



Mobile Phone Policy

Approved by:	Great Steeping Primary School Full Governing Board
Date:	May 2026
Review due:	May 2028 or earlier if guidance changes

Introduction and Aims

At Great Steeping 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.

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.

Relevant guidance

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](#).

Roles and responsibilities

Staff

- 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.
- 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.

Governors

Governors will be provided with information about the implementation of this policy and the issues of mobile phone use in school.

Use of mobile phones by staff

The DfE's non-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 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 01754 830251 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.

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).

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.

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

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 or by withholding their number.

A school mobile could be provided for trip / excursion leaders with a separate number for making and keeping contact with parents / carers.

Work phones

A mobile phone may be provided by the school to a member of staff for work purposes, specifically for off-site trips and residential visits. 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 phone functions 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 appropriate and professional at all times, in line with our staff code of conduct
- Ensure that all work phones are kept secure and password protected

Sanctions

Staff that fail to adhere to this policy may face disciplinary action. See the school's staff disciplinary policy for more information.

Use of mobile phones by pupils

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

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

The school's policy is that generally, pupils are not permitted to bring their phones into school except in exceptional circumstances which must be agreed with the Headteacher. An example of these circumstances are listed below.

The Headteacher reserves the right to:

- Ban mobile phones from the school premises altogether if this is deemed appropriate
- Ensure that mobile phones are handed in to the office on arrival for any children who have permission to have phones in school
- Confiscate phones 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.

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.

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

- 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
- Smartwatches can be more fragile than mobile phones, so any confiscation / storage procedures may need to be modified to safely accommodate them

Exceptions for special circumstances for pupils

Some pupils are allowed to bring a mobile phone to school or use it in school, as agreed with the Headteacher.

For instance:

- Pupils travelling to school by themselves
- Young carers who need to be contactable
- Pupils with diabetes or other medical conditions who use their phones to monitor their blood sugar

Where some pupils are allowed to use mobile phones due to exceptional circumstances:

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 Amy Halsall, Headteacher, via email

Enquiries@greatsteeping.lincs.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.

Sanctions

Sanctions we may use if a pupil is in breach of this policy.

For example:

- Schools are permitted to confiscate phones from pupils under sections 91 and 94 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006
- If they are confiscated, the Headteacher can confiscate mobile phones and similar devices for the length of time they deem proportionate, according to the DfE's guidance on mobile phones in schools.

Named senior leaders 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 and our Relationships, Belonging and Behaviour policy allows the Headteacher 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 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
- Abusive calls, emails, social media posts or texts directed at someone on the basis of someone's ethnicity, religious beliefs or sexual orientation

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 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.

Loss, theft or damage

Pupils bringing mobile phones to school must ensure that the phones are appropriately labelled and are stored securely when not in use. Secure storage means handed in to the office as soon as child enters 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 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 and from school.

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

- Including a message on the visitor sign in (see Mobile phone information for visitors below)
- Including disclaimers in your permission forms for bringing a phone to school
- Signposting new parents / carers to the policy and disclaimer

Confiscated phones will be stored in a 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.

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
- Feedback from governors
- 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 Halsall, Headteacher, in a timely manner.

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



Acceptable Use Agreement – Pupil 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 during lessons or once you have entered school.
2. Phones must be switched off (not just put on 'silent').
3. You may not use your mobile phone in the toilets or changing rooms. This is to protect the privacy and welfare of other pupils.
4. You cannot take photos or recordings (either video or audio) of school staff or other pupils.
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
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 vulgar, obscene or derogatory language while on the phone or when using social media.

11. Don't use your phone to view or share pornography or other 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.

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

This form should be signed by parents/carers.

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 (tick the appropriate reasons here):

Travel to and from school alone via public transport	
Are a young carer	
Need the phone to support their medical needs	
Attend a before- or after-school activity where a mobile phone is required for the activity, or to contact parents/carers (especially if clubs finish in Winter months when it is dark)	

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

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 the school staff room.
- Do not take photos or recordings of pupils 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.