



USE OF MOBILE PHONES IN SCHOOL

Governor responsible- Emma Isaacs

Approved by- FGB

Approval date- September 2026

Review date- September 2027

Policy position: The school is a mobile phone-free environment. Pupils must not use or have access to a mobile phone or other personal smart communication device at any point during the school day. Devices should not normally be brought into a primary school. Any exception must be agreed in advance and the device handed to the school for secure storage on arrival.

1. Purpose and scope

This policy sets clear, consistent expectations for pupils, staff, parents, governors, volunteers, contractors and visitors. It applies on the school premises during the school day, including before-school and after-school provision, lessons, movement around school, breaktimes and lunchtimes. Relevant expectations also apply on educational visits, residential visits, sporting events and other school-organised activities.

For this policy, 'mobile phone' includes smartphones and other personal technology with similar communication, notification, internet, audio-recording, image-recording or video-recording functions. This includes smart watches, camera-enabled watches, tablets with communication functions and connected wearable devices. School-owned devices used under staff supervision are not personal devices and are governed by the school's acceptable-use and data-protection arrangements.

2. Aims

- maintain a calm, safe and purposeful environment in which pupils can learn, play and socialise without digital distraction;
- protect pupils' privacy, dignity, safeguarding and wellbeing;
- reduce opportunities for bullying, harmful content, inappropriate contact, filming, photography and online conflict during the school day;
- set expectations which are simple, fair, understood and consistently applied;
- ensure reasonable, planned exceptions are available where a pupil's individual needs require them; and
- support pupils to develop safe, respectful and healthy habits when using technology.

Phone-free throughout the school day • Together We Can

3. Legislative and guidance framework

This policy has been prepared with regard to the Department for Education's statutory guidance Mobile phones in schools, which became statutory on 29 June 2026 and should be followed by schools from 1 September 2026. The guidance states that schools should be mobile phone-free by default and should prohibit pupils' use of, and access to, mobile phones and similar smart technology throughout the school day.

It should be read alongside the school's Behaviour Policy, Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, Online Safety Policy, Acceptable Use Policies, Data Protection Policy, Educational Visits Policy, Staff Code of Conduct, Equality Information and Objectives, and relevant medical or individual support plans.

The school will have regard, as applicable, to Keeping Children Safe in Education; Behaviour in Schools; Searching, Screening and Confiscation; the Equality Act 2010; the Education and Inspections Act 2006; UK GDPR; and the Data Protection Act 2018.

4. Expectations for pupils

4.1 The default rule

- Pupils should not normally bring a mobile phone, smart watch or similar personal device to school.
- A pupil may bring a device only where the headteacher, or a member of staff authorised by the headteacher, has agreed an exception in advance.
- An approved device must be switched off before the pupil enters the school site and handed to the nominated member of staff immediately on arrival.
- The device will be stored securely and will not be accessible to the pupil during the school day. It will be returned at the agreed collection point when the pupil leaves.
- A phone must never be used to call, message, access the internet, play games, receive notifications, take photographs, record audio or video, or share material during the school day.
- Smart watches brought to school must have communication, recording and notification functions disabled; where this cannot be reliably achieved, they must not be worn and will be treated in the same way as a mobile phone.

4.2 Contact during the school day

Parents who need to contact their child must contact the school office. Pupils who need to contact a parent must speak to a member of staff and use the school's agreed communication arrangements. Pupils must not contact family members privately from a personal device during the school day. This enables the school to safeguard the child, provide appropriate support and ensure that important information is handled accurately.

5. Agreed exceptions

Exceptions will be limited, proportionate, recorded and reviewed. They are not an entitlement to general phone use. The headteacher will consider the pupil's age, needs, safety, equality duties and the practical safeguards available.

- Medical or health needs, including where a device is required to monitor or manage a condition.
- A disability or special educational need where use is necessary as a reasonable adjustment.
- Exceptional travel or safeguarding arrangements, such as an older pupil travelling to or from school independently.

- A temporary, exceptional family circumstance agreed with the headteacher.

Unless a medical or accessibility plan specifically requires pupil access, an approved device will still be switched off and securely stored by the school throughout the day. Where access is necessary, an individual plan will set out when, where, why and how the device may be used; who supervises or supports its use; storage arrangements; privacy controls; and when the arrangement will be reviewed.

Emergency arrangements: A declared emergency or critical incident may require different communication arrangements. Pupils must follow staff instructions and must not independently use a device unless explicitly directed to do so.

6. Educational visits, clubs and wraparound care

The phone-free expectation continues during school-organised activities unless the visit leader or headteacher has agreed a specific alternative following a risk assessment. Pupils should not bring phones on visits unless expressly authorised. Where a device is authorised for travel or safeguarding reasons, staff will determine secure storage and access arrangements. Staff will carry school-approved means of communication for emergencies wherever practicable.

7. Staff use of mobile phones

Staff model the standards expected of pupils. Personal phones must be switched off or on silent and kept securely out of sight and reach of pupils during working time. Staff must not use a personal phone for personal reasons in front of pupils. Personal use is restricted to designated staff areas during authorised breaks, except in a genuine emergency or where the headteacher has authorised use for a specific reason.

- Personal devices must never be used to photograph, film or record pupils, access or store pupil information, or communicate with pupils or parents through personal accounts or numbers.
- Only school-approved equipment, systems and accounts may be used for school photographs, recordings, communication and personal data.
- Phones must not be taken into or used in toilets, changing areas, intimate-care areas or other circumstances where privacy may be compromised.
- Any authorised professional use—for example multi-factor authentication, a school application, medical monitoring or an emergency—must be necessary, brief and consistent with safeguarding, data protection and the Staff Code of Conduct.
- Staff must report suspected inappropriate or unauthorised use immediately to the headteacher or designated safeguarding lead (DSL).

8. Visitors, volunteers, contractors and parents

Visitors will be informed that the school is phone-free. Phones should be on silent and kept out of sight in areas used by pupils. Calls should be taken only in an agreed private area. No visitor may photograph, film or record a pupil, access confidential information or post material relating to pupils without the headteacher's explicit permission and the school's consent procedures being followed.

Parents and carers are asked to support the policy, including by keeping phones away while speaking to staff and by not photographing or filming children on the school site unless the school has expressly permitted this for a

particular event. Any permitted images must be used responsibly and must not be posted online if other children are identifiable, in accordance with event-specific instructions.

9. Breaches, confiscation and sanctions

Breaches will be managed calmly, fairly and consistently in line with the Behaviour Policy. Staff may confiscate a phone or device as a disciplinary penalty where it is reasonable to do so. Any search, examination of data or deletion of data will be undertaken only by authorised staff and in accordance with current law and DfE guidance. Staff will not routinely search the contents of a device.

Circumstance	School response	Collection / follow-up
Device brought without permission	Device handed to staff, switched off and stored securely; reminder of policy; incident recorded as appropriate.	Normally returned to a parent/carer, or to the pupil at the end of the day where the headteacher judges this appropriate.
Device not handed in / accessible during the day	Device confiscated; parent informed; proportionate sanction under the Behaviour Policy.	Parent/carer may be required to collect. Exception arrangements reviewed.
Use to record, bully, threaten, share harmful content or breach privacy	Device secured; DSL/headteacher informed immediately; safeguarding and behaviour procedures followed; evidence preserved where lawful and necessary.	Parent meeting and further sanction. Police, children's social care or other agencies may be contacted where appropriate.
Repeated breach	Escalating, proportionate response and work with the pupil and family to address the cause.	Written agreement or withdrawal/review of permission to bring a device.

Where a device may contain evidence of a safeguarding concern or criminal offence, staff will secure it, avoid unnecessary handling and seek advice from the DSL, headteacher and, where appropriate, the police. Safeguarding needs will take priority over disciplinary processes.

10. Loss, damage and security

Any device brought to school remains the responsibility of the pupil and parent, subject to the school's legal duties. The school will take reasonable care of devices formally handed in for secure storage but cannot accept responsibility for loss, theft or damage except where liability arises in law. Devices must be clearly labelled and protected by a passcode. The school will record and investigate any reported loss or damage appropriately.

11. Safeguarding, online safety and curriculum

The phone-free rule is part of a wider approach to safeguarding and digital wellbeing. Through the curriculum, assemblies and communication with families, pupils will learn about online safety, privacy, consent, respectful communication, cyberbullying, harmful content, misinformation, healthy technology habits and how to seek help. The school will respond to online incidents which affect the safety or wellbeing of pupils or the orderly

running of the school, even where the activity occurred outside school, in accordance with its safeguarding and behaviour duties.

The school's filtering and monitoring arrangements apply to school systems and devices. Personal mobile data can bypass school filtering; this is an additional reason why pupils must not have access to personal devices during the school day.

12. Equality, SEND and medical needs

The policy will be applied in a way that is lawful, inclusive and sensitive to individual circumstances. The school will consider reasonable adjustments for disabled pupils and will avoid applying sanctions where conduct is a consequence of a need that has not been appropriately supported. Decisions will be made with the pupil and parent where appropriate and, where relevant, documented in an individual healthcare plan, SEND support plan or risk assessment. Exceptions will be explained sensitively without disclosing confidential information.

13. Roles and responsibilities

The governing body

- approves the policy and ensures it is consistent with statutory duties and the school's wider policies;
- holds leaders to account for effective, equitable implementation; and
- reviews relevant safeguarding, behaviour and equality information.

The headteacher

- implements and communicates the policy;
- decides or delegates decisions about exceptions and ensures they are recorded and reviewed;
- ensures staff receive appropriate guidance and apply expectations consistently; and
- monitors incidents, impact and any unintended consequences.

All staff

- model appropriate phone use and enforce the policy consistently;
- secure confiscated or handed-in devices and follow recording arrangements;
- make appropriate adjustments for agreed individual needs; and
- report safeguarding, privacy or data-protection concerns without delay.

Parents and carers

- support and reinforce the policy at home;
- contact children through the school office during the day;
- seek permission in advance where an exception may be needed; and
- discuss safe and healthy technology use with their child.

Pupils

- follow the phone-free rule and hand in any authorised device promptly;
- tell an adult if they see unsafe, unkind or inappropriate device use; and
- use technology safely and respectfully in and beyond school.

14. Communication, monitoring and review

The policy will be published on the school website and communicated to pupils, staff, parents and visitors. Expectations and consequences will be revisited at least annually and when pupils join the school. The headteacher will monitor compliance, incidents, exceptions and the impact on behaviour, safeguarding, wellbeing and equality. The governing body will review the policy annually, or sooner following updated guidance, a significant incident or evidence that changes are needed.

15. Related documents and sources

- **Department for Education: Mobile phones in schools (statutory guidance, effective for schools from 1 September 2026)**
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/mobile-phones-in-schools/mobile-phones-in-schools>
- **Department for Education: Creating a mobile phone-free environment – school case studies**
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/mobile-phones-in-schools/creating-a-mobile-phone-free-environment-school-case-studies>
- **Department for Education: Behaviour in schools**
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/behaviour-in-schools--2>
- **Department for Education: Searching, screening and confiscation**
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/searching-screening-and-confiscation>
- **Department for Education: Keeping children safe in education**
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2>