

Mobile phone policy Including smart devices

Approved by: PBDW

Date: September
2026

Next review due by: September 2029

1. Introduction and aims

At Parayhouse school 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 students, staff, parents/carers, visitors and volunteers
- Support the school's other policies, especially those related to child protection, Disciplinary 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 is [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#).

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 Headteacher is responsible for monitoring the policy and reviewing it every 3 years, and holding staff and students 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 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, 8.55am- 3.30pm when all students have left at the end of day. Use of personal mobile phones must be restricted to non-contact time, and to areas of the school where students are not present (such as the staffroom).

The school operates a mobile phone-free environment. Personal mobile phones and smart devices must not be used, visible or accessible in any area where students are present.

All staff are required to store personal mobile phones in designated lock boxes from 8:55am until students have left the school building. Staff must not carry personal phones in pockets, bags or on their person whilst working in student areas.

Personal mobile phones may only be accessed in designated staff-only areas, including the staffroom and other approved staff workspaces, and only during breaks when students are not present.

These arrangements are designed to safeguard students, protect staff from allegations, support professional conduct and ensure compliance with safeguarding and data protection requirements.

There may be exceptional circumstances where access to a personal mobile phone is required during the school day. This may include emergency situations authorised by a member of the Senior Leadership Team or pre-arranged telephone appointments.

Staff attending a scheduled telephone appointment must inform the Senior Leadership Team in advance. During the agreed time period they may keep their phone on silent or vibrate and carry it with them. Any calls must be taken in a designated private location to maintain confidentiality and safeguarding standards.

Staff with dependent adults or children should ensure that schools, nurseries or other care providers contact the school directly in the event of an emergency. The school office should be used as the primary point of contact for urgent messages during the working day.

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 on data protection can be found in our data protection policy.

4.3 Safeguarding

Staff must not give their personal contact details to parents/carers or students, 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 students.

Staff must not use their personal mobile phones to take photographs or recordings of students, their work, or anything else that could identify a student. If it's necessary to take photos or recordings as part of a lesson / school trip / activity, this must be done using school equipment.

This policy is rooted in safeguarding principles. Personal devices can enable covert communication, create risks relating to recording and data protection, increase the likelihood of allegations or misunderstandings and reduce active supervision of students.

Any breach of this policy will be considered through a safeguarding lens and may be recorded as a safeguarding concern where appropriate.

Section 4.4 Smartwatches and Wearable Technology

Staff may wear smartwatches; however, if a smartwatch is used in a way that replicates the functions of a mobile phone it will be treated as a mobile phone for the purposes of this policy.

Acceptable use includes:

- Checking the time.
- Passive health monitoring.
- Non-disruptive calendar reminders.

Staff must not use smartwatches to:

- Make or receive calls.
- Read or send messages.
- Check notifications whilst students are present.
- Use applications whilst supervising students.
- Make any audio, photographic or video recordings.

The school's guiding principle is:

If you would not be allowed to do it on a phone, you must not do it on a smartwatch.

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
- Ensure that communication or conduct linked to the device is appropriate and professional at all times, in line with our staff code of conduct

5. Use of devices by students

5.1 Use of mobile phones by students.

students 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). When a student arrives at school they should hand their phone to a member of their class team who will keep it in a locked drawer/cupboard until the end of the day.

students will be taught the risks that are associated with the use of mobile phones, both in school and more broadly, to ensure 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. students will be encouraged to see a mobile-phone free environment as desirable and valuable.

At Parayhouse parents will be informed of the rules and expectations around students' mobile phone use and the potential sanctions for misuse.

5.2 Use of smartwatches by students

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 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 smartwatches have wellness and health-related features

6. Sanctions

Staff

Breaches of this policy will be managed through a graduated response. All breaches will be logged and monitored by school leaders to ensure consistent implementation.

Examples of prohibited conduct include:

- Using a phone in classrooms, the PPA room, lunch hall, corridors or playgrounds.
- Carrying personal devices in student areas.
- Taking photographs or videos on personal devices.
- Messaging or communicating whilst supervising students.

Where appropriate the school's response may include:

Stage 1 – Informal

- Reminder of expectations.
- Logged concern.

Stage 2 – Formal

- Formal management instruction.
- Recorded management action.

Stage 3 – Disciplinary

- Formal disciplinary process.

Serious breaches may constitute gross misconduct. Examples may include recording students, deliberate concealment of devices, repeated breaches of the policy or using a smartwatch to circumvent mobile phone restrictions.

Please see school disciplinary policy for more information.

Students

- Mobile phones can be confiscated (schools are permitted to confiscate phones from students under sections 91 and 94 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006)
- If a students' phone is confiscated it will be kept in a locked drawer until the end of the day. The students' parents will be informed that this has happened.

Staff have the power to search students' phones in specific circumstances as set out in the DFE's guidance on searching ,screening and confiscation. The guidance allows you to search a student's phone if there is 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).

The student'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 [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#). This will include speaking with the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) or deputy, who will consider if pastoral support, an early intervention, or a referral to children's social care, is appropriate

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

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/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 students, 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 students 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.

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 students, their work, or anything else that could identify a student

Parents/carers or volunteers supervising trips are also responsible for enforcing the school's policy for students 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.

8. Loss, Theft or Damage

Students bringing mobile phones to school must ensure that their phones are appropriately labelled or identified and ready to be stored away securely when not in use during the school day.

Students 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 students are travelling to and from school.

Parents and students will be made aware of this by:

- Including a disclaimer in the permission forms for bringing a phone to school.
- Providing a copy of our policy and disclaimer to new and existing students and parents/carers each year.

9. Monitoring and Review

The school is committed to ensuring that this policy has a positive impact on students' education, behaviour and welfare. When reviewing the policy, the school will take into account:

- Feedback from parents/carers and students
 - Feedback from staff
 - Records of behaviour and safeguarding incidents
 - Relevant advice from the Department for Education, the local authority and any other relevant organisations
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Appendix 1: Parent letter outlining code of conduct / acceptable use agreement for students and confirmation slip for students bringing device to school

Dear parents/carers,

We are aware that some students may wish to bring their mobile phones to school for use on the journey to and from home.

Please note that for the safety and wellbeing of our whole school community our school is a mobile phone free environment and students must hand their devices to staff to be safely locked away on arrival at school. The following rules apply to students' use of mobile phones, these will be shared with students as appropriate and we also ask parents to support the school in ensuring these are adhered to.

Where the school feels that a student's mobile phone use breaches our school policy/these acceptable use rules, the school may need to confiscate the device and remove permission for it to be brought to school going forward.

If your child will be bringing their mobile phone to school, please complete the confirmation slip at the bottom of this letter and return it to the school office.

Many thanks for your support in this matter

Parayhouse School

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

1. Students must hand your phone into your class teacher, it will then be locked away until needed (for example if needed for medical reasons)
 2. Students may not use your mobile phone throughout the school day, including lesson times, in between lessons, breaktime and lunchtime
 3. Phones must be switched off (not just put on 'silent').
 4. Students may not use mobile phones in the toilets or changing rooms. This is to protect the privacy and welfare of other students.
 5. Students cannot take photos or recordings (either video or audio) of school staff or other students.
 6. Students must avoid sharing contact details with people they don't know, and not share other people's contact details without their consent.
 7. Students should not share their phone's password(s) or access code(s) with anyone else.
 8. Students must not use their 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 students or staff via:
 - a. Email
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- b. Text/messaging app
 - c. Social media
9. Students must not use their 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')
 10. Rules on bullying, harassment and intimidation apply to how students use their mobile phone even when they aren't in school.
 11. Students should not 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.
 12. Students must not use their phone to view or share pornography or other harmful content.
 13. Students 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.

I confirm that my child will be bringing their mobile phone to school and that I have read and agree to support the code of conduct related to their mobile phone use. I also confirm that their device is labelled with their name.

Student name:	
Class:	
Make/model and colour of device	
Parent/carer(s) name(s):	
Parent/carer signature:	

Appendix 2: 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 students are present. If you must use your phone, you may go past the red gate.
- Do not take photos or recordings of students (unless it is your own child in space that has been dedicated for photos), or staff

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.
