
Mobile Phones in Schools Policy

Swanwick School and Sports College

Version 5

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This document will be reviewed annually and sooner when significant changes are made to the law.

Guidance on strategic leadership and the governance of maintained schools and academy trusts can be found here:

[Maintained schools: governance guide - GOV.UK](#)

[Academy trusts: governance guide - GOV.UK](#)

Contents

1. Introduction 3

2. Scope and Responsibilities 3

3. Definitions 3

4. National Context and Expectations..... 3

5. Policy Aims 4

6. Expectations for Pupils..... 4

7. Reasonable Exceptions 4

8. Expectations for Staff..... 4

10. Managing Breaches of the Policy 4

11. Safeguarding Considerations 5

12. Communication of the Policy..... 5

13. Monitoring and Review..... 5

14. Related Policies 6

Annex A: Mobile Phones in School - Information for Parents and Carers 7

Annex B1: Pupil FAQs VERSION 1..... 9

Annex C: Pupil FAQs VERSION 2..... 10

Annex C1: Pupil FAQs VERSION 3..... 11

1. Introduction

In line with Department for Education guidance, the school operates as a mobile phone-free environment by default during the school day.

We recognise that digital technology can offer valuable benefits for teaching, learning and school operations. However, personal mobile phones and similar devices should be managed carefully so they do not negatively affect learning, behaviour, safeguarding or wellbeing.

This policy sets out the school's use of mobile phones and similar devices during the school day. It reflects the Department for Education Mobile Phones in Schools Guidance and supports the creation of a calm, safe, and focused

2. Scope and Responsibilities

Overall responsibility for the implementation and oversight of this policy rests with the Headteacher, supported by the Senior Leadership Team. The governing body will have oversight of the policy and will seek assurance that it is being implemented consistently and reviewed in line with national guidance and the school's safeguarding and behaviour responsibilities. All staff are responsible for the consistent day-to-day application of this policy.

This policy applies to all pupils, staff, visitors, volunteers and contractors of the school where relevant.

It applies throughout the school day and while pupils are on the school site under the school's supervision, including lessons, transitions, breaktimes, lunchtimes and any agreed before- or after-school provision, unless different arrangements have been communicated in advance.

For educational visits, residential trips, fixtures and off-site activities, the school will set out specific mobile phone arrangements in advance, taking account of safeguarding, supervision, travel and communication needs.

Visitors, volunteers and contractors should avoid using mobile phones in pupil areas unless this has been agreed for a specific school-related purpose.

3. Definitions

Devices with mobile phone functionality are covered by this policy even if they are branded or marketed differently. For the purposes of this policy, 'mobile phones' include:

- Smartphones and mobile phones
- Devices capable of sending or receiving messages
- Devices that access mobile networks
- Devices capable of recording audio or video
- Smartwatches or wearable devices with communication, camera, recording, internet or notification functions

This policy does not apply to:

- School-owned devices used for learning
- Laptops or tablets approved under a Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) scheme (where applicable)

4. National Context and Expectations

The Department for Education expects all schools to be mobile phone-free environments by default, with any exceptions being limited and clearly justified.

This policy has been developed with regard to:

- [Mobile phones in schools \(DfE\)](#)

- [Behaviour in Schools guidance](#)
- [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)

Ofsted Considerations

Ofsted inspectors may consider whether the school has a clear and well-defined mobile phone policy, how effectively it is communicated to staff, pupils, and parents, how consistently it is applied in practice, and the extent to which it has a positive impact on pupils' behaviour, learning, and wellbeing.

5. Policy Aims

This policy aims to reduce distraction and disruption to learning, support positive behaviour and calm routines, reduce safeguarding risks associated with mobile phone use, promote positive wellbeing, and provide clarity and consistency for pupils and staff across the school.

6. Expectations for Pupils

Pupils are not permitted to use mobile phones or similar devices at any point during the school day, from arrival on the school site until they leave the site at the end of the day. This includes lessons, transitions, breaktimes and lunchtimes.

- Mobile phones must be fully switched off and handed in to the agreed member of staff or collection point on arrival;

Pupils are expected to follow this requirement consistently, without negotiation. In emergencies, pupils should speak to staff. The school will contact parents where required.

Mobile phones brought onto the school site remain the responsibility of the pupil unless formally handed in under the school's agreed storage arrangements. The school is not responsible for loss, damage or theft where pupils have not followed the required procedures.

7. Reasonable Exceptions

Pupils may be allowed to take their mobile device on an off-site activity, trip or residential. This will be assessed on an individual basis and will be the decision of the lead member of staff. Parents/Carers and pupils will always be informed in advance as to whether mobile devices will be permitted or not.

8. Expectations for Staff

Staff are expected to understand and follow this policy, apply it consistently and calmly, model positive behaviour, adhere to agreed procedures for managing breaches, and avoid making informal or individual exceptions.

Staff mobile phone use during the school day should align with the school's staff code of conduct and safeguarding expectations.

Staff should not use personal mobile phones in front of pupils during the school day unless this is necessary for an agreed school purpose, emergency, safeguarding matter or reasonable adjustment.

Staff will support pupils in understanding and adjusting to this policy, particularly during periods of review or change.

10. Managing Breaches of the Policy

Breaches of this policy will be managed in line with the school's Behaviour Policy and established escalation procedures. Responses will be proportionate, consistent, support learning and behaviour improvement, and avoid confrontation where possible.

Where a mobile phone or similar device is seen, heard or used in breach of this policy, staff will follow the school's agreed behaviour procedures. This may include confiscation of the device, secure storage by the school, and return at the end of the school day or to a parent/carer, depending on the circumstances and the school's published procedures.

Repeated or serious breaches may result in further action in line with the Behaviour Policy. Staff should not routinely search the content of a pupil's device. Any search, screening, or confiscation must be managed in line with the school's procedures and relevant statutory provisions in the Education Act 2011 and DfE Searching, Screening and Confiscation guidance.

11. Safeguarding Considerations

Mobile phone use can introduce safeguarding risks, including:

- Unsupervised communication
- Recording and sharing of images or audio
- Online bullying or harassment
- Access to harmful or age-inappropriate content
- Rapid escalation of incidents through messaging, social media or group chats

The school will consider safeguarding and data-protection risks when deciding where pupil mobile phones and similar devices are stored. Storage locations should not be in offices, meeting rooms or other spaces where confidential or sensitive conversations may take place, as mobile phones and similar devices may retain listening, recording or sensor capability if they are not fully powered off.

Maintaining a mobile phone-free environment supports the school's safeguarding duties under Keeping Children Safe in Education, particularly in relation to online safety and child-on-child abuse, and helps reduce related risks.

12. Communication of the Policy

The school will:

- Publish this policy on the school website
- Communicate expectations clearly to pupils and parents/carers
- Reinforce the rationale behind the policy
- Provide opportunities for questions and clarification

Clear communication supports understanding, consistency, and compliance.

Where the school introduces or changes its mobile phone arrangements, leaders will ensure that pupils, parents, carers and staff are given clear information in advance. Expectations will be reinforced through assemblies, tutor time, staff briefings and parent communications.

Parents and carers are encouraged to reinforce expectations at home and use the school's usual communication routes if they need to contact their child during the school day. Pupils who need to contact home should speak to a member of staff, who will support them in line with school procedures.

13. Monitoring and Review

As a minimum, this policy will be formally reviewed on an annual basis. The policy will be monitored by senior leaders and updated as necessary to reflect changes in national guidance or the school's context.

Senior leaders will monitor the implementation and impact of this policy through behaviour records, safeguarding records, staff feedback, pupil voice, parent/carer feedback, and any incidents involving mobile phones or connected

devices. Feedback from pupils, staff, and parents may be used to inform future refinements and ensure the policy remains effective and appropriate.

The governing body will receive appropriate assurance that the policy is understood, applied consistently and reviewed in response to national guidance, safeguarding considerations and the school's context.

14. Related Policies

This policy should be read alongside:

- Behaviour Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- ICT Acceptable Use Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Searching, Screening and Confiscation Policy/procedures
- SEND Policy

Note on annexes: The annexes are optional supporting resources and should be adapted or removed according to the school's phase, context, and communication needs.

Annex A: Mobile Phones in School- Information for Parents and Carers

Our school aims to provide a calm, safe, and focused learning environment where all children can thrive. To support this, we follow Department for Education (DfE) guidance which states that schools should be mobile phone-free during the school day by default.

Why does the school restrict mobile phones?

Mobile phones can:

- Distract pupils from learning
- Disrupt lessons and social time
- Increase the risk of bullying or unkind behaviour
- Introduce safeguarding risks, such as unsupervised online contact or image sharing

By limiting mobile phone use during the school day, we help pupils focus on learning, enjoy positive social interactions, and stay safe.

What does this mean for pupils?

Pupils are not allowed to use mobile phones during the school day, from arrival on the school site until they leave at the end of the day. This includes lessons, transitions, breaktimes and lunchtime.

Our school uses a clear and consistent approach to managing mobile phones, which is applied equally to all pupils.

Pupils are allowed to bring mobile phones or similar devices onto the school site but must be fully switched off and handed in to the agreed member of staff on arrival. Silent, vibrate, sleep, locked or “Do Not Disturb” modes do not meet this requirement.

Where pupils are permitted to bring phones onto the school site, they remain the responsibility of the pupil unless formally handed in under the school’s agreed storage arrangements. The school is not responsible for loss, damage or theft where pupils do not follow the required procedures.

How does this support safeguarding?

Restricting mobile phone use supports our safeguarding responsibilities under Keeping Children Safe in Education. It helps reduce risks related to:

- Online safety
- Child-on-child abuse
- Inappropriate recording, audio capture, or sharing of images or messages

This is a preventative approach designed to protect all pupils.

What is expected of parents and carers?

Parents and carers play an important role in supporting this policy. We ask that you:

- Reinforce the school’s expectations with your child
- Use the school’s usual communication routes if you need to pass on urgent information or contact your child during the school day, rather than contacting pupils directly

This helps us maintain a consistent and calm environment for learning.

How is the policy enforced?

Staff apply the policy calmly and consistently, in line with the school’s Behaviour Policy. If a phone is seen, heard or used in breach of the policy, this may include confiscation, secure storage and return at the end of the school day

or to a parent/carer, depending on the school's published procedures. Repeated or serious misuse may lead to further action.

Where can I find the full policy?

The full Mobile Phones in Schools Policy is available on the school website. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the school - we are always happy to discuss our approach.

Annex B1: Pupil FAQs VERSION 1

Why do we not use phones in school?

School is for learning, playing, and spending time with friends. Phones can make it harder to concentrate or stay calm. When phones are not used, lessons are quieter, break times are happier, and everyone feels safer.

Can I bring my phone to school?

Some pupils are allowed to bring a phone. If you bring a phone, it must be fully switched off and kept where a teacher tells you.

Can I use my phone at break or lunch?

No. Break and lunchtime are for playing, talking with friends, and relaxing your mind.

What if I feel worried or unwell?

You do not need a phone. You can talk to your teacher or another adult in school at any time. Adults will help you and can contact home if needed.

Who can help me understand the rules?

Your teacher, teaching assistant, or another adult in school. You can always ask if you are unsure.

Annex C: Pupil FAQs VERSION 2

Why does the school restrict mobile phones?

The school follows national guidance which says schools should be mobile-phone-free during the school day. Phones can distract from learning, affect behaviour, and sometimes cause problems between pupils. Limiting phone use helps create a calm, safe, and focused environment for everyone.

Can I bring a phone to school?

Phones are allowed on site but they must be fully powered off and handed in to staff when you enter the building in the morning. Silent, vibrate, sleep, locked and “Do Not Disturb” modes do not count as fully powered off.

Why can't I use my phone at break or lunch?

Breaktimes are important for rest, movement, and socialising. Being phone-free encourages positive interactions, reduces online issues during the day, and helps everyone switch off.

What about emergencies?

If something urgent happens, staff can contact home or emergency services. Pupils should speak to a member of staff rather than using their own phone.

How does this help keep pupils safe?

Limiting phone use reduces risks linked to online safety, recording, audio capture, sharing images, harmful content, bullying, group chats and child-on-child issues during the school day. It also helps staff support pupils more effectively.

What if I'm worried or something isn't working?

Speak to a trusted member of staff. The school wants policies to be fair and workable, and feedback helps improve how things are done.

Annex C1: Pupil FAQs VERSION 3

Why does the school have phone rules?

The rules help everyone learn without distraction, stay calm and focused, and feel safe during the school day. Phones can sometimes make school harder, not easier.

Am I allowed to bring a phone to school?

This depends on the school's rules. If phones are allowed on site, they must be fully switched off, kept as the school says, and not used during the school day.

Why can't I use my phone at break or lunch?

Breaks are important for resting your brain, moving around, and talking face to face with others. Being phone-free helps reduce stress and problems online.

What if I need help or something goes wrong?

Adults in school are there to help you. If you feel unwell, anxious, unsafe, or overwhelmed, speak to a member of staff straight away.

What happens if I use my phone when I shouldn't?

Staff will speak calmly and clearly, follow the school rules, and be fair and consistent. Support is always offered to help you get it right next time.