



Mobile Phone Policy



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1. Introduction and aims

Mobile phones are part of daily life. In school, learning and safety come first. This policy sets clear, simple rules for mobile phones on site and on school activities. It applies to pupils, staff, parents, carers, visitors, and volunteers.

Core aims

- Promote safe, responsible conduct.
- Prevent disruption and distraction.
- Protect children and personal data.
- Set out who may carry a device, when, and how it is stored.
- Explain consequences for misuse and how incidents are logged.
- Provide reasonable adjustments for medical, SEND, or caring needs.

Risks addressed

- Child protection concerns, including image sharing and bullying.
- Data protection breaches.
- Loss, theft, or damage to devices.
- Disruption to teaching and pastoral care.

Definitions

- "Mobile phone" covers smartphones and basic handsets.
- "Similar devices" includes smartwatches, earbuds, tablets, and any device that can call, message, record, or connect to the internet.
- "School day" means from arrival on site to departure, including lessons, transitions, breaks, clubs, and wraparound on site.

Linked Policies: Behaviour; Child Protection & Safeguarding; Online Safety; Data Protection; Staff Code of Conduct; Educational Visits.

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

- 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 Headteacher is responsible for monitoring the policy and holding staff and pupils accountable for its implementation. Waterton Academy Trust is responsible for reviewing the policy annually.
- 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 pupils are present. 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. Staff should make the headteacher aware and seek permission in these circumstances.

If special arrangements are not deemed necessary, school staff can use the school office number 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). More detailed guidance on data protection can be found in the Data Protection Policy and within the ICT Acceptable Use 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 which 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 aren't limited to:

- To use multi-factor authentication
- Emergency evacuations
- 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

4.5 Work phones

Some members of staff are provided with a mobile phone by the school for work purposes, for example the DSL. Only authorised staff are permitted to use school mobile 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.

4.6 Sanctions

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

5. Use of mobile phones by pupils

Pupils must not use or access mobile phones on site at any time. This applies on trips and residentials, as well as at after school clubs or during wraparound care.

The school operates a leave-at-home policy.

In exceptional cases, the school may permit a hand-in on arrival and collect at departure arrangement. Parents apply using Appendix 1 and this is approved by the headteacher. Any approval is time limited and reviewed each term. The school may withdraw approval if conditions are breached.

Use of smartwatches by pupils

Smartwatches are prohibited throughout the school premises during school hours, including classrooms, corridors, playgrounds, and other school facilities.

6. Responsibilities

- Pupils: It is the responsibility of the pupil to adhere to this policy, and where permission is granted, hand in their mobile phones upon arrival at school.
- Teachers and Staff: Teachers and staff members are responsible for enforcing this policy and ensuring that pupils comply with the guidelines regarding mobile phone usage. We will follow this policy with rigour and consistency.
- Parents/Carers: Parents have an important role in supporting the school's policy on prohibiting the use of mobile phones and should be encouraged to reinforce and discuss the policy at home as appropriate, including the risks associated with mobile phone use and the benefits of a mobile phone-free environment. The school will communicate this policy to parents and provide information about its implementation and rationale.

7. Education and Awareness

- Education: Pupils will be educated about the reasons behind this policy and the importance of limiting mobile phone usage during school hours; they will also be aware of the consequences and sanctions for not following it, at the start of each school year and again, where appropriate, at regular intervals.
- As part of their PSHE, RSE and Online Safety lessons, pupils will be taught the risks that are associated with the use of mobile phones, both in school and more broadly, to ensure they understand the decision being taken by their school to prohibit the use of mobile phones throughout the school day. These risks can include a loss of focus in lessons, classroom disruption and an increase in bullying. Pupils will be taught the benefits of having a mobile phone-free environment and be encouraged to see such an environment as desirable and valuable, which also supports our mental wellbeing as a result of less screen time. This will help to create intrinsic motivation to support the school culture.
- Parental Communication: Where parents need to contact their child during the school day, they should be directed to the school office, where staff should be aware of the school's policy on relaying messages and facilitating contact. Where parents have questions or concerns, staff should address these in a timely manner and clearly communicate the reasons for prohibiting the use of mobile phones.

8. Searching and Confiscating Mobile Devices

Headteachers, or staff they authorise, have a statutory power to search a pupil or their possessions where they have reasonable grounds to suspect that the pupil is in possession of a prohibited item, as set out in legislation (Education Act 1996) or any item identified in the school rules as an item that may be searched for.

We identify mobile phones and similar devices as something that may be searched for as part of this policy, in conjunction with our behaviour policy. Staff should refer to the [searching, screening and confiscation in schools](#) guidance regarding searching a pupil.

9. Sanctions

If we believe a pupil has not followed this policy and is in possession of their mobile phone, during the school day, then this device will be confiscated, until the end of the school day and the pupil's parents/carers will be contacted. This will be done proportionately and appropriately, based on the individual pupil's actions, needs etc. The school's behaviour policy and sanction system will be followed like normal. In each case, the sanction given must 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

10. 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 or messaging apps e.g. WhatsApp, 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.

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 which 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 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.

11. 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 as set out above. 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.

We will ensure that pupils and parents/carers are aware of the disclaimer above by providing them a copy of this policy and making it available on the school website.

Confiscated phones will be stored in the school office in a secure location.

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

12. Monitoring and Review

The school is committed to ensuring that this policy has a positive impact of pupils' education, behaviour and welfare. When reviewing the policy, Waterton Academy Trust 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

If there are any concerns regarding this policy, these should be brought to the attention of the Headteacher in a timely manner.

Appendix 1: Permission form allowing a pupil to bring their phone to school

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

I would like to seek permission for the pupil named above to bring mobile phone to school because they:

[please tick]

☐	Travel to and from school alone
☐	Are a young carer
☐	Need the phone to support their medical needs
☐	Attend a before- or after-school activity where a mobile phone is required to contact parents/carers

Please note:

- Pupils who bring a mobile phone to school must abide by the school's policy on the use of mobile phones, and hand their phone to their class teacher on arrival.
- The school will not accept any responsibility for loss or damage regarding individual devices and it is the child and/or parents/carers decision to bring their phone into school.
- Your child's phone should be appropriately marked so that they can recognise it.
- The school reserves the right revoke permission if a pupil does not abide by the policy.

Parent/carers signature: _____

FOR SCHOOL USE ONLY	
Authorised by:	
Date:	

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Document Name:	Mobile Phone Policy		
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