PERSONAL PORTABLE DEVICES (phone, tablet, iPad, smart watch, laptop etc.) USAGE CONTRACT

Research and experience has shown that smartphones and other electronic devices can often be a distraction to learning, social interaction and emotional wellbeing, particularly for younger students. Since 2010, when smartphones and social media became mainstream, there has been a sharp rise in youth mental health concerns, including anxiety, self-harm and depression. Smartphone users are being deliberately targeted in the street, with their devices being stolen out of their hands. There is also increasing evidence that extensive smartphone use is altering development in the teenage brain and impairing the ability of young people to focus, retain information and engage in sustained activity, including learning.

In order to help our Year 7 students settle into secondary school, build strong face to face relationships and fully engage with their learning, we have made the decision not to allow Year 7 students to bring a smartphone into school from September 2026.

Permitted devices for Year 7

Year 7 students may bring a mobile phone to school, but it must be a traditional phone that does not have wifi access eg the Nokia 105, Nokia 110 or IMO Dash.

Internet enabled tracker devices, such as Apple, Samsung, Tile or Amazon Tags are permitted for families who wish to monitor a student on their journey to and from school. These devices must be kept securely in school bags during the day.

Smart watches are not permitted for Year 7 students. It is recommended that students have a traditional wristwatch in order to tell the time.

Permitted devices for Years 8-11

For Years 8-11, the existing policy remains in force. Devices must be switched off and out of sight as soon as students enter the school quad (or come through reception). Any phone seen or heard during the day will be confiscated and held for the next 24 hours.

Other mobile devices eg headphones and smartpods must similarly be put away and out of sight during the day.

Permitted devices for Year 12 and 13 (Sixth Form)

Sixth Form students may use smartphones in the canteen areas during free lessons and in the study room. Smartphones, headphones and earpods should be out of sight at all other times.

Principles applicable to all year groups

All portable devices remain the responsibility of the student at all times and the school accepts no responsibility for loss or damage of such items. Students are discouraged from bringing expensive items into school.

For students in Years 8 and above, personal portable devices may only be used inside classrooms with the express permission of the member of staff in charge of the activity for which the device is required. Should an activity need internet access, the school will provide an appropriate device for students (e.g. the lesson will be held in a designated IT room or a chromebook will be issued for the lesson).

School trips are considered to be lesson time and use of portable devices will be at the discretion of the teacher in charge.

Students will not be allowed to use a portable device in place of a calculator at any time. Students should come to school properly equipped with a calculator for their maths lessons.

Every student is issued with a hard copy of their timetable at the start of the school tear. Year 7's also have a hard copy planner in which they can write their timetable. No student needs to check their timetable on a mobile phone.

Portable devices (including smart watches) are never allowed in examination rooms, even if turned off and in a bag. These are National Examination Board rules. Any breach of these rules will be reported to the examination board and could jeopardise a student's formal exam results.

Parents are asked to support the school in the implementation of this policy by NOT calling or messaging their child during the school day. This encourages students to break the school rules and potentially incur a consequence. If you need to speak to your child urgently, please phone the school (01895 200849) or email the main school office (office@vynersschool.org.uk).

If your child has a medical condition requiring use of a smartphone (eg diabetes), please contact our pastoral team as soon as possible. This allows appropriate arrangements to be put in place to support a student's health, whilst maintaining the integrity of this policy.

Sanctions:

Any breach in the agreed rules will result in the immediate confiscation of the portable device and a C3 detention in the first instance.

Confiscated portable devices will be taken to Student Services by the member of staff who confiscates them. Student Services will log and secure any confiscated device.

For Years 8 and above, the portable device will be returned to the owner at the end of the next school day. Devices confiscated on Friday will be returned for the weekend.

Following a second offence, a further C3 detention will be issued and the portable device must be collected by the parent / carer. Devices confiscated from Year 7 students must always be collected by a parent.

Further offences will be treated as deliberate defiance, for which a C4 will be issued. The school reserves the right to permanently ban a student from bringing a portable device to school where they demonstrate a repeated unwillingness to respect the school rules.

September 2026