

Mobile Phone Policy

1. Introduction and aims

At Ropley CE Primary School we recognise that mobile phones and similar devices, including smartphones, are an important part of everyday life for our children, 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 children, 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.

2. 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.

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 and Assistant Headteacher are responsible for monitoring the policy every year, reviewing it, and holding staff and children accountable for its implementation.

3.2 Governors

Governors will review and monitor this policy yearly .

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, while children are present e.g. in class or out on the playground. Use of personal mobile phones must be restricted to non-contact time, and to areas of the school where children 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.

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). The school's Data Protection Policy should be read in conjunction with this policy.

4.3 Safeguarding

Non leadership members of staff must not give their personal contact details to parents/carers or children, 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 children.

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

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 aren't limited to:

- To use multi-factor authentication;
- Safeguarding;
- 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;
- Refrain from using their phones to contact parents/carers. If necessary, contact must be made via the school office.

4.6 Sanctions

Staff that fail to adhere to this policy may face disciplinary action.

5. Use of mobile phones by children

Children should not use their mobile phones during the school day, including during lessons, in the time between lessons, at breaktimes and at lunchtimes. Children may bring a mobile phone to school but must hand it in at reception at the start of each day.

The phones will be placed in a secure and inaccessible place away from children. Children must adhere to the school's code of conduct for mobile phone use (appendix one)

5.1 Use of smartwatches by children

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.

If a child brings in a smartwatch these need to be handed in at reception in the morning and will be returned at the end of the day.

5.2 Exceptions for special circumstances

Children with diabetes who use their phones to monitor their blood sugar.

The school may permit children 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, children or parents/carers should contact the headteacher.

Any children who are given permission must then adhere to the school's code of conduct for mobile phone use (see appendix 1).

5.3 Sanctions

Schools are permitted to confiscate phones from children under sections 91 and 94 of the Education and Inspections Act (2006)

If children are found with a mobile phone during school hours, it will be confiscated and kept in the school office. The phone will need the child's parent to collect. Repeat abuse of this will result in the child not being allowed to bring a phone into school.

Staff have the power to search children's phones in specific circumstances, as set out in the DfE's guidance on searching, screening and confiscation. The DfE guidance allows you to search a child'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 child'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 I 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.

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 children, unless it's at a public event (such as a school fayre), 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 children.

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. See Appendix 2.

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 children, their work, or anything else which could identify a child.

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

Children bringing mobile phones to school must ensure that the phones are appropriately labelled and are stored securely at reception.

Staff must 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 children are travelling to and from school.

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

8. Monitoring and review

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

- Feedback from parents/carers and children;
- Feedback from staff;
- Records of behaviour and safeguarding incidents;
- Relevant advice from the Department for Education, the local authority and any other relevant organisations.

9. Appendix 1: Mobile phone agreement for children allowed to bring their phones to school due to exceptional circumstances

Mobile phone – Agreement

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

1. You must hand your mobile phone to the office at the start of the day.
2. Phones must be switched off (not just put on 'silent').
3. You must not access your phone whilst in school.
4. Avoid sharing your contact details with people you don't know, and don't share other people's contact details without their consent.
5. Don't share your phone's password(s) or access code(s) with anyone else.
6. Don't use your mobile phone to bully, intimidate or harass anyone. This includes bullying, harassing or intimidating children or staff via:
 - a. Email
 - b. Text/messaging app
 - c. Social media
7. Rules on bullying, harassment and intimidation apply to how you use your mobile phone even when you aren't in school.
8. We reserve the right to confiscate mobile phones.
9. Confiscated mobile phones will only be returned to a parent/carer who will be required to collect the phone from school.

10. Appendix 2: mobile phone information slip 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 children are present. If you must use your phone, you may go to the staff room;
- Do not take photos or recordings of children (unless it is your own child), or staff;
- Do not use your phone in lessons, or when working with children.

The school accepts no responsibility for phones that are lost, damaged or stolen while you are on the school grounds.

Approved: 8th July 2026

Next review due by: