Sixth Form Mobile Phone Use Policy

Purpose and Philosophy

At Samuel Whitbread Academy (SWA), we recognise that Sixth Form students are mature, independent learners. Therefore, like staff, Sixth Form students may have access to their mobile phones during the school day and we trust our Sixth Formers to manage their devices responsibly.

Sixth form students play a vital role in setting the standard for the rest of the school community. This policy therefore outlines the privileges, restrictions, and responsibilities regarding mobile phone usage to ensure a focused, safe, and respectful learning environment for all.

The Rules: Where and When

To balance Sixth Form privileges with whole-school expectations, the following rules apply to all Sixth Form students:

- **Mobile phone permitted areas:** Mobile phones may only be used inside the designated Sixth Form block, in the study area outside the main canteen toilets in block 4 and in the library/learning resources centre.
- **Lessons and tutorial registration periods:** Mobile phones must be put away and kept out of sight during all Sixth Form tutorial registrations and lessons. However, the classroom teacher/tutor may permit the use of phones for a specific, curriculum-related learning activity.
- **Mobile phone prohibited areas:** Mobile phones must not be used or seen/visible anywhere else on the school site. This includes all outside spaces, main school corridors, canteens (not the main canteen outside the toilets), and shared walkways/corridors.
- **Earphones and Audio Devices:** The use or wearing of earphones, AirPods, or headphones is restricted to the Sixth Form block.
- **Medical use:** Any student who needs to use their mobile phone for medical purposes and/or medical appointments, please ensure your teachers and the Sixth Form team are aware so staff can ensure a space is available where you can use your mobile phone.

Sanctions

The expectation is that Sixth Form students will adhere to these rules without issue, and respect the privileges they have been given. If a student fails to meet these expectations, they will receive an **M1 – 6th Form Mobile Phone Offence.** An M1 for a Sixth Form student will result in entry into the Sixth Form penalty hour at lunch time.

Aligning with Government Guidance

This policy aligns directly with UK government and Department for Education (DfE) guidance, which strongly supports restricting mobile phone use in schools. The guidance is designed to minimise disruption, tackle bullying, and maximise learning time. By keeping phones out of the wider school environment, we create a calmer, safer space for everyone. Government policy regarding mobile phone use for post 16 students in Sixth Form is as follows:

'Schools should consider whether students in the Sixth Form should be permitted access to their mobile phone at certain and limited times and locations, reflecting this period of education as one of increased independence and responsibility, without compromising the school's policy on the use of mobile phones for other pupils. This should include prohibiting the use of mobile phones by sixth form students in front of younger pupils. For example, limiting use to a common room. Sixth form students should remain subject to the school's behaviour policy and misuse of their phone should have the potential to lead to sanctions'.

Role Modelling for Younger Students

Students in Years 9, 10, and 11 have their devices pouched when on school site. As the most senior students in the school, Sixth Formers are expected to model excellent behaviour and practice. If younger students see Sixth Formers using phones around the site, it undermines the whole-school policy. Your flexibility is a privilege of your maturity; modelling good practice is the responsibility that comes with it.

The Benefits of Unplugging

We want to prepare our Sixth Form students not just academically, but personally. Stepping away from your mobile devices offers significant benefits:

- **Improved Focus:** Without the constant ping of notifications, cognitive load is reduced, allowing for deeper concentration and better academic performance.
- **Enhanced Social Interaction:** Putting the phone away encourages face-to-face conversations, helping build stronger interpersonal skills and relationships with your peers.
- **Better Mental Health:** Taking a break from social media and digital pressures during the school day is proven to reduce anxiety and improve overall wellbeing.
- **Preparation for the Workplace:** Learning when it is and isn't appropriate to use a personal device is a crucial professional skill for future careers.