

STUDENT MOBILE PHONE POLICY 26-27

**International School of Creative Science
Nad al Sheba**



Field	Detail
Created by	Principal
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1. Introduction and Safeguarding Commitment

At the International School of Creative Science, safeguarding and student well-being are at the heart of all that we do. In line with international research and national expectations in the UAE, including guidance from the UK Department for Education (*Mobile phones in schools: government guidance, 2024*) and KHDA expectations for student safety with the use of personal devices, we recognise the need to minimise risks associated with mobile phone use during the school day.

Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 states that all schools should be mobile-phone-free environments, and expects schools to have a mobile phone policy, and supporting procedures, that make clear how this is implemented in their setting. This policy and the procedures below are that document.

Evidence shows that unrestricted mobile phone access can lead to increased distraction, cyberbullying, exposure to inappropriate content, and compromised safeguarding within school environments. A safe, focused, and nurturing environment is essential for students to thrive academically, socially, and emotionally.

This policy outlines our approach to mobile phones, with clear procedures that support learning, protect well-being, and maintain high safeguarding standards. Our school's starting point is that mobile phones are distracting and unnecessary in school, and are strictly prohibited from learning environments. We recognise that there may be extenuating circumstances with students travelling long distances that necessitate communication en route, and have designed the following policy with this in mind.

ISCS Nad Al Sheba is a mobile-phone-free environment for students. Phones should not be seen, heard or used during the school day. The limited exceptions set out below exist only so that students who travel long distances can communicate safely on the journey to and from school; they do not alter that position.

This policy should be read alongside the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and the Digital Safeguarding Policy. Where a mobile phone is involved in a safeguarding concern, the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy takes precedence over the procedures in this document.

2. Mobile Phone Policy: Primary Phase (FS–Year 6)

- Students in the Foundation and Primary Phase are **not permitted** to bring mobile phones to school.
- In **exceptional circumstances** where there is a clear need (e.g. complex after-school arrangements), an email should be sent directly to the Principal.
- In such cases, only a “brick phone” is permitted.
- Students must hand their mobile phone to their class teacher at the start of form time who will store it until the end of the school day.

3. Mobile Phone Policy: Secondary Phase (Year 7–Year 11)

- Students are strongly discouraged from bringing mobile phones to school.
- Where a mobile phone is necessary for **logistical reasons**, students are only permitted to bring Brick Phones.
- Approved phones must be handed in to the Phase Supervisor every morning upon arrival.
- Phones are not to be used during the school day under any circumstances.
- After school, phones may only be used to make urgent calls to parents and should not be taken out in the corridors or the school grounds other than for this reason.

4. Mobile Phone Policy: Secondary Phase (Years 12&13)

- Students in sixth form are considered as young adults, and as such, are given the responsibility to manage their personal devices responsibly.
- Students are permitted to bring mobile phones to school, but it must be kept in their bags in learning environments. They should also not use them whilst walking through corridors.
- Misuse of mobile phones will not be tolerated, and will result in confiscation and collection required from parents.
- The use of social media on school campus is strictly prohibited.

5. Use of Phones on School Transport

- Phones must not be used on school buses.
- Phones should remain securely stored in the student's bag during travel.
- If a phone is used without permission on a bus, it will be confiscated and retained at the front of the bus for collection by the parent.

6. Use of Phones During School Trips and Residential

- Students are not permitted to bring mobile phones on day trips.
- For residential trips, specific arrangements regarding phone use will be communicated in advance. All procedures will prioritise safeguarding and controlled use under staff supervision

7. Responsibilities and Compliance

- Staff, Parents and students are expected to familiarise themselves with this policy and support its implementation. Students who are approved to bring mobile phones to school are required to sign a Mobile Phone Safety Contract.
- The school reserves the right to confiscate any mobile device used in breach of this policy for the protection of students in school. Confiscated devices will only be handed over to parents for collection.

7.1 If a confiscated device may contain harmful material

Occasionally a device is confiscated in circumstances suggesting it may contain harmful material — for example an indecent image of a child, evidence of bullying or harassment, or contact from an adult of concern.

In those circumstances staff must not:

- view, open, search, copy, forward or delete any content on the device, or ask the student to show them anything on it;
- question the student about what the device contains;
- discuss the matter with other staff, other students, or any parent.

Staff must instead secure the device, hand it directly to a Designated Safeguarding Lead the same day, and submit a report through the Safeguarding Reporting Button on the staff intranet. The DSL decides what happens next, in line with section 7.8 of the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

Where an indecent image of a child may be involved, the device is not examined by school staff at any point. The Designated Safeguarding Lead determines whether a referral to Dubai Police or another authority is required.

7.2 Where a phone has been used to harm another student

Where a mobile phone has been used to bully, harass, intimidate or exclude another student, or to take or share images of them, the matter is treated as a safeguarding concern and not only as a breach of this policy. It is managed under the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and the Anti-Bullying Policy, and the Designated Safeguarding Lead will consider the support needs of every student involved.

- The school accepts no responsibility for loss, damage, or theft of mobile phones brought to school without authorisation, or when not handed over to the appropriate adults as defined in this policy.

8. Review of Policy

This policy will be reviewed annually or earlier if required, in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education, emerging research, parental feedback, and KHDA updates.

Attached are documents related to a parent presentation on the rationale of our mobile phone policy.

Strengthening Our Mobile Phone Policy

A Vision for Student Wellbeing, Focus and Digital safety

By Sarah Bouarissa

Year 12GA



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Why Are We Reviewing This?

Understanding the need for a change in policy.

Growing concerns over smartphone impact on learning and mental health

Parent consultation showed that the majority prefer the prohibition of smartphones

Reinforces KHDA focus on student wellbeing and safeguarding

Parent Feedback

Quantitative data from our ISCS NAS Mobile Phone Consultation Survey, May 2025

These statistics highlight the existing concern for student wellbeing regarding mobile phones amongst parents.

60%

93 parents prefer brick phones only

40%

61 parents support smartphones with stricter procedures

What the Research Shows

Understanding the negative impact of smartphone usage on student well-being.

- ✓ "Your phone is **changing your brain.**"
Catherine Price, How to Break Up with Your Phone
- ✓ "Designed to be **addictive...**like a slot machine"
Tristan Harris cited in Price, 2025
- ✓ Negative impact on **memory** due to **encoding impariment**
Kuznekoff et al. (2013). The impact of mobile phone usage on student learning
- ✓ Banning phones in schools **increased test scores**
Beland & Murphy (2015)

Hard-Hitting Statistics

Teens average **273 notifications per day**, disrupting focus and sleep

The Guardian, 2024

50% of teens spending 4+ hours on devices show signs of **anxiety and depression**

Common Sense Media, 2023

70% of 12-18 year olds check their phones within 30 minutes of bedtime

American Academy of Pediatrics, 2023

11% of teenagers show **addiction-like behaviours** with social media

NIH/UNICEF 2024

What do our Parents say?

Feedback from our parents in our May consultation.

- ✓ "No need for phones in school—disadvantage outweighs advantage."
- ✓ "Please ban smartphones. The risk is too high."
- ✓ "Only allow brick phones with basic features."
- ✓ "Students compare phone models—it's becoming a status issue."
- ✓ "We shouldn't allow smart phones in the school or bus."
- ✓ "Help us protect our children from early exposure to social media."
- ✓ "Allow phones for pickup coordination, but ensure they're handed in."
- ✓ "Trust students, but supervise and reinforce the policy."

Implementing These Changes

Additional details to facilitate this transition.

- This new policy will be made effective starting the upcoming **2025-2026** school year

Criteria for permissible brick phones:

- - Lack of camera
 - No access to internet browsers

Recommended Models:

- - Nokia 105

Changes to iPad policy

A Vision for Student Wellbeing, Focus and Digital safety





Other Schools' Practice

Discovering how schools and educators around the world feel about smartphones.

- ✓ **17 London schools adopted smartphone-free policies (Y7-9)**

The Guardian, June 2024

- ✓ **90% of teachers favour bans during lessons; 75% support full-day restrictions**

Education Endowment Foundation, 2023

- ✓ **90% of secondary schools in England now have some form of phone ban during the school day**

National survey of +15,000 Schools, The Guardian, April 2025

- ✓ **London Borough of Barnet has implemented a smartphones ban in all it's schools**

The Times, February 2025

Our Policy Recommendation

Primary:

All phones are prohibited.
(Exceptions can be made via Head of Primary)

Secondary:

Smartphones are prohibited.
Brick phones are permitted and must be handed in daily to the phase supervisor.

Sixth Form:

No changes made to existing smartphone policy.

Violations:

Failure to abide by the new policy would result in device confiscation which must be retrieved by parents. Parents will be contacted and the infraction logged under behaviour policy.



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