



Draft NHS 'Away for the Session' Phone Rules 2024

International research indicates some key challenges with phones at school such as being a major distraction for our students. These rules are designed to ensure that the learning of all students is maximised, while minimising any potential for distraction and cyber-bullying. The Northern Health School has an '**away for the session**' approach.

The school defines a session as *a block of time when the student is working with or supervised by NHS staff*. This might be for a regular school day, such as a hospital classroom, or part of a school day, such as a community support centre classroom session or a meeting with a teacher (online or in person). It includes trips, education outside the classroom and education activities organised by the school.

For any such session, phones either do not come with the student, or are switched off and

- Handed into NHS staff while the student is on site
- In the student's bag in a designated and public place, such as at the front of the Unit classroom
- In an agreed safe place, out of sight, such as another room of the student's home
 - Locked in a school provided locker – the students might provide their own padlock, as some secondary schools require for lockers
 - The Unit has one locker or cupboard that is locked at the start of the session and unlocked at the end. Students place and retrieve their own phones

When and where do the rules apply

NHS students work in a wide range of ways and places and the following guidelines are designed to help students and parents understand what the rules mean for us.

- Student homes and ward-based teaching. A student's home, or bedside is only covered by the rules, for the duration of a teaching session, whether that is in person, or online.
- NHS support centres and hospital classrooms. A session runs from when the student arrives, until they depart.
- Public places such as libraries or cafes: A sessions runs from when the student arrives, until they depart.
- The student's school of enrolment: students are effectively at their own school and must follow that school's rules.
- If a student does bring their phone for emergency contact or health reasons, these must be switched off and kept in bags at all times, unless directed by a teacher.
- It is important to note that if students do make the decision to bring a phone to the school grounds, they do so at their own risk. The school is not responsible for any loss or damage caused to any phone.

We understand that some parents like their children to have a phone to communicate with them. Students may use their phones after their teaching session finishes. If a parent or caregiver needs to contact their child urgently during a teaching session, they should call the school office or contact their child via email.

Phones 'away for the session' expectations

Students are always encouraged to regulate themselves and develop healthy in person relationships. In circumstances where a member of staff considers the device to be a harmful, disruptive, or distracting

influence or that usage has breached the school phone rules the result will be confiscation for the rest of the teaching session. The device will then be retrieved by the student at the conclusion of the session and the inappropriate use recorded.

Breaches of the phone rules include (but not limited to):

- using the device when not permitted
- any sort of bullying, including online bullying
- taking photos or videos of other people without their permission
- forwarding inappropriate messages or content.

Phones 'away for the session' exemptions

Learning activities

If phones are used for a learning activity, this will be at the teacher's discretion and the phone's use will be supervised by a staff member. Guidelines on appropriate usage still apply.

Health and emergency situations

Students with additional learning needs who use phones in class to increase or improve their ability to participate and learn will be granted an exemption and this will be noted in the student's ILP. In matters related to a student's immediate health and safety concerns, a parent or caregiver can apply at any time to the principal for a period of exemption (e.g., medical conditions or protection issues). Education outside the classroom (EOTC)

Students may take certain digital devices on EOTC activities but should check whether their device is allowed before the activity commences. Usage will be at the discretion of teachers and other adult supervisors.

Please note with all exemptions and exceptions appropriate usage guidelines and other relevant school rules still apply.