



**Elms Bank**  
School & College

Excellence for All

# Mobile Phone Policy



Part of the

**Oak**



Learning Partnership

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## 1. Policy Statement

This policy sets out how the school will meet the Department for Education (DfE) expectation that all schools should be mobile phone-free environments by default, with use prohibited throughout the school day; including lessons, transitions, breaktimes and lunchtimes.

It aligns with the updated DfE Mobile phones in schools (2026) guidance requiring schools to prohibit the use of mobile phones and similar smart technology as part of a consistent behaviour framework.

The school does not accept any responsibility for loss or damages associated with the storage or confiscation of mobile phones or other electronic devices.

## 2. Purpose

The aims of this policy are to:

- Reduce distraction and disruption to learning caused by mobile phones.
- Minimise safeguarding risks, bullying, and exposure to harmful online content.
- Promote a calm, safe, and supportive educational environment.

## 3. Policy and Guidance

This policy is produced with the following DfE guidance in mind:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education (2025)
- DfE Mobile Phones in Schools (2026)
- Behaviour in Schools (2024)

This policy should be considered alongside:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Behaviour for Learning Policy
- Searching, Screening and Confiscation Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Medical Conditions Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct

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#### **4. Scope**

This policy applies to:

- All pupils during the entire school day (arrival to departure).
- All school premises including playgrounds, classrooms, corridors and dining areas.
- All devices with smart functionality: mobile phones, smart watches, and any device capable of messaging, notifications, audio/video recording, or internet access.

#### **5. Safeguarding**

Use of mobile phones in schools poses a significant safeguarding concern for pupils, including bullying and exploitation. The school reserves the right to search a pupil for banned items (see Searching, Screening and Confiscation Policy). The school has the legal right to check a pupil's mobile phone if they have "reasonable suspicion" the data is used to cause harm, disrupt education, or violate school rules. Staff can confiscate, search, and delete inappropriate content, without parental consent, to protect the safe environment of the school.

Electronic devices, including mobile phones, can contain files or data which relate to an offence, or which may cause harm to another person. This includes, but is not limited to, indecent images of children, pornography, abusive messages, images or videos, or evidence relating to suspected criminal behaviour.

As with all prohibited items, staff should first consider the appropriate safeguarding response if they find images, data or files on an electronic device that they reasonably suspect are likely to put a person at risk.

Staff may examine any data or files on an electronic device they have confiscated as a result of a search, if there is good reason to do so.

If the member of staff conducting the search suspects they may find an indecent image of a child (sometimes known as nude or semi-nude images), the member of staff should never intentionally view the image, and must never copy, print, share, store or save such images. When an incident might involve an indecent image of a child and/or video, the member of staff should confiscate the device, avoid looking at the device and refer the incident to the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy) as the most appropriate person to advise on the school's response.

Staff should use their best judgement and avoid deleting data which may form part of a criminal investigation.

## **6. Policy Expectations**

### **6.1. Pupil Expectations**

Pupils must not use, see, or hear mobile phones or smart devices at any point during the school day.

All mobile phones and / or smart watches must either be:

- Not brought onto the school site, or
- Handed in at the start of the school day for secure storage

Any breach of the policy will result in sanctions consistent with the behaviour policy (see Section 7).

### **6.2. Staff Expectations**

Staff must model appropriate behaviour by avoiding use of personal mobile phones in front of pupils, unless for emergency or operational reasons.

### **6.3. Parent/Carer Expectations**

Parents must support the school's phone-free environment by ensuring children do not bring phones or keep them switched off and stored appropriately. Parents should reinforce messages about safe and reduced social media use, supporting the School's policy.

Where parents need to contact their child during the school day, this should only be in urgent and exceptional circumstances. In such circumstances they should direct communications to the school office who will aim to facilitate contact.

## **7. Loss theft or damage**

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. The law protects staff from liability in any proceedings brought against them for any loss or damage to items they have confiscated as a sanction, providing they have acted lawfully.

The school actively discourages parents from providing expensive devices to pupils to bring into school. Where parents provide devices, the school strongly advises that protective cases are used and that phones are labelled appropriately.

## **8. Exceptions & Reasonable Adjustments**

The school recognises that some pupils may require phone access under exceptional circumstances, including:

- Medical needs (e.g., diabetes monitoring via smartphone).
- Disabilities or SEND where adjustments are essential.
- Unique safeguarding or family circumstances (e.g., young carers).

All exceptions must be:

Approved by the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or Headteacher;  
Documented in a pupil's individual care plan or risk assessment.

## 9. Residential and Off-Site Activities

For off-site visits, trips and residential activities, the school's mobile-free expectation continues to apply unless a specific, time-limited exception has been agreed in advance.

- Mobile phones must not be used, seen or heard during trips or residential activities unless explicitly authorised by the Visit Leader or Headteacher.
- Any permitted access (for example, to contact family at an agreed time) must be:
  - Clearly planned and risk assessed
  - Supervised by staff
  - Time-limited and purpose-specific
- Pupils must not photograph, film or audio-record staff, pupils or members of the public at any time.
- Safeguarding, behaviour and recording expectations apply as they do on the school site, and misuse of devices will be treated as unwanted behaviour or a Significant Incident where appropriate.

Leaders may impose stricter controls on mobile phone access during trips or residential activities where required to maintain safety, regulation and positive relationships

## 10. Sanctions and Consequences

Sanctions and consequences align with our school's behaviour for learning policy and may include:

- **Confiscation of the device**, stored securely
- **Requesting parents to collect devices** where incidents are significant, persistent or repeated.
- **Loss of privileges** linked to repair and restoration of trust
- **Behaviour intervention** points recorded in line with school systems

- **Restorative conversations** or meetings to reflect on impact and repair relationships
- **Parental/carer meetings or contact** where patterns of misuse or safeguarding concerns arise

Where misuse involves recording, safeguarding concerns, bullying, or persistent refusal to follow instructions, it may be escalated to a Significant Incident. In such cases, the response may include an internal reflection period, supported by familiar staff, prior to restorative actions and further intervention being agreed.

Confiscated devices will be returned only to parents/carers where appropriate, in line with school procedures and individual circumstances

## **11. Communication of the Policy**

The school will ensure that the mobile phone policy is:

- Published and accessible to pupils, staff, and parents.
- Reinforced through assemblies, tutor time, signage, and parent updates.
- Reviewed annually as part of the behaviour policy review process.

## **12. Leadership oversight**

School Leaders and the Trust will evaluate:

- Whether the school's mobile phone policy is clear, communicated and understood.
- How consistently the policy is applied by staff and pupils.
- The impact of the policy on behaviour, learning and wellbeing.
- Consistency of implementation.

## **13. Monitoring and Review**

The policy will be reviewed every 12 months by the Senior Leadership Team and the Board of Governors, considering:

- Feedback from staff, pupils and parents
- Safeguarding updates
- Changes in DfE or Ofsted requirements



## **Appendix A:**

### **Staff Mobile Phone and Smart Device Use Protocol**

#### **1. Purpose**

This protocol sets out clear expectations for staff use of personal mobile phones and smart devices.

It ensures safeguarding, effective supervision and professional conduct, and supports consistent modelling of the school's mobile-phone-free environment.

This protocol applies to:

- All teaching and support staff
- Volunteers, trainees and visitors where applicable
- All school premises and school-led activities

This protocol must be read alongside the Staff Code of Conduct, Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, Behaviour for Learning Policy, and Data Protection Policy.

#### **2. Core Expectation**

Personal mobile phone use by staff during the school day should be exceptional and minimal.

Staff must not use personal mobile phones during the school day unless:

- A genuine emergency arises requiring urgent personal contact, or
- An immediate call to emergency services (999) is required

All use must follow the protocol below.

#### **3. Personal Emergency Calls**

The school recognises that, in exceptional circumstances, staff may need to take a personal emergency call.

Where this is necessary:

- A member of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) must be informed as soon as possible
- Phones must be kept on vibrate only
- Phones must be kept on the staff member's person, not left unattended
- Staff must not answer or make calls in the presence of pupils
- Calls must be taken away from pupil areas, such as:
  - A nearby office
  - A staff workroom

Staff must ensure that pupils remain appropriately supervised in line with school procedures before leaving the area to take a call. Personal mobile phones must not be kept on or used for routine, convenience, or non-urgent reasons.

#### **4. Emergency Services (999) Calls**

Where there is an **immediate risk to life or serious injury**:

- Staff may use their personal mobile phone to contact 999
- If the 999 call relates to the health or safety of a pupil, staff member or visitor, the member of staff must remain with the person wherever possible so that the individual can follow the call handler's advice
- Staff must follow the school's emergency response procedures, including Elms Bank Emergency Protocols (Code Blue)

A member of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) must be informed as soon as it is safe to do so.

#### **5. Use Outside of Emergencies**

Outside of genuine emergency situations:

- Staff must not use personal mobile phones during the school day
- Phones must:
  - Be switched off or on silent
  - Be stored securely
  - Remain out of sight at all times

Staff must not keep phones switched on "just in case".

#### **6. Photography, Recording and Data Protection**

Staff must never use personal devices to:

- Photograph or video pupils
- Audio-record pupils or conversations
- Capture behaviour incidents
- Store or access pupil information

All recording must be completed using authorised school equipment only, in line with safeguarding and data protection policies.

#### **7. Communication with Pupils and Families**

Staff must not:

- Contact pupils via personal mobile phones
- Communicate with parents/carers using personal devices

- Share personal contact details
- Use personal messaging or social media platforms for school communication

All communication must take place via approved school systems only.

## **8. Smart Watches and Wearable Technology**

- Smart watches or wearable devices capable of messaging, recording or internet access are treated the same as mobile phones.
- Notifications must be disabled.
- Devices must not be used during pupil-facing time.

## **9. Visibility and Storage of Phones**

- Personal mobile phones must be kept out of sight at all times
- Phones must not be visible on desks or work surfaces, including in offices
- This applies to shared offices, meeting rooms, and any area pupils may pass through

Staff are responsible for the safe storage of their own devices. The school accepts no responsibility for loss, damage or theft.

## **10. Staff Breaks and Outdoor Areas**

Staff must remain mindful of pupil visibility at all times.

- Staff using the garden area near the SALT Room during breaks must not use or view personal mobile phones
- Although this is a staff break area, pupils may be able to see staff from nearby spaces
- Staff must continue to model the school's mobile-phone-free culture in all visible areas

## **11. Trips and Off-Site Activities**

During trips and residential activities:

- Staff personal mobile phone use must remain exceptional and minimal
- Phones may only be used for emergency purposes
- Staff must remain fully attentive to supervision responsibilities at all times



## 12. School Mobile Phone

The school provides designated mobile phones for operational and safeguarding purposes. These devices may be used, for example, to support internship programmes by enabling staff to maintain appropriate contact with students and fulfil safeguarding responsibilities.

All school mobile phones are clearly labelled and must only be used for authorised school purposes. Separate residential phones are available to support appropriate communication with parents/carers where required.

The use of school mobile phones is strictly governed by the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, Data Protection Policy, and relevant assessment protocols. Photographs may be taken using school mobile phones to evidence learning and progress; however, all such use must be appropriate, proportionate, and compliant with these policies.

