St Peter's CofE Whetstone

Mobile Phone Policy

2026 – 2028

Embrace Multi Academy Trust strives to maintain and improve good provision and outcomes at each of its member schools. Based upon our shared ethos and our values of wisdom, collaboration, respect, integrity, inclusivity, and compassion, we aim to support the learning and development of every person within the trust and our policies are written from this perspective.

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1. Introduction and aims

1.1. At our school we recognise that mobile phones and smart devices are part of everyday life for pupils, parents, carers, staff and the wider school community. However, during the school day they can create risks relating to learning, behaviour, safeguarding, privacy, data protection and wellbeing.

1.2. This policy supports the school to operate as a mobile phone-free environment by default. It is designed to help pupils engage fully in learning, protect pupils and staff from avoidable online and image-based risks, and ensure staff have clear and consistent procedures to follow.

1.3. The policy aims to:

- promote safe, responsible and proportionate use of technology
- set clear expectations for pupils, staff, parents, carers, visitors, volunteers, governors and contractors
- prevent unnecessary disruption to learning and the school day
- support safeguarding, online safety, privacy and data protection arrangements
- ensure any exceptions are managed carefully, fairly and consistently
- align mobile phone expectations with the school behaviour policy and Trust safeguarding expectations

2. Scope and definition of mobile phones and smart devices

2.1. This policy applies to pupils, staff, parents, carers, visitors, volunteers, governors, contractors and any other adults on the school site or supporting school activities.

2.2. For the purposes of this policy, "mobile phone" includes mobile phones and any smart device with similar communication, notification or recording functionality. This includes, but is not limited to:

- smartphones and mobile phones
- smartwatches and wearable devices
- devices able to send or receive calls, messages or notifications
- devices able to access internet services
- devices able to record audio, record video or take photographs
- any similar device identified by the school as falling within the scope of this policy.

3. Relevant guidance and linked policies

3.1. This policy has been written with reference to the Department for Education guidance on mobile phones in schools, behaviour in schools, safeguarding, online safety and data protection. It should be read alongside the school and Trust policies listed below.

3.2. This policy should be read alongside the school and Trust policies listed below:

- Behaviour Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Online Safety Policy
- Acceptable Use of IT Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct

- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy
- SEND Policy
- Educational Visits Policy
- Complaints Policy where concerns are raised by parents or carers

4. Mobile phone-free environment: core policy statement

Core expectation

The school operates as a mobile phone-free environment by default. Mobile phones and smart devices covered by this policy must not be used, seen or heard during the school day, including lessons, transitions, breaktimes and lunchtimes, unless a specific authorised exception or reasonable adjustment has been agreed.

4.1. Anything other than a mobile phone-free school day is by exception only. Exceptions must be authorised, recorded, time-limited or purpose-specific where appropriate, and communicated to relevant staff.

4.2. Schools may adopt local arrangements for how phones are managed. This may include pupils not bringing phones onto site, handing phones in, using lockers or pouches, or keeping devices switched off and out of sight. The chosen approach must be clear, consistently applied and communicated to pupils, parents and carers.

5. Roles and responsibilities

5.1. Trust and school leaders

The headteacher is responsible for the implementation of this policy at school level. This includes:

- ensuring staff, pupils, parents and carers understand the policy and the reasons for it
- ensuring the behaviour policy and any local procedures are aligned with this policy
- authorising reasonable adjustments and exceptional arrangements
- ensuring secure arrangements for confiscated or handed-in devices
- monitoring breaches, patterns and any safeguarding concerns linked to mobile phone use
- ensuring concerns are addressed promptly and consistently
- reporting relevant trends to the Local Governing Committee or Trust, where required.

5.2. Staff

All staff, including teachers, support staff, supply staff, agency staff and volunteers, are responsible for consistently enforcing this policy. Staff must:

- model expected behaviour by not using personal mobile phones for personal reasons in front of pupils during the school day
- challenge breaches of the policy promptly and professionally
- follow agreed local procedures for confiscation, logging and storage of devices
- report repeated breaches to senior leaders
- share safeguarding concerns with the Designated Safeguarding Lead or deputy without delay
- comply with the Trust Acceptable Use of IT Policy, Online Safety Policy, Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, Data Protection Policy and Staff Code of Conduct.

5.3. Pupils

Pupils are expected to follow the school's mobile phone-free arrangements and any authorised individual agreement. Pupils must not use, display, access or allow their device to be heard during the school day unless an agreed exception applies.

5.4. Parents and carers

Parents and carers have an important role in supporting the school's mobile phone-free environment. Parents and carers do not have authority to grant permission for a pupil to use a mobile phone during the school day. Permission can only be granted by the headteacher or an authorised senior leader in accordance with this policy. Parents and carers should ensure pupils understand the school's expectations and should contact the school office if they need to pass on an urgent message during the school day.

6. Use of mobile phones by staff

6.1. Personal mobile phones

Staff must not use personal mobile phones for personal reasons in front of pupils throughout the school day. Personal mobile phone use must be restricted to non-contact time and to areas where pupils are not present, such as the staffroom or other agreed staff-only areas.

There may be circumstances in which it is appropriate for a member of staff to have specific access to their phone for personal reasons. Examples include emergency contact relating to their own child, school, dependent or acutely ill family member. The headteacher will decide whether special arrangements are appropriate. Where arrangements are not agreed, staff should use the school office number for emergency contact.

6.2. Data protection

Staff must not use personal mobile phones to process personal data or confidential school information. This includes entering personal or confidential information into generative artificial intelligence tools or unauthorised applications.

6.3. Safeguarding and professional boundaries

Staff must not give personal contact details to pupils or parents/carers, including through social media or messaging apps. Staff must not use personal mobile phones to take photographs, videos or audio recordings of pupils, pupil work or anything else that could identify a pupil. If photographs or recordings are required for educational, safeguarding or communication purposes, school-approved equipment and systems must be used.

6.4. Use of mobile phones for work purposes

In limited circumstances, staff may need to use a mobile phone or similar device for work purposes, for example to use multi-factor authentication, issue homework, operate school-approved systems, support emergency evacuations or supervise off-site trips. Staff must use devices professionally, avoid use in front of pupils unless necessary, and must not use personal devices to contact parents or carers except where authorised in an emergency.

6.5. School-provided phones

Where school-provided phones are issued, they must be used only for authorised work purposes and in line with the Staff Code of Conduct, Acceptable Use of IT Policy, Online Safety Policy and Data Protection Policy. Access to school phones must not be shared with unauthorised users.

6.6. Staff breaches

Staff who fail to follow this policy may be subject to management action or disciplinary procedures in line with the Staff Code of Conduct and Disciplinary Policy.

7. Use of mobile phones by pupils

7.1. Default pupil expectation

Pupils must not use mobile phones or smart devices during the school day. This includes lessons, transitions, breaktimes, lunchtimes, clubs or supervised activities taking place during the normal school day, unless an authorised exception applies.

For primary schools, pupils should not bring a mobile phone or smart device onto the school site unless permission has been granted by the headteacher or delegated senior leader. Where mobile phones are permitted for travel, medical, SEND, safeguarding or exceptional reasons, they must be switched off and handed to the class teacher.

7.2. Smartwatches and wearable technology

Smartwatches and wearable devices with communication, notification, internet, camera, audio or video functionality are treated as mobile phones under this policy. They must be switched off and stored in accordance with school procedures throughout the school day unless an authorised medical, SEND or safeguarding adjustment has been approved.

7.3. Use outside the normal school day, including trips and residentials

The school will determine arrangements for mobile phone use on educational visits, residential visits and activities outside the normal school day through the visit planning and risk assessment process. Where phones are permitted, pupils and parents/carers will be given clear expectations before the visit. Any permitted use must not disrupt the educational purpose of the activity or compromise safeguarding, privacy or welfare.

7.4. Bring Your Own Device arrangements

Where Bring Your Own Device arrangements are used for approved learning purposes, these apply only to approved tablets or laptops and must comply with the school's Acceptable Use of IT and Online Safety policies. Mobile phones must not be used as part of any Bring Your Own Device or digital learning scheme.

8. Exceptions, reasonable adjustments and permitted use

8.1. The school will consider exceptions and reasonable adjustments where mobile phone access may be needed for medical, SEND, safeguarding or other exceptional reasons. Parental preference, convenience, reassurance, transport arrangements, social arrangements, after-school contact requirements or a pupil's wish to carry a phone shall not in themselves constitute exceptional circumstances. Exceptions will be considered on a case-by-case basis and agreed by the headteacher or delegated senior leader.

8.2. Examples may include:

- diabetes monitoring or other medical condition management
- SEND-related communication or accessibility needs. The existence of a SEND need, disability, medical condition or anxiety-related difficulty does not automatically entitle a

pupil to access a mobile phone during the school day. The school will determine the most appropriate reasonable adjustment, which may not involve mobile phone access

- safeguarding arrangements
- young carers who need specific emergency contact arrangements
- travel to and from school where a phone is needed before or after school
- exceptional family circumstances evidenced to the satisfaction of the headteacher and where no reasonable alternative arrangement exists.

8.3. Where an exception is agreed, the arrangement must be recorded using the school's permission form. The record should identify the reason for the exception, the approved purpose, where and when the device may be used, storage arrangements and review date. Possession of a switched-off mobile phone for travel purposes will not normally constitute grounds for use during the school day and does not automatically justify an exception to this policy

9. Sanctions, confiscation, searching and safeguarding response

9.1. Behaviour response

Breaches of this policy will be addressed in line with the school Behaviour Policy. Sanctions must be reasonable, proportionate and consistently applied. The school will consider the pupil's age, SEND, disability, medical needs, caring responsibilities and any safeguarding context when deciding the appropriate response.

Example breach	Possible response
First low-level breach	Device confiscated or secured until the end of the school day; pupil reminded of expectations. parent/carer informed; behaviour consequence applied in line with the Behaviour Policy.
Repeated breach	Device confiscated or secured; parent/carer informed; behaviour consequence applied in line with the Behaviour Policy.
Persistent breach	Parent/carer meeting; individual plan or further restriction on bringing a device to school.
Serious misuse	Safeguarding response, behaviour sanction, possible police or external agency involvement where appropriate.

9.2. Confiscation and storage

Where a device is confiscated or handed in because of a breach or agreed procedure, it will be logged, labelled where appropriate, stored securely in a locked location and returned only by authorised staff. Parents/carers may be required to collect the device following repeated or serious breaches. The school will record who confiscated the device, where it was stored, when it was returned and to whom it was returned. Refusal to hand over a mobile phone when instructed by a member of staff will be treated as a serious breach of the Behaviour Policy.

9.3. Searching

The headteacher and authorised staff may search for mobile phones and similar devices, where permitted by legislation and where there are reasonable grounds to suspect possession or misuse contrary to school rules. Searches will be conducted in line with DfE Searching, Screening and Confiscation guidance and the school Behaviour Policy.

9.4. **Safeguarding response**

Where mobile phone misuse may indicate that a pupil is suffering, or may be at risk of, harm, staff must follow the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and speak to the designated safeguarding lead or deputy. Safeguarding concerns may include, but are not limited to, bullying, harassment, threats, harmful online content, inappropriate image sharing, recording without consent, sexualised content, coercion or exploitation.

Certain conduct may also constitute criminal behaviour. The school will involve the police or other agencies where appropriate, especially where there are concerns about violence, harassment, hate incidents, image-based abuse, sexual offences or other serious harm.

10. Use by parents, carers, visitors, volunteers and governors

10.1. Parents, carers, visitors, volunteers, governors and contractors must follow this policy when on the school site or supporting school activities. They must not use mobile phones in lessons or when working with pupils, unless authorised as part of their role. They must not take photographs, videos or audio recordings of pupils or staff unless this has been specifically permitted by the school and appropriate consent arrangements are in place.

10.2. Parents and carers should contact the school office if they need to pass on an urgent message to their child during the school day. Pupils should not use personal mobile phones to contact parents or carers during the school day unless this has been authorised by a member of staff.

10.3. Visitors will be informed of the school's mobile phone expectations when they sign in or attend an event.

11. Loss, theft or damage

11.1. The school accepts no responsibility for mobile phones or smart devices that are lost, damaged or stolen on school premises, on school transport, during visits or trips, or while pupils are travelling to and from school, except where the school has taken formal responsibility for a confiscated or handed-in device.

11.2. Pupils and staff must take reasonable steps to secure devices, including using passwords, passcodes or biometric security where available. Where pupils are permitted to bring devices, devices must be clearly identifiable and stored in the agreed secure location.

11.3. Lost devices should be returned to school office. The school will make reasonable efforts to identify the owner and arrange return.

12. Communication, education and implementation

12.1. The school will communicate this policy clearly to pupils, parents, carers and staff so that expectations, procedures and sanctions are understood. Communication will include:

- publication on the school website
- parent/carer newsletters or start-of-year information
- pupil assemblies and regular reminders
- staff briefings and induction
- visitor sign-in information
- classroom or site reminders, where helpful.

12.2. Pupils will be taught and reminded about the risks linked to mobile phones and the benefits of a mobile phone-free school day. This may include learning about distraction, disruption, bullying, online harm, privacy, image sharing, data protection, digital wellbeing and responsible technology use.

13. Monitoring and review

13.1. The school will monitor the implementation and impact of this policy. Monitoring may include:

- records of breaches and sanctions
- safeguarding concerns linked to devices
- patterns by year group, time of day or location
- staff and pupil understanding of the policy
- parent/carer and staff feedback
- impact on behaviour, wellbeing and learning
- consistency of implementation across the school.

13.2. Safeguarding concerns relating to mobile phone misuse will be recorded through CPOMS. Behaviour-related breaches will be recorded through the school's agreed behaviour recording system. The headteacher will ensure relevant trends are reviewed and shared with the Local Governing Committee or Trust as appropriate.

13.3. This policy will be reviewed every two years, or sooner if statutory guidance changes or monitoring indicates that revisions are required.