

Welton St. Mary's Church of England Primary Academy



Our Vision

As an inclusive Christian community we value each person, seeking to release everyone's full potential as promised by Jesus Christ. We seek to provide a safe, inspiring and creative learning environment providing opportunities for all to flourish. Through challenge, support and care, we strive for excellence in all that we do; always building on the foundations of shared values with consistently high expectations rooted in God's love. Together we are encouraged to be agents of positive change in this world.

'May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.' Romans 15:13

Wisdom Hope Community Dignity

Together we care, learn and thrive

Mobile Phone Policy

Approved March 2026

Welton St Mary's CE Primary Academy

Mobile phone policy

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1. Introduction and aims

At Welton St Mary's Church of England Primary Academy 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, including smartwatches.

2. Relevant guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the Department for Education's non-statutory [Mobile phones in schools - GOV.UK](#) 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 every 2 years, reviewing it, and 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.

3.2 Governors

The Headteacher will report to the governors in the annual safeguarding report how the policy has been implemented and any breaches of the policy.

4. Use of mobile phones by staff

The DfE's non-statutory mobile phone guidance says that staff should not use their mobile phones for personal reasons in front of pupils during school days. Mobile phones should not be visible where there are children. They can be used only in areas that are designated to adults.

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. 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.

If special arrangements are not deemed necessary, school staff can use the school office number 01673 860339 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).

For more information, please refer to the data protection policy and IT 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 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.

Staff are able to use their phones to access the internet. The filtering and monitoring system applies.

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:

- Use of multi-factor authentication
- Emergency evacuations
- Supervising off-site trips
- Supervising residential visits.

- Safeguarding children and families
- A school mobile is available for use on residential and school visits.

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. The school mobile will be used for any contact with parents / carers

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

The DfE's non-statutory mobile phone guidance (January 19th 2026) states that 'all schools should be mobile-free environments by default'.

Pupils are not allowed to have phones or any other smart technology with similar functionality to mobile phones (eg the ability to send and or receive notifications or messages via mobile phone networks or the ability to record audio and / or video) on school site. Mobile phones are also not permitted on school visits or residential.

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. Smartwatches are not to be worn in school. Smart watches are not permitted on school visits or residential.

5.2 Exceptions for special circumstances

There may be **exceptional** circumstances, where due to a pupils' individual circumstances, there may be a need for them to bring a phone to school. 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.

In such a case, this will need to be agreed by the Headteacher in writing.

This may include:

- Young carers
- Pupils with diabetes who use their phone to monitor their blood sugar

Any pupils who are given permission must then adhere to the school's acceptable use agreement for mobile phone use (see appendix 1).

5.3 Sanctions

- If a child is in breach of the policy – ie brings a mobile phone or smartwatch to school, they will be confiscated and kept in the school safe. Schools are permitted to confiscate phones under sections 91 and 94 of the Education and Inspections Act 2026 . Parents will be informed and will be asked to collect the technology from the school office. Headteachers are backed by the DfE to confiscate mobile phones and similar devices if they consider it proportionate for whatever length of time they feel proportionate. The headteacher will consider the pupil's individual circumstances such as age and any SEND need.
- School will also consider whether the misbehaviour gives cause to suspect that a pupil is suffering, or may be at risk of, harm. Where this may be the case as set out in Keeping Children Safe in Education, school staff will follow the safeguarding policy and speak with Designated Safeguarding Lead. They will consider if pastoral support, an early intervention or a referral to children's social care is appropriate.
- Staff have the power to search pupils' phones in specific circumstances as set out in the DfE's guidance on searching, screening and confiscation if there is good reason to do so (such as having reason to believe that the phone contains inappropriate images, or if it is being used / 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 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
- Online bullying
- 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'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 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 that 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

There may be an occasion, in agreement with the Headteacher, where a phone is required on site.

Pupils bringing mobile phones to school must ensure that the phones are appropriately labelled and are handed into the office on arrival at school.

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 phone. 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.

In the permission form for exceptional circumstances, a parent must sign the disclaimer before a phone is brought on to site.

Confiscated phones will be stored in a locked cabinet in the school office. The school becomes responsible for any phone that is confiscated and can be held responsible for loss, theft or damage.

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

Adaptations and reasonable adjustments

Schools have 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.

Academies have a duty under the [Children and Families Act 2014](#) to have arrangements in place to support pupils with medical conditions. In meeting this duty the governing body must have regard to the statutory guidance [supporting pupils with medical conditions at school](#). In some circumstances, supporting a pupil with their medical condition can involve the use of a mobile phone. For example, pupils with diabetes might use continuous glucose monitoring with a sensor linked to their mobile phone to monitor blood sugar levels. Where mobile phone use allows pupils to manage their medical condition effectively, it would not be reasonable for a school to prevent this.

Allowing flexibility for individual pupils does not mean that these pupils are exempt from all restrictions on the use of their mobile phone.

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 organisation

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

9. Appendix 1: acceptable use agreement for pupils allowed to bring their phones to school due to exceptional circumstances

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').
2. Phones must be clearly labelled.
3. Phones must be handed into the office on arrival at school and collected at the end of the school day
4. You cannot take photos or recordings (either video or audio) of school staff or other pupils without their consent.
5. Avoid sharing your contact details with people you don't know, and don't share other people's contact details without their consent.
6. Don't share your phone's password(s) or access code(s) with anyone else.
7. 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

On the way to or from school

8. Don't use your phone to send or receive anything that may be criminal.
9. Rules on bullying, harassment and intimidation apply to how you use your mobile phone even when you aren't in school.
10. Don't use obscene or derogatory language while on the phone or when using social media. This language is not permitted under the school's behaviour policy.
11. Don't use your phone to view or share harmful content.
12. 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	
Pupil name:	
Year group/class:	
Parent/carer(s) name(s):	

The school has agreed to allow [pupil name] to bring [their] mobile phone to school because they:

List the appropriate reasons here. We have listed some common reasons below (you can delete as required):

- Travel to and from school alone
- Attend a before or after school club where they will not be arriving or leaving at the normal school times
- Are a young carer
- Need the phone to support their medical needs

Pupils who bring a mobile phone to school must abide by the school's policy on the use of mobile phones, and its acceptable use agreement

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:	

11. Appendix 3: Template mobile phone information slip for visitors

Print out and cut copies of this slip to give to visitors when they arrive at your school. Adapt the template to reflect section 6 of this policy.

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 [insert location]
- 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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