



**Houlton School**  
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**Michael McCulley**  
Principal

Registered in England  
Company number 07515832

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Dear Parents/Carers

## **Safeguarding Updates**

We would like to wish you a Happy New Year and hope that the Christmas period provided you and your family with a much-earned rest.

### **New Department for Education direction to all schools on Mobile Phones**

As you may already be aware, the Government has issued some new guidance with regard to the use of mobile phones and technology in schools which can be found [here](#).

In line with our high expectations and commitment to safeguarding all pupils, from **Monday 15 January 2024** we will be changing our expectations regarding mobile phones to fall in line with the new guidance, which bans mobile phones in schools. From Monday 15 January we encourage your child not to bring their phone to school at all. If they do bring it, they will be required to store their mobile phone in secure lockers during the school day. The Government's view is that no pupil should bring a mobile phone onto any school site at any time. Houlton School has been designed as such that most pupils in the future will walk to the school. We understand that some pupils currently travel longer distances and families may prefer that they have access to their mobile phones before / after school for safety reasons. We are, therefore, providing safe lockers for pupils to store their phone during the school day if they choose to bring one to school. Mobile phones will be labelled and stored securely. Pupils who have a mobile phone with them will be expected to place them into the secure locker in their tutor bases during morning registration and collect them at the close of the day at the end of afternoon registration. All mobile phones must remain off and out of site whilst transported on the campus to and from tutor bases.

**The Transforming Lives Educational Trust cannot take responsibility for any loss or damage caused to phones whilst on site and so we ask you to consider carefully if your child really needs to have a phone with them during the school day.**

Pupils are aware of these new expectations and it is important that we are clear that this is a Government directive to which we will be adhering. If pupils fail to hand in a mobile phone, in the first instance, parents will be called to a meeting to discuss and collect the phone and a detention will be issued. Were this to happen a second time, pupils would be at risk of a fixed term suspension. As per our Positive Behaviour Policy and the Statutory Guidance, we are permitted to search any child's belongings at any time if we suspect pupils are carrying prohibited items. We will always contact parents/carers if we have searched any child's property to discuss this.



## Changes to the School Day

Following feedback from pupils and parents/carers we have taken the decision to split our lunchtime service from this term rather than wait until September as originally planned. This means Year 7 and 8 now have their lunch time between **12.10-12.50pm** and Year 9 lunch break remains from **1.10-1.50pm**. We have already found that these changes have had a positive impact across the site.

Yours faithfully



**Chloe Buckenham**  
Vice Principal