Dear Parents and Carers,

We regularly review our routines to ensure they support calm classrooms, strong learning habits, and students' wellbeing. As part of this ongoing work, we will be strengthening our approach to mobile phones and mobile technology use in school from September 2026.

This is not a major change to our current ways of working. We have always been clear that mobile phones and mobile technology should be switched off and out of sight during the school day. What is changing is that we will now be applying this policy more closely and consistently, in line with Department for Education (DfE) recommendations.

Increasingly, research shows that schools have a duty of care to actively ensure phone-free expectations are followed, rather than simply stated. The DfE advises schools to limit or remove mobile phone use during the school day to protect students' wellbeing, focus, behaviour, and safety. National guidance makes clear that schools should be mobile-phone-free environments by default, with expectations applied consistently across the school day.

UK evidence from the DfE, Ofcom, and the Children's Commissioner for England supports the benefits of sustained phone-free time for wellbeing and behaviour. Educational research also shows that reducing distractions has a positive impact on learning and engagement.

How the revised approach will work

To ensure expectations are clear and applied consistently, there are a small number of key operational routines that all students will follow each day:

- **Off and In Bags:** Phones and mobile technology must be OFF and IN BAGS from 8:20am until the end of the school day.
- **Visibility:** Throughout the school site, phones must not be seen or heard at any time, including in classrooms, corridors, outdoor areas, dining spaces, and reception areas (which are designated safeguarding zones).
- **Storage:** Phones and mobile technology must not be on a student's person, including in blazers, trousers or other clothing pockets. If they are seen in a pocket they will be confiscated in line with the school's behaviour policy.

In line with our behaviour policy, students are expected to bring a bag to school every day so phones can be stored safely. If a student arrives without a bag a Habits Detention will be issued. Their phone must be handed to a member of staff on arrival, where it will be stored securely and can be collected at the end of the school day.

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Sanctions

If a phone or mobile technology is seen or heard at any point during the school day, including being visible in a pocket (outline, shape, or handling), the following will apply:

- Immediate confiscation of the phone which will be handed in at reception or stored in a safe place. Students will get this back at the end of the day.
- If it is the third or more occasion the phone has been confiscated then parents/carers have to come in and collect it.
- If a student refuses to hand it over then they will receive a red sanction and have to go to reflection, in line with the whole school behaviour policy.
- If this becomes a regular occurrence then students will have to check their phone in at reception every day.

Communication during the school day

We would like to thank parents and carers in advance for your support and understanding. A consistent message between home and school is vital in helping students adjust positively.

- **Contacting your child:** We ask that parents and carers do not contact students directly on their mobile phones during the school day, as this can unintentionally undermine these routines. If you need to get an important message to your child, please contact the academy directly, and a member of staff will ensure it is passed on appropriately.
- **Students contacting home:** Likewise, if students feel they need to contact a parent or carer during the school day, they will be supported to do so through the academy with help from our pastoral team.
- **Visitors:** When visiting the academy, mobile phones are not permitted in reception areas or around the building. This is an essential safeguarding measure designed to protect students, visitors, and staff.

This shared approach will be reinforced directly with students through upcoming assemblies, form time, and specialized lessons exploring the benefits of phone-free time.

By strengthening our mobile phone policy, we aim to:

- Support student wellbeing and healthy boundaries with technology.
- Improve focus, behaviour, and engagement in lessons.
- Create a calmer, safer school environment.

We appreciate your continued support as we put this in place for the benefit of all our students.

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Yours sincerely,

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