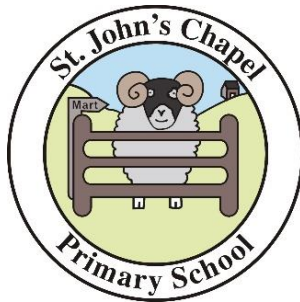


Durham Dales Partnership

Butterknowle, Frosterley, Hamsterley,
St John's Chapel, Wearhead & Woodland
Primary Schools



Mobile Phone Policy

Written:	September 2026
Reviewed:	
To be reviewed:	September 2027

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1. Introduction and aims

At the Durham Dales Partnership, our policy aims to:

- Ensure our environment is mobile phone-free by default
- Ensure the safe, responsible and lawful use of mobile phones, where applicable
- Provide 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
- Risk of theft, loss or damage
- Appropriate use of technology for learning purposes

Note: throughout this policy, 'mobile phones' refers to mobile phones and similar devices.

2. Relevant guidance

This policy meets the requirements of section 36 of the [Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act 2026](#), and the Department for Education (DfE)'s [mobile phone guidance](#) and [behaviour guidance](#). Further guidance that should be considered alongside this policy includes [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#), which sets out the expectation that all schools should be mobile phone-free environments by default.

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 Staff

All staff (including teachers, support staff and supply staff) are required to actively enforce this policy and challenge any breach of mobile phone restrictions immediately and consistently.

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 Executive Headteacher is responsible for monitoring the policy and reviewing it annually, 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

Governors will review/monitor this policy annually.

4. Use of mobile phones by staff

The DfE's mobile phone guidance says that staff should not use their own mobile phone for personal reasons in front of pupils throughout the school day. All schools should be mobile phone-free environments by default: anything other than this should be by exception only.

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 during the school day, while pupils 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 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
- For use of dual factor authentication

The Executive 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 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 Gemini). More detailed guidance can be found in our data protection policy and Staff ICT acceptable use policy.

4.3 Safeguarding

Staff must not give their personal contact details to parents/carers or pupils, including by 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.

Contact with pupils and parents/carers should take place only through school-approved accounts, devices and channels unless a specific exception has been authorised and risk assessed. Any pre-existing relationship that may create a boundary issue should be declared to senior leaders.

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.

Personal use of the school's ICT systems and connectivity is only permitted with the consent of the Executive Headteacher. Staff wishing to connect personal devices to the school network must ensure that the device has an identifiable name, such as the member of staff's initials.

4.4 Using personal mobiles for work purposes

In some circumstances, it may be appropriate for staff to use personal mobile phones or a similar device during the school day in front of pupils 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
- 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

4.5 Work phones

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

Only authorised staff are permitted to use school phones, and access to the phone must not be provided to anyone without authorisation.

Staff must:

- Only use school phone functions for work purposes, including making/receiving calls, sending/receiving emails or other communications, or using the internet
- Make sure that all communication and conduct linked to the device is appropriate and professional at all times, in line with our staff code of conduct

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 mobile phone guidance says that the use of mobile phones should be prohibited throughout the school day. Pupils must not use their mobile phones during the school day, including during lessons, in the time between lessons, at breaktimes and at lunchtimes, unless explicitly authorised by a member of staff (for example, for a specific medical reason).

Our approach to pupils bringing mobile phones to school:

- Pupils are permitted to bring a mobile phone to school where this is necessary, for example, to support their journey to and from school.
- On arrival, pupils must hand their mobile phone to a member of staff.
- Mobile phones will be stored securely by staff throughout the school day.
- Mobile phones will be returned to pupils at the end of the school day.

Pupils will be taught the risks that are associated with the use of mobile phones, both in school and more broadly, to make sure they understand the decision to prohibit the use of mobile phones throughout the school day. These risks can include a loss of focus in lessons, classroom disruption and an increase in bullying. Pupils will be encouraged to see a mobile-phone free environment as desirable and valuable.

5.1 Use of smartwatches by pupils

The DfE's statutory [mobile phones guidance](#) includes in the term 'mobile phones' all devices with communications and smart technology that the school chooses to include in its 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 smartwatches have wellness and health-related features.

Our approach to pupils bringing smartwatches to school:

- Smartwatches are not permitted to be worn or used in school during the school day.
- If a pupil needs to bring a smartwatch to school, it must be handed to a member of staff upon arrival, in the same way as a mobile phone.
- Smartwatches will be stored securely by staff throughout the school day.
- Smartwatches will be returned to pupils at the end of the school day.

Any pupil found wearing or using a smartwatch during the school day will be asked to hand it to a member of staff immediately, and the school's behaviour procedures may be applied where appropriate.

This approach ensures that smartwatches, including those with communication, internet access, photography, audio recording or other smart features, do not disrupt learning, compromise privacy, or present safeguarding concerns during the school day.

5.2 Exceptions for special circumstances

In exceptional circumstances, some pupils may be permitted to possess or use a mobile phone or smart device during the school day where there is a documented safeguarding or medical need. For example:

- Pupils with diabetes who use a mobile phone or smart device to monitor their blood glucose levels.

The school may permit pupils to use a mobile phone or smart device in school due to exceptional circumstances. Permission will only be granted where there is a documented safeguarding or medical necessity. Requests for such permission should be made to Mr Sains, Executive Headteacher.

Any approved arrangements will be recorded as part of the pupil's individual medical, safeguarding or support plan.

5.3 Sanctions

If a pupil breaches this policy by using, possessing or failing to hand over a mobile phone or smartwatch as required, the device may be confiscated by a member of staff in accordance with the school's behaviour policy and relevant legislation.

- Confiscated devices will be stored securely by the school.
- Parents/carers may be required to collect the device from school, depending on the circumstances and frequency of the breach.
- The Executive Headteacher will determine the length of time that a device is confiscated, taking into account the nature and seriousness of the incident.
- Repeated breaches of this policy may result in further sanctions in line with the school's behaviour policy.

Where there are reasonable grounds to suspect that a mobile phone or smart device contains evidence of inappropriate content, has been used to commit an offence, or may pose a risk of harm to a pupil or another person, the school will act in accordance with current Department for Education guidance on searching, screening and confiscation.

If inappropriate content is discovered or there are safeguarding concerns relating to the use of a mobile phone or smart device:

- The device will be secured immediately.
- The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) will be informed without delay.
- The incident will be managed in line with the school's safeguarding and child protection procedures.
- Parents/carers will normally be informed unless doing so would place a child at risk of harm.
- External agencies, including Children's Social Care or the Police, may be contacted where appropriate.
- Staff will not unnecessarily view, copy, print, share or delete data or images from a device and will follow safeguarding and data protection requirements at all times.

This approach ensures that staff, pupils and parents/carers understand the consequences of breaching the policy and the steps that will be taken where safeguarding concerns arise

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:

- Making of or sharing nudes and semi-nudes including images that are digitally altered or wholly generated using AI (such as 'deepfakes' or 'deep nudes')
- 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 and carers 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/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, when working with pupils or while children are present

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. A summary of our mobile phone expectations will be displayed within the entrance to each 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, but must refer any proposed 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 make sure that their phones are identifiable to them, ready to be stored away securely when not in use during the school day.

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 or from school.

The school will ensure that pupils and parents/carers are made aware of this policy and the associated disclaimer. This will be achieved by:

- Including the disclaimer within any permission forms relating to pupils bringing a mobile phone to school.
- Including reference to the disclaimer within the Home-School Agreement.
- Providing a copy of the Mobile Phone and Smart Device Policy to all new pupils and parents/carers on admission to the school.
- Publishing the policy on the school's website and making it available on request.

- Reminding parents/carers and pupils of the policy through regular school communications, where appropriate.

By allowing a pupil to bring a mobile phone or smart device to school, parents/carers acknowledge and accept the school's procedures for the storage, management and confiscation of devices as outlined in this policy.

Confiscated mobile phones and smartwatches will be stored securely in the school safe located within the school office. Once a device has been confiscated, the school accepts responsibility for its safekeeping whilst it remains in the school's possession. The device will be logged and stored securely until it is returned to the pupil or collected by a parent/carer. The school's senior leader will be responsible for the secure storage, management and return of confiscated devices.

Lost phones should be returned to the school office or the school's senior leader. The school will then attempt to contact the owner.

8. Monitoring and review

The school is committed to making sure 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 DfE, 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 Executive Headteacher in a timely manner.

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

Pupil code of conduct / acceptable use agreement

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

1. You may bring a mobile phone to school if you need it for your journey to and from school.
2. You must hand your mobile phone to a member of staff as soon as you arrive at school.
3. You must not use your mobile phone during the school day unless you have been given permission by the school.
4. Your mobile phone will be stored securely by staff throughout the school day.
5. Your mobile phone will be returned to you at the end of the school day.
6. You must follow all instructions given by staff regarding the storage and collection of your mobile phone.
7. Phones must be switched off (not just put on 'silent').
8. You may not use your mobile phone in the toilets or changing rooms. This is to protect the privacy and welfare of other pupils.
9. You cannot take photos or recordings (either video or audio) of school staff or other pupils.
10. Avoid sharing your contact details with people you don't know, and don't share other people's contact details without their consent.
11. Don't share your phone's password(s) or access code(s) with anyone else.
12. Don't use your mobile phone to bully, intimidate or harass anyone or otherwise to act in breach of the school's behaviour policy. This includes bullying, harassing or intimidating pupils or staff via:
 - a. Email
 - b. Text/messaging app
 - c. Social media
13. Don't use your phone to send or receive anything that may be a criminal offence. For instance, by making or sharing nudes or semi-nudes (including AI-generated images or 'deepfakes')
14. Rules on bullying, harassment and intimidation apply to how you use your mobile phone even when you aren't in school.
15. 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 policy.
16. Don't use your phone to view or share pornography or other harmful content.
17. 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.
18. Failure to follow these rules may result in your mobile phone being confiscated and further action being taken in line with the school's behaviour policy.

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 _____ to bring their mobile phone to school because they:

- ☐ Need the mobile phone for their journey to and from school.
- ☐ 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

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 / 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

Use of mobile phones and similar devices in our school

Our school is a mobile phone-free environment.



- 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 staffroom or school office
- Do not take photos or recordings of pupils (unless it is your own child), or staff
- Do not use your phone in lessons, when working with pupils or while children are present

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.