



Policy on the use of mobile phones and other smart devices in school

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02.05.2023	Policy reviewed and ratified	Finance & Resources Committee
27.11.2023	Policy reviewed and ratified	Finance & Resources Committee
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1.0 Introduction and aims

It is widely recognised that many children have access to personal communication devices including mobile phones, smart phones and smart watches. Children using these devices are likely to have unlimited and unrestricted access to the internet via mobile networks such as, 4G, 5G, Airdropping and 'Nearby Share' (see Annex 2 for more details). For many, these devices can provide security and reassurance; however there also associated risks. Safeguarding of children within the school is paramount.

Effective guidance is in place to avoid the use of mobile, smart phone and smart watches causing unnecessary disruptions and distractions within the workplace, and to ensure effective safeguarding practice is promoted to protect against potential misuse.

The terms 'phone' or 'mobile phone' in this guidance denotes mobile phones, smart phones, airpods, iPods, iPads, MP3 players, MP4 players and smart watches.

There is a separate section covering Air Tags.

1.1 The guidance aims to:

- Set out clear guidance for the use of mobile phones for staff (including supply staff), pupils and volunteers
- Set out clear guidance for visitors and contractors
- Ensure robust safeguarding
- Support schools' other policies relating to child protection and behaviour

2.0 Staff responsibilities

All staff (including teachers, support staff, and supply staff) may wish to have their personal mobile phones at work for use in case of emergencies, however, there is a clear expectation that all personal use is limited to areas and times when there are no children present or likely to be present.

2.1 All staff:

- The school expects staff to lead by example and therefore should not make or receive personal calls, or texts (via mobile phone or smart watch), whilst children are present or during contact time.
- Staff (including volunteers and supply staff) should only use their mobile phones and smart devices for personal contact in designated areas such as a staff room and when they are not in contact with children.
- Other than in agreed exceptional circumstances, mobile phones should be switched off or on silent and left in a safe place and smart watches silenced during lesson times. Mobile phones must not be kept in a pocket during contact with children. Exceptional circumstances should be discussed and agreed with a member of the leadership team. If special arrangements are not deemed necessary, school staff can use the school office number as a point of emergency contact.

2.2 Safeguarding

- Staff should not contact parents from their personal mobile phone in or out of school time or give their mobile phone number to pupils or parents. If a member of staff needs to make telephone contact with a parent, a school telephone should be used in the first instance. If in an emergency a personal phone is used, then 141 should be put in front of the parents phone number so the staff members number is withheld.
- Staff should not share personal contact details through social media and messaging apps.
- Staff should regularly monitor and update their privacy settings on social media sites.
- Staff should never accept a 'friend request' or respond to any posts that may deliberately or inadvertently include them but inform their line manager or Senior Leader of the contact.
- Staff should never send to, or accept from, colleagues or pupils, texts or images that could be viewed as inappropriate.
- Staff are not permitted to take photos or videos of pupils or anything else (e.g. work) that might identify the pupil.
- If photos or videos are being taken as part of the school curriculum or for promotional purposes then school equipment must be used. Staff should not allow themselves to be photographed by a pupil(s).

2.3 Using a personal mobile for work purposes

In some circumstances, it may be appropriate for staff to use a personal mobile phone for work purposes. Where possible this should always be agreed with a line manager or Senior Leader in advance. Such circumstances may include, but are not limited to:

- Emergency evacuations
- Parental contact in emergency's (mobile phones setting that allow for the number not to be identified should be used)

This guidance should be seen as a safeguard for members of staff and the school. Any breach of school policy may result in disciplinary action against that member of staff.

2.4 Work phones

Some members of staff are provided with a mobile phone by the school for work purposes. Only authorised staff are permitted to use school phones and access to the phone must not be provided to anyone without authorisation.

Staff must:

- Only use phone functions for work purposes, including making / receiving calls, sending / receiving emails or other communications, or using the internet.
- Ensure that communication or conduct linked to the device is appropriate and professional at all times, in line with our staff code of conduct.

3.0 Pupils:

- Pupils are dissuaded from bringing mobile phones to school.
- If it is deemed necessary for a pupil to bring a mobile phone to school, (e.g., in the case of older pupils because they travel to and from school independently), then the expectation is that the pupil hands their phone into the school office or to the class teacher. This expectation should be discussed with a member of the leadership and management team. See appendix 1.
- Pupils should not use their mobile phone on a school site.
- Pupils should not take unsolicited photos of staff or other pupils.
- No mobile phones should be brought to school events such as the school disco or residential trips.

4.0 Parents, visitors and contractors:

Parents, visitors and contractors are respectfully requested not to use their mobile phones at all on the school site/in any area where children/young people are present.

- Should phone calls and/or texts need to be taken or made, use is restricted to those areas not accessed by children to avoid any unnecessary disturbance or disruption to others.

Photos of children must not be taken without prior discussion with a member of the Senior Management Team and in accordance with the UK *General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018* and using the 'Use of images consent form' (please refer to the Education Safeguarding Team's document 'Guidance for schools and other establishments on the use of images 2025').

- Any individual bringing a personal device into the school must ensure that it contains no inappropriate or illegal content.

5.0 Apple Air Tags and other tracking devices

Such devices are designed to help people locate personal belongings but have been known to be used to track individuals.

Apple have released the statement below which can be found on their website

"AirTag was designed to help people locate their personal belongings, not to track people or another person's property, and we condemn in the strongest possible terms any malicious use of our products."

Therefore, we do not allow the use of Air Tags or any other form of tracking device in relation to a pupil, either while in school or when on school trips or residential visits.

All consent slips which parents sign prior to taking part in a trip will state that such devices will not be allowed under any circumstances and must not be hidden in pockets/bags etc.

If any tracking devices are found in a pupil's clothing or in any personal belongings, they will not be allowed on the trip and will be returned to school.

6.0 Inappropriate or illegal content:

Where there is a suspicion that the material on a mobile phone may be unsuitable and may constitute evidence relating to a criminal offence, the allegations process will be followed (please refer to the school's 'Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy').

7.0 Filtering of Personal Devices:

School cannot be held responsible for the filtering of material on users' personal devices when they access the internet using their personal 4G/5G data plan. Any individual, staff or pupil, found to have been accessing material which contravenes the school's Acceptable Use Policy applicable to them during school hours will be subject to action under the terms of the school Behaviour Policy/Code of Conduct.

Anyone using a personal device to access the internet using the school network connection will have the web content on that device filtered by Netsweeper at the strictest level if used at school. Schools can view logs of activity that have occurred on specific devices and action may be taken where user activity raises a safeguarding concern.

8.0 Security:

- For both staff and pupils, the school retains no liability for any device that is brought into school which is either lost, stolen or damaged.
- For both staff and pupils, the school retains no liability for any device that is used in a manner that is against the owner's consent.
- Pupils bringing mobile phones to school must ensure that they are appropriately labelled and are stored in the School Office.
- Pupils must secure their phones as much as possible, including using passwords or pin codes to protect access to the phone's functions. Staff must also secure their personal phones, as well as any work phone provided to them. Failure by staff to do so could result in data breaches.
- Lost phones should be returned to the school office and staff will attempt to contact the owner.

Staff that fail to adhere to this policy may face disciplinary action. Please see the School's staff disciplinary policy for more information.

Related Policies and guidance:

Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy (September 2025)

Guidance for Safer Working Practice for Adults who work with Children and Young People in Education Settings February 2022

Keeping Children Safe in Education (September 2025)

School's Acceptable Use Policy

Guidance for schools and other establishments on the use of images (September 2025)

[Mobile phones in schools - February 2024](#)

[Taking photographs: data protection advice for schools | ICO](#)

Data Protection: [Data protection in schools - Guidance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

Appendix 1 – Code of Conduct for Pupils

Code of Conduct / Acceptable Use Agreement

You must obey the following rules if you bring your mobile phone to school:

- Phones must be switched off and left with the School Office on arrival.
- You cannot take photos or recordings (either video or audio) of school staff or other pupils without their consent.
- Avoid sharing your contact details with people you don't know and don't share other people's contact details without their consent.
- Don't share your mobile phone password or access codes with anyone else.
- Don't use your mobile phone to bully, intimidate or harass anyone. This includes bullying, harassing or intimidating pupils or staff via:
 - a. Email
 - b. Text / messaging app
 - c. Social media

- Rules on bullying, harassment and intimidation apply to how you use your mobile phone even when you aren't in school.
- Don't use vulgar, obscene or derogatory language while on the phone or when using social media. This language is not permitted under the Federation's behaviour policy.
- You must comply with a request by a member of staff to switch off, or turn over a phone. Refusal to comply is a breach of the Federation's behaviour policy and will be dealt with accordingly.
- The use of pupil mobile phones is prohibited throughout the school day, including during lessons, the time between lessons, break times and lunchtimes.

Appendix 2 – Airdrop and Nearby Share

Airdrop.

- AirDrop is a wireless feature available on Apple devices.
- It allows physically close Apple devices to share files, photos, websites etc.
- There are no size limits on files.
- AirDrop automatically detects nearby supported devices within a maximum distance of 30 feet.
- When a receiver of content is selected, they will be notified and offered the option to accept or decline the incoming file.

Quick Share/Nearby Share.

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- Both are available on Android 6.0+ phones.
- Like AirDrop, it allows users to instantly share files, links and pictures with people around them.
- It also works through Bluetooth or WiFi.
- When Nearby Share/Quick Share are turned on, a list of devices available within sharing proximity is visible.
- When a receiver of content is selected, they will be notified and offered the option to accept or decline the incoming file.

Safeguarding risks posed by both Airdrop and Nearby Share/Quick Share.

- Being exposed to age-inappropriate sexualised and/or violent content.
- Photo sharing as a form of cyberbullying, with the person featured in the image being the target.
- The sharing of self-generated sexual imagery, with or without the permission of the original image/video creator.
- Images of teachers or other staff members shared as part of teacher targeted bullying, including 'upskirting' images (the practice of taking an illegal photo of someone's genitals or genital area, without consent).

If a member of staff or a pupil report receiving inappropriate content then the school must follow their Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and procedures and /or Code of Conduct