



15 July 2026

Dear Parent/Carer,

Maiden Erlegh School in Reading (MER), as part of Maiden Erlegh Trust (MET) are committed to providing a calm, focused, and purposeful learning environment where all students can thrive academically, socially and emotionally.

Over recent years, there has been increasing national attention on the impact of mobile phones on learning, concentration, attendance, behaviour and wellbeing. In February 2026 the Department for Education (DfE) released updated legislation relating to mobile phone use in schools instructing schools to prohibit the use of mobile phones throughout the school day to minimise disruption, improve behaviour and maximise learning time. This legislation states that “all schools should be mobile phone-free environments by default and that schools should develop a mobile phone policy that prohibits the use of mobile phones and other smart technology with similar functionality to mobile phones throughout the school day, including during lessons, the time between lessons, breaktimes and lunchtime.

The DfE expects schools to implement a policy whereby pupils do not have access to their mobile phone throughout the school day including during lessons, the time between lessons, breaktimes and lunchtime.

In response to this legislation, the Children’s Wellbeing and Schools Act 226 (section 36) notes that schools should be phone free from the 29th June 2026. We have therefore taken the decision to introduce magnetic signal-blocking phone pouches in the new academic year and to strengthen the sanctions associated with mobile phone misuse in our schools to ensure we comply with this new legislation.

Students can continue to bring their mobile phone to school next academic year if they wish. However, MER will be adopting the sanctions show in the table below if a student is seen using a mobile phone on the school site during the school day. These sanctions will start from 6th September 2026.

	Sanction	Consequence for refusing to hand over the phone
1 st offence in the year	The phone is taken from the student at the time of the offence. A phone call / message is sent home to alert the parents of the confiscation.	The student is placed into Internal isolation until the phone is handed in. If the student refuses isolation, they will be suspended for



	The phone is kept until the end of the week in the school office. The student attends an after-school detention on Friday and is given their phone back at the end of the detention.	defiance for the remainder of the day. When the parent collects their child to serve the suspension, the phone must be handed to a member of staff. The phone is kept in the school office until Friday and is handed back to the student after the Friday detention.
2 nd offence in the year (and all further offences)	The phone is taken from the student at the time of the offence. A phone call / message is sent home to alert the parents of the confiscation. The phone is kept in the school office until the end of the half term. The student sits a detention on the last day of the half term. The parents come to school at the end of the detention to collect the phone and their child.	The student is placed into Internal isolation until the phone is handed in. If the student refuses isolation, they will be suspended for defiance for the remainder of the day. When the parent collects their child to serve the suspension, the phone must be handed to a member of staff. The phone is kept in the school office until the last day of the term and is handed back to the student after the Friday detention.

From the 3rd November (immediately after October half term), on arrival each morning, phones must be switched off and placed into a secure magnetic pouch. The pouch will remain with the student throughout the school day but cannot be opened until the end of the school day using designated unlocking stations located at exit points in the schools. This will result in students being unable to access their phones during lessons, breaktimes, lunchtimes or between lessons each school day.

All students will be provided with one pouch free of charge by the school. If students lose or damage their pouch a replacement will need to be purchased by the student.

Parents and carers can be assured that they will still be able to contact their child in an emergency through the school office. Likewise, if a student needs to contact home during the school day for an essential reason, they will be able to do so via the school office / student services.

We appreciate that this represents a significant change in school policy. However, we firmly believe that this approach will support students in developing healthy habits,



improving focus and making the most of every learning opportunity available to them. The Trust's policy for mobile phones, and other smart devices, will be updated to reflect these changes.

We will provide further details, including implementation arrangements, in September.

Thank you for your continued support in helping us create the best possible learning environment for our students.

Yours faithfully,



S Gibbs
Headteacher MER



S Jump
Director of Secondary Education



J Peck
CEO

