



# Mobile Phone Policy

## 2024 - 2026

Embrace Multi Academy Trust strives to maintain and improve good provision and outcomes at each of its member schools. Based upon our shared ethos and our values of wisdom, collaboration, respect, integrity, inclusivity, and compassion, we aim to support the learning and development of every person within the trust and our policies are written from this perspective.

Version	Approval Level	Document History	Date	Review Period
V1	Trust Leader	Approved	27/08/2024	2 Years

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## 1. Introduction and aims

At St Peter's 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 headteacher is responsible for monitoring the policy and holding staff and pupils accountable for its implementation. The policy will be reviewed every two years.

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/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 or PPA room).

There may be circumstances in which it is 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.

### 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 (eg ChatGPT and Google Bard).

More detailed guidance on data protection can be found in the trust data protection policy and acceptable use of IT 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 is 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:

- To issue homework, rewards or sanctions
- To use multi-factor authentication
- Emergency evacuations
- Supervising off-site trips
- Supervising residential visits (if possible, it is better to provide a school mobile instead, or a SIM card with a separate number)

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 which 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 school'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.

Pupils at St Peter's are not permitted to bring mobile phones in to school.

Older Pupils (Year 5 and 6) who have brought their phones in because they need them to contact parents when walking home will give them in to their class teacher who will store them safely during the day and return them at home time. It is the responsibility of the child to hand the phone in and ask for it at the end of the day.

#### 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.

Pupils at St Peter's are not permitted to wear smart watches, which can take pictures in school at any time.

## 5.2 Exceptions for special circumstances

The school may permit pupils to use a mobile phone in school, due to exceptional circumstances. This will be considered on a case-by-case basis. To request such permission, pupils or parents/carers should contact the 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

All members of the community are informed of the need to report policy breaches or concerns in line with existing school policies and procedures. This includes child protection, behaviour policy, whistleblowing and online safety policies.

Where pupils breach this policy:

- appropriate sanctions and/or pastoral/welfare support will be implemented in line with our behaviour policy
- concerns will be shared with parents/carers as appropriate
- we will respond in line with our child protection policy, if there is a concern that a child is at risk of harm.
- After any investigations are completed, leadership staff will debrief, identify lessons learnt and implement any policy or curriculum changes, as required.
- We require staff, parents/carers and pupils to work in partnership with us to resolve issues.
- All members of the community will respect confidentiality and the need to follow the official procedures for reporting concerns.
- Pupils' parents and staff will be informed of our complaints procedure and staff will be made aware of the whistleblowing procedure.
- If we are unsure how to proceed with an incident or concern, the DSL (or a deputy) or Headteacher will seek advice from the local authority or other agencies, as appropriate in accordance with our child protection policy.

Staff have the power to search pupils' phones in specific circumstances, as set out in the DfE's guidance on searching, screening and confiscation. The DfE guidance allows schools to search a pupil's phone if there is a good reason to do so (such as having reason to believe the phone contains pornographic images, or if it is being/has been used to commit an offence or cause harm to another person).

In each case, the sanction given must be reasonable and proportionate. The school will also consider whether:

- There are any relevant special circumstances (eg 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 is 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.

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 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 handed in to the class teacher (Year 5 and 6)

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.

The school will make sure pupils and parents/carers are aware of the disclaimer above by publishing the policy on our website and providing a copy of this policy to new pupils.

## 8. 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, 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

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

**9. Appendix 1: [Code of conduct/acceptable use agreement] for pupils allowed to bring their mobile phones to school due to exceptional circumstances**

**Code of Conduct/Acceptable Use Agreement**

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

1. Phones must be switched off (not just put on 'silent') and handed to the class teacher.
2. 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.

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

PUPIL DETAILS	
<b>Pupil name:</b>	
<b>Year group/class:</b>	
<b>Parent/carer(s) name(s):</b>	

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

- 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 (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

Pupils who bring a mobile phone to school must abide by the school's policy and code of conduct/acceptable use agreement on the use of mobile phones. School staff have the power to search pupils' phones in specific circumstances, as set out in the DfE's guidance on searching, screening and confiscation.

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

Parent/carer signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Pupil signature (where appropriate): \_\_\_\_\_

FOR SCHOOL USE ONLY	
<b>Authorised by:</b>	
<b>Date:</b>	

## 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 staff room or an office if agreed.
- 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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## 12. Appendix 4: Additions Required for Compliance with Updated DfE Mobile Phone Guidance (2026)

This appendix outlines the policy elements that will be included in the next full policy review to ensure full alignment with the Department for Education's updated Mobile Phones in Schools guidance (2026) **to be adopted from April 2026**.

### 1. Phone-Free Environment (Mandatory Policy Requirement)

The school will operate as a mobile phone-free environment by default, prohibiting the use of mobile phones throughout the entire school day, including lessons, transitions, breaktimes and lunchtimes. Anything other than a phone-free environment must be an *exception only*.

- "Our school is a mobile phone-free environment by default. Mobile phones and similar smart devices must not be used, seen or heard at any point during the school day."

### 2. Inclusion of All Smart Technology with Similar Functionality

The DfE guidance defines mobile phones to include all devices capable of sending/receiving messages or notifications, or recording audio/video (e.g., smartwatches, wearable tech).

- "This policy applies to all smart devices with communication/recording functionality (e.g., smartwatches, wearable devices), unless explicitly excepted for SEND or medical needs."

### 3. Consistency of Implementation Across the School

Ofsted will evaluate how consistently staff and pupils understand and follow the phone-free policy across the day.

- Clear expectations ensuring 100% consistency across all staff and contexts.
- Staff must model adherence by not using personal mobile phones in front of pupils except where necessary.
- Leaders must regularly monitor consistency through walkthroughs, pupil voice, and staff feedback.

### 4. Communication Requirements

We recognise the importance of clear communication to pupils, parents and staff.

- The mobile phone policy will be communicated through:
  - Website visibility (policies page).
  - Parent newsletters and start-of-year briefings.
  - Pupil assemblies and form-time reminders.
  - Classroom signage and site posters.
- Parents will be informed that the school operates a default phone-free environment and that consistent reinforcement and support of this at home is expected.

### 5. Reasonable Adjustments and Equalities Act Duties

The DfE stresses the need to make reasonable adjustments for pupils with disabilities, medical needs (eg, diabetes monitoring), SEND or caring responsibilities.

- Reasonable adjustments may be made in accordance with the Equality Act 2010, with examples such as:
  - Diabetes monitoring via connected apps
  - Emergency access for young carers
  - SEND-related communication needs

## 6. Behaviour Policy Alignment and Clear Sanctions

Mobile phone rules will be integrated within the school's behaviour policy, including proportionate sanctions, confiscation rules, and search powers.

- Explicit link to behaviour policy.
- Clear confiscation procedures (duration, storage, collection).
- Clarification of when searching a device may be permitted, referencing DfE Searching, Screening and Confiscation.
- Sanctions must be reasonable, proportionate and consistently applied.

## 7. Rules for Trips, Residential and Sixth Form

DfE guidance allows schools to decide rules for use outside the school day (e.g., residential) while maintaining a strict school-day ban, there will be:

- Clear expectations for:
  - School trips
  - Residential visits
- Any permitted use must not undermine the phone-free environment for younger pupils.

## 8. Monitoring and Evaluation

- Leaders must evaluate policy implementation, including:
  - Staff/pupil understanding
  - Patterns of breaches
  - Impact on behaviour, wellbeing and learning
- Evidence will be stored on CPOMs with regards to adherence to the policy and used to inform Trust-level reporting.

## 9. BYOD Clarification (New Requirement)

The DfE states that BYOD schemes must not include mobile phones.

For schools that use *this*:

- “Our Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) arrangements apply only to tablets/laptops. Mobile phones cannot be used as part of any BYOD or digital learning scheme.”

## 10. Safeguarding Rationale

Updated guidance emphasises the link between a phone-free environment and reduced disruption, bullying, online harm, and wellbeing risks.

- *“Our no mobile phones policy is a core safeguarding measure designed to promote pupils' safety, wellbeing, and positive behaviour. By maintaining a mobile phone free environment throughout the school day, we reduce distractions and support pupils' ability to engage fully with learning in a calm, focused atmosphere. This approach also helps prevent online harm and image-based abuse, as highlighted in national guidance emphasising the risks associated with smart devices in schools, including messaging, recording and social media misuse.”*
- *“Removing mobile phones from the school day further minimises peer-on-peer issues, such as bullying, intimidation, and inappropriate sharing of content, which the updated guidance notes can be exacerbated by mobile and smart technology. Through this policy, we create a safer, more predictable environment where children are protected from avoidable pressures and digital risks, and where safeguarding remains at the centre of our practice.”*