Mobile phone policy

Buckleshame Primary School

Approved by:	Rachael Rudge	**Date:**	September 2026
Last reviewed on:			
Next review due by:	September 2028		
Version:	**1**		

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Contents

1. Introduction and aims 2
2. Relevant guidance 2
3. Roles and responsibilities 2
4. Use of mobile phones by staff 3
5. Use of mobile phones by pupils 4
7. Loss, theft or damage 6
8. Monitoring and review 6
9. Appendix 1: Acceptable use agreement for pupils allowed to bring their phones to school due to exceptional circumstances 8
10. Appendix 2: Permission form allowing a pupil to bring their phone to school 9
11. Appendix 3: Template mobile phone information slip for visitors 10

1. Introduction and aims

At Bucklesham Primary 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 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.

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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 2 years, 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, DSL and DPO

Governors are responsible for ensuring the policy is compliant with statutory guidance and is reviewed biennially. The named DSL/Deputy DSL is responsible for advising on safeguarding implications of mobile phone incidents; the named Data Protection Lead (DPO or senior leader) will advise on any data incidents related to 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, while children are present. 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 and must be notified prior to having the phone in the classroom.

Staff must keep personal phones secured and out of sight when pupils are present. Exceptions must be pre-authorised in writing by the Headteacher and recorded (date, reason, duration) in a central log.

If special arrangements are not deemed necessary, school staff can use the school office number 01473 659389 as a point of emergency contact.

4.2 Data protection

Staff must not use personal mobile phones to process personal data, including photographing sensitive documents or pupil work. Any necessary capturing of images for school purposes must use school-owned devices and those images stored on the school network/approved system within 24 hours. Any suspected data breach involving mobile phones must be reported immediately to the DPO and Headteacher. See AI Policy, Acceptable use of IT Policy for more guidance.

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.

They should only contact parents/ carers using school email or Class Dojo about school matters. This may be done on a school device or personal mobile phone.

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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.

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
- Sending a Class Dojo message or story
- 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

If staff use personal devices for work tasks (e.g., Class Dojo), they must ensure appropriate privacy settings, avoid storing pupil personal data on the device, and seek advice from the DPO if unsure.

4.5 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

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).

Pupils will leave their mobile phones in the drawer in the Office on arrival at school and pick them up from the Office at the end of the day.

Children with specific medical needs may have their phone on them and may only use it for this purpose e.g., diabetic pupils who use glucose monitoring systems that connect to a smart device.

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.

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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.

Smartwatches capable of communication (calls, messaging or internet access) are prohibited. Simple wearables that only show the time and step counts without connectivity may be permitted by prior agreement. Parents must declare any smartwatch and its functionality; devices with SIMs or connectivity must be left at home or handed in to the Office.

5.2 Exceptions special circumstances

The school may permit pupils to use a mobile phone in school, due to exceptional circumstances if they have a medical condition e.g., diabetic children who use their phone to monitor their blood glucose levels.

In the case of permission due to exceptional circumstances, permission will only be granted where there is a documented safeguarding or medical necessity. To request such permission, pupils or parents/carers should contact the Headteacher.

Any pupils who are given permission must then adhere to the school's acceptable use agreement for mobile phone use (see appendix 1).

Requests for permission must be submitted via Appendix 2 and accompanied by supporting evidence (medical letter, travel arrangements). Approved permissions will be time-limited, recorded centrally and reviewed termly. Permission can be withdrawn if agreement is breached.

5.3 Sanctions

Staff may ask a pupil to hand over a phone. If a phone is refused and the situation escalates, staff must call a senior leader. The school does not routinely search phones. The school will not access the content of a pupil's device without consent unless there is a safeguarding reason; in such cases the DSL will consider involving parents and/or police and follow KCSIE guidance.

Sanctions will be proportionate and follow a graduated approach:

(1) Verbal reminder and confiscation for remainder of day;

(2) Parent contact for repeat offences;

(3) Formal meeting and written warning;

(4) Further sanctions in line with behaviour policy.

For pupils with SEND or protected characteristics, reasonable adjustments will be considered and recorded. Incidences involving images, sexting or bullying will follow KCSIE and safeguarding procedures and may result in police involvement.

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.

Office staff will give all visitors a copy of Appendix 3 and ensure the visitor confirms that they have read it and will comply. For public events, the school will make announcements and include a reminder in event communications to parents.

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

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- 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.

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 appropriately labelled, ready to be stored away securely in the Office 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.

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

The school is not liable for loss/damage/theft. Families should be signposted to check their home insurance. Any incident involving suspected theft on school premises or during trips must be reported to the Headteacher and recorded; serious incidents may be reported to the police. The school will keep a log of lost/found devices.

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 Headteacher in a timely manner.

All staff (including new starters and supply staff) will receive training on this policy and related safeguarding and data protection expectations during induction and annually thereafter. Records of training will be kept.

Governors will approve this policy every 2 years and it will be published on the school's website.

The Headteacher will report annually to Governors on policy implementation including: number of incidents involving phones, safeguarding incidents linked to devices, number of permissions granted for exceptional

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circumstances, and any data breaches. The policy's impact on behaviour, learning and safeguarding will be reviewed as part of the school improvement cycle and linked to the behaviour priority.

Link to other Policies:

- AI Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Staff code of conduct
- Acceptable use of IT Policy

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

Pupil acceptable use agreement

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

1. You may not use your mobile phone throughout the school day, including lesson times, in between lessons, breaktime and lunchtime, unless a teacher specifically allows you to for a specific reason.
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 or otherwise to act in breach of the school's behavior policy. 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 a criminal offence. For instance, by making or sharing nudes or semi-nudes (including AI-generated images or 'deepfakes')
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. This language is not permitted under the school's behaviour policy.
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.
13. Mobile phones are not permitted in any internal or external exam or test environment. If you have a mobile phone, you will be asked to store it appropriately, or turn it over to an exam invigilator, before entering the test room. Bringing a phone into the test room can result in your exam being declared invalid.

I understand that misuse of my phone may result in withdrawal of permission and sanctions in line with the behaviour policy.

Signature of child

Signature of parent

Date

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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 phone to support their medical needs.
- Travel to or from school alone

(Tick appropriate reason)

Evidence provided?

Pupils who bring a mobile phone to school must abide by the school's policy on the use of mobile phones, and its 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: _____

FOR SCHOOL USE ONLY	
Authorised by:	
Date:	

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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 Office
- Do not take photos or recordings of pupils (unless it is your own child, for your own use and not for social media), 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.

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