The Key > Leaders

Mapperley Plains Primary School

Mobile Phone and Smartwatch Policy

Statutory

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1. Introduction and aims

Mapperley Plains Primary and Nursery School is a mobile phone-free environment by default. Anything other than this is by exception only.

This policy applies to mobile phones, smartwatches and other communications or smart technology with similar functionality, including devices that can send or receive messages or notifications, make calls, access online services or record audio or video.

The policy aims to:

- prohibit children from accessing or using mobile phones and similar smart devices throughout the school day, unless an agreed exception applies
- ensure the safe, responsible and lawful use of mobile phones where an exception or authorised work use applies
- set clear expectations for children, staff, parents/carers, visitors, volunteers, governors and contractors
- support safeguarding, behaviour, online safety, data protection and the effective education of children
- meet the safeguarding and welfare requirements that apply to the Early Years Foundation Stage, including arrangements for mobile phones, cameras and other electronic devices with imaging and sharing capabilities

The school recognises that mobile phones can present safeguarding, privacy, distraction, bullying, data protection, theft and loss risks. The purpose of the policy is not to prevent legitimate communication outside the school day, but to ensure that personal mobile technology does not disrupt or compromise children's safety, learning or wellbeing while they are in school.

2. Relevant guidance

This policy has been developed with regard to the following legislation and guidance:

- section 36 of the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act 2026, which places the Department for Education's guidance on mobile phones in schools on a statutory footing
- Department for Education statutory guidance Mobile phones in schools, updated 29 June 2026 and to be followed by schools from 1 September 2026
- Department for Education Behaviour in schools guidance
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026
- the Early Years Foundation Stage statutory framework for group and school-based providers, effective from 1 September 2026
- the Equality Act 2010 and the duty to make reasonable adjustments for disabled children where necessary
- the Children and Families Act 2014 and statutory guidance on supporting children with medical conditions
- Department for Education guidance on searching, screening and confiscation
- This policy should be read alongside the school's Behaviour Policy, Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, Online Safety and Acceptable Use arrangements, Data Protection Policy, Staff Code of Conduct, Supporting Children with Medical Conditions Policy and Educational Visits arrangements.

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 Headteacher

For a maintained community school, the headteacher is the appropriate person required to have regard to the statutory guidance on mobile phones when exercising functions relating to the conduct of the school.

The headteacher is responsible for determining and implementing the school's approach, ensuring that expectations are communicated clearly and consistently, deciding whether an individual exception is justified and monitoring the impact of the policy. Children will be reminded of the school's mobile phone

expectations at the start of each academic year and again where appropriate, and staff and parents/carers will be kept informed of the school's approach.

3.2 Staff

All staff, including teachers, support staff and supply staff, are required to actively and consistently enforce this policy. Staff should challenge breaches promptly and apply the school's agreed procedures proportionately.

Volunteers, contractors and anyone else engaged by the school must alert a member of staff if they witness or become aware of a breach.

3.3 Governing body

The governing body has strategic oversight of behaviour, safeguarding and the effective implementation of school policies. It may seek assurance about how this policy is operating through its normal monitoring arrangements. The headteacher remains responsible for determining the school's operational approach under the statutory mobile phone guidance.

4. Use of mobile phones by staff

4.1 Personal mobile phones

Staff, volunteers, contractors and anyone else engaged by the school must not use a personal mobile phone for personal reasons in front of children during the school day.

Personal phones must be kept on silent or vibrate and out of sight while staff are working with children. Personal use must be restricted to non-contact time and to staff-only areas where children are not present.

There may be exceptional personal circumstances in which a member of staff needs access to their phone during contact time, for example because of an urgent family matter. Such arrangements must be agreed with the headteacher or, in the headteacher's absence, another senior leader.

Where no special arrangement is required, the school office should be used as the point of emergency contact for staff.

4.2 Data protection

Staff must not use personal mobile phones to process personal data or confidential school information. They must not enter personal, confidential or safeguarding information into generative artificial intelligence tools or other unapproved applications on a personal device.

School systems, approved school devices and the school's data protection and acceptable-use requirements must be used when handling school information.

4.3 Safeguarding and photography

Staff must not give their personal contact details to children or parents/carers or connect with them through personal social media or messaging accounts, except where an existing professional arrangement has been expressly authorised by the headteacher.

Staff must not use personal mobile phones or other personal devices to take photographs, video or audio recordings of children, their work or anything else that could identify a child. Where photographs or recordings are required for an authorised school purpose, school equipment and approved systems must be used.

These arrangements apply equally in Nursery and Reception and form part of the school's Early Years Foundation Stage safeguarding arrangements concerning mobile phones, cameras and other electronic devices with imaging and sharing capabilities.

4.4 Authorised work-related use

There may be limited circumstances in which a member of staff needs to use a personal mobile phone or similar device for an authorised work purpose. Examples may include:

- multi-factor authentication for an approved school system
- emergency evacuation or other urgent operational communication
- an off-site educational visit where no suitable school-owned device is available and the use has been agreed as part of the visit arrangements

In these circumstances, staff must use the device professionally and only for the agreed purpose. Personal phones must not be used to photograph or record children, and staff should not use personal contact details to communicate directly with parents/carers or children. Communication with families should normally take place through the school office or another approved school system.

4.5 Breaches by staff

A failure by a member of staff to follow this policy may be addressed under the school's Staff Code of Conduct and, where appropriate, the relevant disciplinary procedure.

5. Use of mobile phones by children

Children must not use or have access to a mobile phone or similar smart device during the school day, including lessons, transitions, breaktimes and lunchtimes, unless the headteacher has agreed a specific exception.

As a primary and nursery school, children should not normally bring mobile phones or smartwatches onto the school site. A mobile phone or smartwatch may only be brought to school where a completed Mobile Phone and Smartwatch Permission Form has been approved by the headteacher because there is a clear exceptional reason, for example an agreed safeguarding, medical or independent travel need.

All permitted mobile phones and smartwatches must be clearly labelled with the child's name, switched off before the child enters the school site and handed in immediately on arrival each morning. During the main school day, devices are stored in the designated box in the school office in staff-controlled storage. Devices are returned only when the child is leaving the school's care for the day. A child must not switch on, wear, access or use the device anywhere on the school site unless staff have specifically authorised this as part of an agreed medical or assistive arrangement.

Children attending Breakfast Club must hand any permitted phone or smartwatch to Wraparound staff on arrival. It is kept in the designated Wraparound wallet in staff-controlled storage and transferred to the school office box for the main school day. At the end of the school day, devices belonging to children attending After School Club are transferred to the designated Wraparound wallet rather than returned to the child. Devices are returned only when the child leaves the school's care for the day.

Children must not take personal mobile phones or smartwatches on school trips, visits or residentials unless specific arrangements have been agreed in advance by the school and communicated to parents/carers. Leaving the school site as part of a school visit does not mean a handed-in device is returned to the child; it remains in staff-controlled storage unless an agreed exception applies. For residentials or activities outside the normal school day, arrangements will be set for the specific visit.

5.1 Smartwatches and similar devices

All smartwatches are treated in the same way as mobile phones under this policy. This includes devices that can send or receive messages or notifications, make calls, connect to a phone or mobile network, access online services or record audio or video. Children with permission to bring a smartwatch must hand it in on arrival and must not wear or access it while they remain on the school site.

A basic analogue or digital watch without smart, communication or recording functions is not covered by this restriction. Where a smart device is required for an agreed medical or assistive purpose, an individual arrangement will be made.

5.2 Exceptions and reasonable adjustments

The school may permit a child to possess or use a mobile phone or smart device where this is necessary because of exceptional circumstances or as a reasonable adjustment.

Examples may include a child who:

- uses a phone or connected device to manage a medical condition such as continuous glucose monitoring
- requires assistive technology because of SEND or disability
- is a young carer or has another documented safeguarding need
- travels to or from school independently and the headteacher agrees that having a phone for the journey is appropriate

A Mobile Phone and Smartwatch Permission Form must be completed by the child and parent/carer and approved by the headteacher before a device is brought onto the school site. Permission will be considered on the individual circumstances and may include limits on the purpose, times and locations in which a device can be accessed.

Where permission is granted, the child and parent/carer must follow this policy, the agreed storage arrangements and the acceptable use agreement in Appendix 1. No device should be brought to school before permission has been confirmed. The school may review or withdraw permission, or agree alternative arrangements, if the agreed arrangements are not followed. Any decision will take account of the child's individual circumstances, including any safeguarding, medical, SEND or travel needs.

5.3 Sanctions, confiscation and searching

A breach of this policy will be dealt with in line with the school's Behaviour Policy. Any sanction must be reasonable and proportionate and take account of relevant individual circumstances, including age, SEND, disability, medical needs and any safeguarding factors.

Where a phone or similar device is brought without permission, is used during the school day or is otherwise used in breach of this policy, a member of staff may confiscate it. The device will be taken to the school office and stored securely.

The headteacher or a delegated senior leader will decide the return arrangements. A parent/carer will normally be informed. A confiscated device will not be returned for use while the child remains in the school's care. Where the child needs the device for an agreed journey home, it may be returned when the child leaves school care for the day. If the child is attending Wraparound provision, the device will remain in school storage and be returned when the child leaves. Repeated or serious breaches may result in a requirement for the parent/carer to collect the device, permission being withdrawn or alternative arrangements being agreed. Any decision will take account of the child's individual circumstances and safe travel to and from school.

The headteacher and authorised staff have statutory powers to search children or their possessions in circumstances set out in law and Department for Education guidance. In line with the school's Behaviour Policy, mobile phones and similar devices are treated as items that may be searched for where the legal requirements for a search are met. Any search or examination of data on a device will only take place where lawful and in accordance with the school's Behaviour Policy, safeguarding procedures and current Department for Education guidance.

If the misuse of a device suggests that a child may be suffering or at risk of harm, staff must follow the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and speak to the designated safeguarding lead or a deputy. Suspected criminal conduct will be referred to the police or other agencies where appropriate.

6. Use of mobile phones by parents/carers, visitors and volunteers

Parents/carers are encouraged to reinforce the school's mobile phone expectations at home and to discuss the benefits of a mobile phone-free school day with their child.

Parents/carers, visitors, volunteers, governors and contractors must keep personal phones on silent or vibrate and should not use them where children are present. If urgent use is necessary, they should speak to a member of staff who will direct them to an appropriate area.

They must not use a personal device to take photographs, video or audio recordings of children or staff while on the school site, except where the school has expressly permitted photography at a public event.

Where photography is permitted, parents/carers should photograph their own child only and should not publish images containing other children or staff without appropriate consent.

Parents/carers, visitors and volunteers must not use phones in lessons, when working with children or while supervising children on behalf of the school.

Parents/carers must use the school office as the first point of contact if they need to communicate with their child during the school day. They must not attempt to contact the child directly on a personal mobile phone.

Visitors will be made aware of these expectations when signing in. A summary information slip is included at Appendix 3 and may be issued at reception or alongside visitor information.

Parents/carers or volunteers supporting school trips must not use personal phones to contact other parents/carers about the trip or to take photographs or recordings of children. Any proposed sanction or action in relation to a child's device must be referred to a member of staff.

7. Loss, theft or damage

Where a child has permission to bring a mobile phone or smartwatch to school, the device must be clearly labelled with the child's name, be identifiable as belonging to that child and be switched off before it is handed in on arrival.

Children and staff should protect devices with appropriate passwords or PINs. Staff must also ensure that any work-related information accessible through a personal device is protected in accordance with school security requirements.
The school does not accept responsibility for personal mobile phones or other devices that are lost, damaged or stolen on school premises, on school transport, during school visits or while travelling to or from school, except where liability arises by law.

During the main school day, handed-in devices are kept in the designated storage box in the school office in staff-controlled storage. Devices held during Wraparound provision are kept in the designated Wraparound wallet in staff-controlled storage. Confiscated devices will be stored securely. Reasonable care will be taken while any device is in the school's custody.

Lost phones or devices found on the school site should be handed to the school office, which will attempt to identify and contact the owner.

8. Monitoring and review

The headteacher will monitor the implementation and impact of this policy. The policy will be reviewed at least annually and sooner where there is a material change to statutory guidance, safeguarding requirements or school practice.

The school will take account of:

- feedback from children, parents/carers and staff where appropriate
- behaviour and safeguarding incidents involving mobile phones or smart devices
- the effectiveness and practicality of storage, confiscation and exception arrangements
- current advice from the Department for Education, Nottinghamshire County Council and other relevant bodies
- Concerns or questions about this policy should be raised with the headteacher through the school office.
- Details of the school's approach to prohibiting mobile phone use will be published on the school website.

Appendix 1: Acceptable use agreement for children permitted to bring a phone or smartwatch to school

This agreement applies only where the headteacher has approved a completed Mobile Phone and Smartwatch Permission Form allowing a child to bring a mobile phone, smartwatch or similar device to school.

1. I will only bring my phone, smartwatch or similar device to school when my permission form has been approved.
2. I will switch it off before I enter the school site and hand it in as soon as I arrive, unless staff have agreed a different arrangement for a medical or assistive reason.
3. I understand that my device must be clearly labelled with my name, will be stored in the school office box or, when I am attending Wraparound provision, in the designated Wraparound wallet, and will only be returned when I leave the school's care for the day.
4. I will not switch on, wear, use or access my device anywhere on the school site unless a member of staff has specifically authorised this for the agreed reason.
5. I will not use a phone or device in toilets, changing areas or any other private space.
6. I will not take photographs, video or audio recordings of children or adults at school.
7. I will not use a phone or device to bully, threaten, embarrass or upset anyone or to create, view or share inappropriate or harmful content.
8. I will keep passwords and access codes private.
9. I will follow any reasonable instruction from a member of staff to switch off or hand over the device.
10. I understand that breaking these rules may lead to the device being confiscated and permission to bring it to school being reviewed, alternative arrangements being agreed or permission being withdrawn.
11. I understand that the school cannot accept responsibility for my personal device if it is lost, damaged or stolen, except where the law says otherwise.

Child name: _____

Child signature: _____ Date: _____

Parent/carer signature: _____ Date: _____

Appendix 2: Mobile Phone and Smartwatch Permission Form

This form must be completed by the child and parent/carer and approved by the headteacher before a mobile phone, smartwatch or similar device is brought onto the school site.

Child name	
Year group/class	
Parent/carer name	
Device type / identifying details	
Reason / exceptional need	

The exception requested is for one or more of the following reasons:

- independent travel to or from school
- young carer or other safeguarding need
- medical need
- SEND, disability or assistive technology
- another exceptional circumstance

Please explain the reason and any specific arrangements required:

If permission is granted, the child and parent/carer agree to comply with the Mobile Phone and Smartwatch Policy and Appendix 1 acceptable use agreement. In particular, the device must be clearly labelled with the child's name, switched off before entering the site, handed in on arrival and remain in staff-controlled school storage until the child leaves the school's care for the day. The school may review or withdraw permission, or agree alternative arrangements, if the agreed arrangements are not followed, taking account of the child's individual circumstances.

Parent/carer signature: _____ Date: _____
Child signature: _____ Date: _____

For school use only

Decision: Permission granted / Permission not granted

Agreed arrangements or restrictions:

Authorised by: _____ Date: _____

Review date, if applicable: _____

Appendix 3: Visitor information slip

Use of mobile phones and similar devices in our school

Mapperley Plains Primary and Nursery School is a mobile phone-free environment by default.

Keep your mobile phone on silent or vibrate while on the school grounds.

- Do not use your phone where children are present. If you must use your phone, please ask a member of staff who will direct you to an appropriate area.
- Do not take photographs or recordings of children or staff, except where the school has expressly permitted photography at a public event and you are photographing your own child.
- Do not use your phone in lessons, when working with children or while children are present.
- The school accepts no responsibility for personal phones that are lost, damaged or stolen while you are on the school grounds, except where liability arises by law.
- A full copy of the Mobile Phone and Smartwatch Policy is available from the school office and on the school website.