Whitechapel Primary School

Mobile Phone Policy

Whitechapel Primary School

Record of change:

AUTHOR	DATE	VERSION	CHANGE REFERENCE / DESCRIPTION
R. Paul	29-Sep-26	V1	Newly implemented for Sep 2026

Approvers

NAME	DATE	POSITION
Nicola Noblett	Oct 2026	Headteacher

Reviewers

NAME	DATE	POSITION
Standards Committee	14 Oct 2026	Governing Body

Distribution

LOCATION	DATE
TEAM's File	October 2026

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1. Introduction and aims

At Whitechapel Primary School we recognise that mobile phones and similar devices, including smartphones, and smart watches 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 and poor behaviour that disrupts learning and the well-being of children and/or staff
- 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 statutory mobile phone guidance and their non-statutory behaviour guidance. Further guidance that should be considered alongside this policy is Keeping Children Safe in Education.

3. Role and responsibilities

Governors are responsible for:

- reviewing the rationale behind the school's approach to mobile devices, ensuring it fits the primary school's culture.
- Formally reviewing and approving the mobile phone policy.
- Verifying that the policy is enforced consistently.
- Ensuring any serious breaches involving data protection or child protection are reported to the designated safeguarding governor.
- Monitor how effectively the school communicates the mobile-free expectations to parents and how exceptions to the policy are handled (such as medical adjustments).

Staff including the headteacher are responsible for:

- All staff (including teachers, support staff, supply staff and external staff for example, sports coaches, music teachers etc) are responsible for consistently enforcing this policy.
- Ensuring volunteers are aware of the policy expectations.
- Alerting the headteacher if they witness, or are aware of, a breach of this policy.
- 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 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.

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).

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 example;

- In the case of acutely ill dependents or family members
- Important medical telephone appointment

In these cases, staff may have their phones on silent within the classroom and move away from the children to receive the phone call. The headteacher must always be made aware of such instances and will decide on a case-by-basis whether to allow for these special arrangements.

If special arrangements are not deemed necessary, school staff can use the school office number 01995 640364 as a point of emergency contact.

Special arrangements by staff for the use of mobile phones in school must not be assumed and must be agreed with the Headteacher.

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:

- Contacting the Base Contact on an Educational visit.
- Reporting an emergency when working in a separate location to the rest of the school e.g. school field, MUGA or Village Hall.
- Contacting the emergency services
- Use of multi-factor authentication
- Emergency evacuations
- Supervising off-site trips
- Supervising residential visits
- Issuing homework, rewards and sanctions

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

Data Protection

Staff must not use their personal mobile phones to process pupil's personal data, or any other confidential school information, including entering such data into generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools such as chatbots (e.g. ChatGPT. Co-pilot and Google Bard).

More detailed guidance on data protection can be found in the school's data protection policy.

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.

Work Mobile Devices

Some members of staff are provided with a mobile device by the school for work purposes. Only authorised staff are permitted to use these devices, and access to the phone must not be provided to anyone without authorisation.

Staff must:

- Only use the device 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 always appropriate and professional, in line with our staff code of conduct
- Ensure that all work mobile devices are kept secure and password protected

Sanctions

Staff that fail to adhere to this policy may face disciplinary action.

5. Use of mobile phones by pupils

The DfE's most recent mobile phone guidance states that pupils should not use mobile phones throughout the school day.

At Whitechapel Primary School, pupils are not permitted to bring their mobile phones into school except in exceptional circumstances which must be agreed **in advance** with the headteacher. On such occasions, children will be required to hand their devices into the school office at the start of the day to be collected by an adult at home time.

Pupils should **not** keep mobile phones in their school bags or use their mobile phones during the school day. If a child is found to be in possession of a mobile phone or device, it will be collected and stored securely in the school office for collection by a parent.

The Headteacher reserves the right to ban mobiles phones from the school premises altogether if this is deemed appropriate.

Use of smartwatches by pupils

The DfE's 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.

Our school's approach to bringing smartwatches to school, and to wearing and/or using them during the school day is the same as our approach to mobile phones as set out above. We discourage the use of SMART watches or devices for the following reasons:

- Pupils may be able to use a smartwatch to communicate via text, even if their phone is in their bag or pocket
- Smartwatches are often smaller than mobile phones and at a distance look similar to regular watches, so might be easier to conceal

Exceptions for special circumstances

Some pupils are allowed to bring a mobile phone to school when agreed with the Headteacher. For instance:

- Young carers who need to be contactable
- Pupils with diabetes who use their phones to monitor their blood sugar
- Pupils whose parents are separated and have packed a bag to take to the other parent's house.

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 Mrs Noblett, Headteacher via email head@whitechapel.lancs.sch.uk

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).

Therefore, they are only permitted to use their mobile phones out of sight of younger pupils in the agreed spaces that they will discuss with their class teacher. Misuse of

mobile phones by pupils will lead to sanctions according to our behaviour and relationships policy

5.3 Sanctions

Failure to follow this policy will lead to phones being confiscated from pupils who do not have permission to bring phones into school – all confiscated phones will be returned exclusively to parents / carers at the end of the school day and not directly to the pupil.

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 you 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 (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 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 based on 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 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 contact 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** responsible for using 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. Secure storage means handed in to the office as soon as child enters school.

Staff must secure their personal phones, as well as any work device 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 while pupils are travelling to and from school.

We will make sure pupils and parents/carers are aware of the disclaimer above by:

- Putting signs up in the school office
- Display a copy of the Mobile Phone policy on the school website

If a phone is confiscated, it will be stored in a secure locked cabinet in the admin office.

Confiscated phones will be returned to the parent / carer of the child as soon as they can be present at school. Under no circumstances will a confiscated phone be returned to the child.

Lost phones should be returned to the main reception office team. 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

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

This policy will be reviewed every 2 years or earlier if required.

9.1 Appendix 1: Code of Conduct/Acceptable Use Agreement for pupils allowed to bring their phones to school due to exceptional circumstances

Code of Conduct – Use of mobile phones in school hours

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

1. You may not use your mobile phone on school premises.
2. You cannot take photos or recordings (either video or audio) of school staff or other pupils.
3. Avoid sharing your contact details with people you don't know, and don't share other people's contact details without their consent.
4. Don't share your phone's password(s) or access code(s) with anyone else.
5. 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
6. Don't use your phone to send or receive anything that may be criminal.
7. Rules on bullying, harassment and intimidation apply to how you use your mobile phone even when you aren't in school.
8. 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 and relationships policy.
9. Don't use your phone to view or share pornography or other harmful content.
10. You must comply with a request by a member of staff to hand over, a phone. Refusal to comply is a breach of the school's behaviour policy and will be dealt with accordingly.

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

Pupil Details	
Name:	
Year Group:	
Parent/carer name(s):	

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

Tick the appropriate reasons here):

- Are a young carer
- Need the phone to support their medical needs
- Are travelling between parental homes.

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/carer signature: _____

Pupil signature (where appropriate): _____

For school use only	
Authorised by:	
Date:	

Mobile phone information for visitors

- Please keep your mobile phone on silent/vibrate while on the school grounds
- **Do not** use phones where pupils are present. If you must use your phone, you may go to the staff room.
- **Do not** take photos or recordings of pupils, or staff
- **Do not** use your phone on school grounds, 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.