



St. Peter's Smithills Dean CE Primary School

Mobile phone policy

Approved by:	Trust Board	Date: May 2026
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1. Version Control

Version	Date	Author	Changes
May 2026	May 2026	L Coleman	New policy created based on the updated guidance (19th January 2026) on the use of mobile phones in schools. The new guidance states that 'all schools should be mobile phone-free environments by default; anything other than this should be by exception only.

2. Introduction and aims

At St. Peter's Smithills Dean CE Primary School we recognise that mobile phones and similar devices, including smartphones, are an important part of everyday life for our pupils, parents/carers and staff, as well as the wider school community.

Our policy aims to:

- Promote safe and responsible phone use
- Set clear guidelines for the use of mobile phones for pupils, staff, parents/carers, visitors and volunteers
- Support the school's other policies, especially those related to child protection and behaviour

This policy also aims to address some of the challenges posed by mobile phones in school, such as:

- Risks to child protection
- Data protection issues
- Potential for lesson disruption
- Risk of theft, loss, or damage
- Appropriate use of technology in the classroom

Note: throughout this policy, 'mobile phones' refers to mobile phones and similar devices.

2. Relevant guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the Department for Education's non-statutory [mobile phone guidance](#) and [behaviour guidance](#). Further guidance that should be considered alongside this policy is [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#).

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 Staff

All staff (including teachers, support staff and supply staff) are responsible for consistently enforcing this policy.

Volunteers, or anyone else otherwise engaged by the school, must alert a member of staff if they witness, or are aware of, a breach of this policy.

The Trust Safeguarding Lead is responsible for monitoring and reviewing the policy every two years. The Headteacher is responsible for holding staff and pupils accountable for its implementation.

Staff will address any questions or concerns from parents/carers quickly, and clearly communicate the reasons for prohibiting the use of mobile phones.

4. Use of mobile phones by staff

The DfE's non-statutory mobile phone guidance says that staff should not use their own mobile phone for personal reasons in front of pupils throughout the school day.

4.1 Personal mobile phones

Staff (including volunteers, contractors and anyone else otherwise engaged by the school) are not permitted to use their personal mobile phone, while children are present and during contact time. Use of personal mobile phones must be restricted to non-contact time, and to areas of the school where pupils are not present (such as the staffroom).

There may be circumstances in which it's appropriate for a member of staff to have use of their phone during contact time for personal reasons. For instance (this list is non-exhaustive):

- For emergency contact by their child, or their child's school
- In the case of acutely ill dependents or family members

The headteacher will decide on a case-by-basis whether to allow for special arrangements.

If special arrangements are not deemed necessary, school staff can use the school office number 01204 333500 as a point of emergency contact.

4.2 Data protection

Staff must not use their personal mobile phones to process personal data, or any other confidential school information, including entering such data into generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools such as chatbots (e.g. ChatGPT and Google Bard). Please see more detailed guidance in FA1 Data Protection policy, Online Safety policy, Social Media policy, and Use of AI policy.

4.3 Safeguarding

Staff must not give their personal contact details to parents/carers or pupils, including connecting through social media and messaging apps.

Staff must avoid publicising their contact details on any social media platform or website, to avoid unwanted contact by parents/carers or pupils.

Staff must not use their personal mobile phones to take photographs or recordings of pupils, their work, or anything else that could identify a pupil. If it's necessary to take photos or recordings as part of a lesson/school trip/activity, this must be done using school equipment.

4.4 Using personal mobiles for work purposes

In some circumstances, it may be appropriate for staff to use personal mobile phones for work. Such circumstances may include, but are not limited to:

- Issuing homework, rewards or sanctions
- Use of multi-factor authentication
- Emergency evacuations or invacuations
- Supervising off-site trips
- Supervising residential visits

In these circumstances, staff will:

- Use their mobile phones in an appropriate and professional manner, in line with our staff code of conduct
- Not use their phones to take photographs or recordings of pupils, their work, or anything else that could identify a pupil
- Refrain from using their phones to contact parents/carers. If necessary, contact must be made via the school office

4.5 Sanctions

Staff that fail to adhere to this policy may face disciplinary action. See the trust's staff disciplinary policy for more information.

5. Use of mobile phones by pupils

The DfE's non-statutory mobile phone guidance says that pupils should not use mobile phones throughout the school day.

Pupils should not use their mobile phones during the school day, including during lessons, in the time between lessons, at breaktimes and at lunchtimes.

At St. Peter's Smithills Dean CE Primary School the vast majority of pupils will not be allowed their mobile phones on the school premises at all. The only exceptions to this are Y6 pupils whose parents have given permission for them to walk to school and/or home again after school has finished. For their own safety, these children are allowed to bring their phones with them to ensure they are contactable, or can phone parents in case of emergency on their way to and from school. However, all mobile phones must be switched off (not on airplane mode or silent) before they set foot on school grounds and must not be switched on again until they leave school grounds. They must hand phones into the office in the morning and will only be allowed them again at the end of the day, or when they leave school, for example, if going to an appointment or if they are ill and sent home.

Any Y6 child who does not follow these guidelines will not be allowed to bring their phone to school at all.

5.1 Use of smartwatches by pupils

The DfE's [non-statutory mobile phone guidance](#) includes in the term 'mobile phones' all devices with communications and smart technology that the school chooses to include in their policy.

Smartwatches are wristwatches with smart technology in them. They can be used to tell the time, send and receive text and voice messages, make calls and listen to music. Some smart watches have wellness and health-related features.

At St. Peter's Smithills Dean CE Primary School no child should wear a watch capable of sending or receiving messages, accessing the internet or taking photos. If a child is found wearing one of these watches it will be confiscated and given back to the child's parents.

5.2 Exceptions for special circumstances

The school may permit pupils to use a mobile phone or SmartWatch in school, due to exceptional circumstances. This could include children who are walking to and from school, children with diabetes who need a Smartwatch/Phone to monitor their blood/sugar levels or young carers who might need to keep in contact with whoever they are caring for. This will be considered on a case-by-case basis. To request such permission, pupils or parents/carers should contact Matt Harding (Headteacher).

Any pupils who are given permission must then adhere to the school's code of conduct / acceptable use agreement for mobile phone use (see appendix 1).

5.3 Sanctions

Mobile Phone Confiscation

Schools are permitted to confiscate mobile phones and similar devices from pupils under [Sections 91](#) and [94](#) of the Education and Inspections Act 2006.

Where a mobile phone is confiscated, it will be switched off and stored securely in the school office. The phone will not be returned directly to the pupil. Parents/carers will be required to collect the phone from school as soon as possible.

In exceptional circumstances, the school may return the phone to the pupil where withholding it would place the pupil at risk of a safeguarding concern. Where this applies, parents/carers will be expected to contact the school as soon as possible to discuss the circumstances surrounding the confiscation.

Headteachers have the authority to confiscate mobile phones and similar devices for a proportionate period of time, in accordance with the [DfE guidance on mobile phones in schools](#).

Mobile Phone Use and the Behaviour Policy

The school's response to mobile phone use is consistent with its wider behaviour policy. The use of a mobile phone in breach of the school's expectations will be treated as a behaviour matter and may result in appropriate sanctions, in line with the school's behaviour policy.

Phones Containing Inappropriate Content

If a phone is confiscated because the school has concerns that it may contain inappropriate content, or because there is reason to suspect that it has been used in connection with inappropriate behaviour, the phone will remain securely with the school.

In these circumstances, the phone will be retained until a parent/carer attends school to discuss the matter.

Any examination of the phone's contents will take place in the presence of the Headteacher or an appropriate senior leader and will be handled in accordance with the school's safeguarding and behaviour procedures.

In every case, the sanction given will be reasonable and proportionate.

The school will also consider whether:

- There are any relevant special circumstances (for example, age, religious requirements, special educational needs, disability)
- The pupil's behaviour may indicate they may be suffering, or at risk of, harm. If this is suspected, staff will follow the appropriate procedure set out in Part 1 of [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)

Certain types of conduct, bullying or harassment can be classified as criminal conduct. The school takes such conduct extremely seriously and will involve the police or other agencies as appropriate.

Such conduct includes, but is not limited to:

- Sexting (consensual and non-consensual sharing nude or semi-nude images or videos)
- Upskirting
- Threats of violence or assault
- Abusive calls, emails, social media posts or texts directed at someone on the basis of someone's ethnicity, religious beliefs or sexual orientation

6. Use of mobile phones by parents/carers, volunteers and visitors

Parents/carers, visitors and volunteers (including governors and contractors) must adhere to this policy as it relates to staff if they are on the school site during the school day.

This means:

- Not taking pictures or recordings of pupils, unless it's at a public event (such as a school fair), or of their own child
- Using any photographs or recordings for personal use only, and not posting on social media without consent
- Not using phones in lessons, or when working with pupils

Parents/carers, visitors and volunteers will be informed of the rules for mobile phone use when they sign in at reception or attend a public event at school. They must read and sign the volunteer code of conduct as set out in our Educational Visits policy.

Parents/carers or volunteers supervising school trips or residential visits must not:

- Use their phone to make contact with other parents/carers
- Take photos or recordings of pupils, their work, or anything else that could identify a pupil

Parents/carers or volunteers supervising trips are also responsible for enforcing the school's policy for pupils using their phones, as set out in section 5 above, but must refer any sanctions to a member of staff, as they do not have the power to search or confiscate devices.

Parents/carers must use the school office as the first point of contact if they need to get in touch with their child during the school day. They must not try to contact their child on their personal mobile during the school day.

7. Loss, theft or damage

Pupils bringing mobile phones to school must ensure that the phones are appropriately labelled and are stored securely when not in use. They must be kept in the school office where they can be stored securely.

Pupils must secure their mobile 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.

The school accepts no responsibility for mobile phones that are lost, damaged or stolen on school premises or transport, during school visits or trips, or while pupils are travelling to and from school.

Parents/carers and pupils will be aware of this when they sign the consent allowing them to bring a phone into school.

Confiscated phones will be stored in the school office in a secure location. If phones are confiscated by the school, they will become responsible for the phone and will be held responsible for loss, theft or damage.

Lost phones should be returned to the school office or Mr Harding. The school will then attempt to contact the owner.

8. Monitoring and review

The school is committed to ensuring that this policy has a positive impact on pupils' education, behaviour and welfare. When reviewing the policy, the school will take into account:

- Feedback from parents/carers and pupils
- Feedback from staff
- Records of behaviour and safeguarding incidents
- Relevant advice from the Department for Education, the local authority and any other relevant organisations
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If there are any concerns regarding this policy, these should be brought to the attention of the Trust Safeguarding Lead in a timely manner.

9. Appendix 1: Code of conduct pupils allowed to bring their phones to school due to exceptional circumstances

Code of conduct

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

1. You may not use your mobile phone during lessons, unless the teacher specifically allows you to.
2. Phones must be switched off (not just put on Airplane mode or 'silent').
3. You may not use your mobile phone in the toilets or changing rooms. This is to protect the privacy and welfare of other pupils.
4. You cannot take photos or recordings (either video or audio) of school staff or other pupils without their consent.
5. Avoid sharing your contact details with people you don't know, and don't share other people's contact details without their consent.
6. Don't share your phone's password(s) or access code(s) with anyone else.
7. 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
8. Don't use your phone to send or receive anything that may be criminal. For instance, by 'sexting'.
9. Rules on bullying, harassment and intimidation apply to how you use your mobile phone even when you aren't in school.
10. Don't use vulgar, obscene or derogatory language while on the phone or when using social media. This language is not permitted under the school's behaviour policy.
11. Don't use your phone to view or share pornography or other harmful content.
12. You must comply with a request by a member of staff to switch off, or hand over, a phone. Refusal to comply is a breach of the school's behaviour policy and will be dealt with accordingly.
13. Mobile phones are not permitted in any internal or external exam or test environment. If you have a mobile phone, you will be asked to store it appropriately, or turn it over to an exam invigilator, before entering the test room. Bringing a phone into the test room can result in your exam being declared invalid.

10. Appendix 2: Permission form allowing a pupil to bring their phone to school

PUPIL DETAILS	
Pupil name:	
Year group/class:	
Parent/carers name(s):	

The school has agreed to allow to bring their mobile phone to school because they:

(Delete as applicable)

- Travel to and from school alone
- Are a young carer
- Need the phone to support their medical needs
- Are attending a school trip or residential where use of mobile phones will be allowed
- Attend a before- or after-school activity where a mobile phone is required for the activity, or to contact parents/carers
- Other:

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Pupils who bring a mobile phone to school must abide by the school's policy on the use of mobile phones, and its code of conduct.

The school reserves the right to revoke permission if a pupil does not abide by the policy.

Parent/carers signature: _____

Pupil signature (where appropriate): _____

FOR SCHOOL USE ONLY	
Authorised by:	
Date:	

11. Appendix 3: Template mobile phone information slip for visitors

Use of mobile phones and similar devices in our school

- Please keep your mobile phone on silent/vibrate while on the school grounds
- Please do not use phones where pupils are present. If you must use your phone, you may go to the staffroom.
- Do not take photos or recordings of pupils (unless it is your own child), or staff
- Do not use your phone in lessons, or when working with pupils

The school accepts no responsibility for phones that are lost, damaged or stolen while you are on the school grounds.

A full copy of our mobile phone policy is available from the school office.

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