Rufforth Primary School

· Inspire · Care · Grow ·

# Mobile Phone Policy- a gate to gate policy

# Rufforth Primary School

Approval Date: April 2026

Next Review Date: April 2028

Pathfinder
Multi Academy Trust

# Contents

1 Introduction and aims 3
2 Relevant guidance 3
3 Role and responsibilities 3
4 Use of mobile phones by staff 4
5 Use of mobile phones by pupils 5
6 The role of parents 5
7 Sanctions 6
8 Searching pupils 6
9 Adaptations and reasonable adjustments 7
10 School trips, residentials and sporting fixtures 7
11 Curriculum coverage 7
12 Sixth Form 8

# 1 Introduction and aims

1.1 At the St Barnabas CE 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. We set a **'gate to gate' policy** - this means that any pupils bringing a mobile phone or smart watch to school must hand it in to the school office as they enter school each day and then receive it back as they are leaving. Mobile phones must only be brought to school by pupils in exceptional circumstances, such as they are travelling to and from school alone, or are going to their second home at the end of the day.

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 individual school policies, especially those related to child protection, bullying and behaviour

1.2 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

1.3 Throughout this policy, 'mobile phones' refers to mobile phones and similar devices facilitating communications and smart technology. This includes this list of personal devices (not exhaustive):

- Phones
- Smart watches
- Any device which can track - for example a tag
- Filming equipment
- Any device holding a sim card or data memory
- Wearable technology (smart glasses, AI pins and pendants)
- Devices that facilitate messaging services (such as hand held gaming devices)

# 2 Relevant guidance

2.1 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 and DfE Supporting children and young people with medical conditions and allergy. (Draft)

3 Role 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 holding staff and pupils accountable for its implementation.

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

4.1 Personal mobile phone

This policy aims to create transparency for all stakeholders. This includes families, students and staff. Staff (including volunteers, contractors and anyone else otherwise engaged by the school) are not generally permitted to use their personal mobile phone, while children are present / during contact time. However, 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):

- To make an emergency call to 999
- For emergency contact by their child, or their child's school
- In the case of acutely ill dependents or family members
- Accessing a medical support app (such as a diabetes monitor)
- For a reason agreed at the discretion of a line manager

It is the responsibility of the staff member to seek approval for the use of their personal mobile for any reason in addition to the list above.The headteacher will decide on a case-by-case basis whether to allow for special arrangements.

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

More detailed guidance on data protection can be found in the Trust's Data Protection Policy and Acceptable Use Policy.

4.2 Safeguarding

Staff must follow the Trust's guidelines regarding safeguarding. More detailed guidance can be found in the Trust's Social Media Policy, Safeguarding Policy and Accessible Use Policy.

4.3 Using personal mobile phones 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:

- Issuing homework, rewards or sanctions
- Use of 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

More detailed guidance can be found in the Trust's Staff Code of Conduct.

4.3 Work phones

Some members of staff are provided with a mobile phone for work purposes.

- Staff may use these phones for school business, including making/receiving calls, sending/receiving emails or other communications, or using the internet

# 5 Use of mobile phones by pupils

5.1 Pupils should not use their mobile phones during the school day, including during lessons, in the time between lessons, at breaktimes and at lunchtimes.

We recognise that pupils may need to use their mobile phone to and from school (e.g. to pay for bus fares).

Primary school pupils must:

- hand in their mobile phone to the school office on arrival and collect it at the end of the school day.

5.2 Use of smartwatches and tracking devices 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.

The use of tracking devices (defined as any device which tracks, monitors or records: audio communication, location, falls, steps or similar data) is prohibited. The only exception to this is the use of life-saving medical tracking devices or devices approved by the Headteacher for a specified use in school. Any tracking device found in use without permission in school or on a school trip will be removed and returned to the pupil or parent at the end of the day/ trip.

# 6 The role of parents

6.1 Parents have an important role in supporting the school's policy on prohibiting the use of mobile phones. Parents are encouraged to reinforce and discuss this policy at home as appropriate, including the risks associated with mobile phone use and the benefits of a mobile phone-free environment. Parents may not use their mobile device on the school premises with the exception of:

- To make an emergency services call to 999
- Accessing a medical support app (such as a diabetes monitor)

6.2 Contacting your child during the school day:

Where a parent needs to contact their child during the school day, they should be directed to the school office.

6.3 Where a parent has questions or concerns regarding this policy, they should make contact with the school and staff should address these in a timely manner and clearly communicate the reasons for prohibiting the use of mobile phones.

# 7 Sanctions

7.1 The school will exert its power to confiscate mobile phones or similar devices (previously defined in section 1.2) from students as a disciplinary sanction where the policy is clearly breached, for instance where a mobile phone is used by a pupil or is heard ringing in a pupil's bag.

7.2 Where a confiscation of a device is required, staff will take regard for the safe storage of the device. 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.

7.3 Where a confiscation happens, the school will determine the outcome:

- The length of the confiscation
- The manner of return (return to pupil, return to parent or alternative)

7.4 The school will evaluate the impact of the confiscation and will act in line with KCSiE and Health and Safety regulations. For example: the school will not confiscate a device used to track or monitor a pupils health such as a diabetes monitor for which the confiscation would have a serious impact on the safety and health of the individual.

# 8 Searching pupils

8.1 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:

- Tobacco, cigarettes - add vapes
- Fireworks
- Pornographic images
- Knives, guns or offensive weapons
- Alcohol or drugs
- Stolen items
- An article that the member of staff reasonably suspects has been, or is likely to be, used to commit an offence, or to cause personal injury to, or damage to the property of, any person.
- Any item considered in the school's rules as a banned item (including mobile phones).

8.2 Any search conducted must be made within the guidance set out in Searches, screening and Confiscations, DfE guidance: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/62d1643e8fa8f50bfbefa55c/Searching__Screening_and_Confiscation_guidance_July_2022.pdf .

8.3 The school will not use reasonable force to search for a mobile phone in line with the guidance on Use of Reasonable Force and Other Restrictive Interventions, DfE ' A member of staff can use such force as is reasonable to search for legally prohibited items, but not to search for items banned under the school rules only'. https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/6943dad6501cdd438f4cf5aa/Restrictive_interventions_including_use_of_reasonable_force_in_schools.pdf

# 9 Adaptations and reasonable adjustments

9.1 The school will comply with its legal duties such as the duty to make reasonable adjustments where necessary. There may be other exceptional circumstances where the school may consider making adaptations to this policy for specific pupils.

9.2 The school has a duty under the Equality Act 2010 to take such steps as is reasonable to avoid substantial disadvantage to a disabled pupil caused by the school's policies or practices. Allowing a disabled pupil access to their mobile phone during the school day, where it is necessary due to the nature of their disability, may be considered a reasonable adjustment and a failure to do so may be a breach of the school's duty. Below is a list of examples:

- For medical purposes such as a blood sugar monitor
- For communication apps
- For a young carer to perform their role
- A send need requiring the use of a phone at agreed times; The school will work with each individual case to develop practices which enable pupils to use their mobile phone for a specific purpose at specific times and locations, for example in a senior leadership office, in the school office.

# 10 School trips, residentials and sporting fixtures

10.1 The definition of a trip is listed below:

- Day trips, those trips leaving and returning during the school teaching hours.
- Extended day trips, those trips extending before the start of the school day and/or after the school teaching hours.
- Residential trips, those trips requiring pupils to stay away overnight.

10.2 Day trips

Pupils and students are required to follow the usual policy for mobile phones.

10.3 Extended day trips

Pupils and students must adhere to the usual school policy, as outlined by the trip leader. This would typically involve the mobile phone policy being invoked upon the arrival of the collection point. Trip Leaders are responsible for arranging suitable communication methods to mitigate the use of individual devices and for communicating changes to arrangements on behalf of students.

10.4 The use of mobile phones during school hours on a residential visit is prohibited. The use of mobile phones outside of school hours will be at the discretion of the Trip Leader. This will be communicated in advance to facilitate clarity.

# 11 Curriculum coverage

11.1 The school will facilitate the delivery of E-Safety through its curriculum offer. This will include its PHSE and RSE lessons where appropriate and will cover responsible online conduct, evaluating sources (misinformation awareness), respectful communication, online bullying.