

Mobile Phone Policy

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Mobile Phone Policy

Statement of Intent

At George Washington 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
- 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.

Legal Framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation including, but not limited to, the following:

- Education and Inspections Act 2006
- Education Act 2011
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Equality Act 2010
- The UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR)
- Data Protection Act 2018
- DfE Mobile Phones in Schools statutory guidance
- KCSIE 2025

The policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Safeguarding and Child protection Policy
- Behaviour Management Policy
- Online Safety Policy

Roles and Responsibilities

The trust board is responsible for:

- Establishing, in consultation with the Head and school community, a clear understanding of expectations around mobile phone usage when on the school premises.
- Ensuring compliance with the DfE's 'Mobile Phones in School' statutory guidance.
- Review this policy on a 3-year basis, or sooner if statutory guidance is updated.

The governing body is responsible for:

- Establishing, in consultation with the Head and school community, a clear understanding of expectations around mobile phone usage when on the school premises.
- Ensuring compliance with the DfE's 'Mobile Phones in School' statutory guidance.
- Monitoring the implementation of this policy within school.

The Head is responsible for:

- Enforcing the school's procedures are followed on a day-to-day basis.
- Ensuring that teachers understand this policy and what to do if a pupil is in breach of the policy.

Staff members are responsible for:

- 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 Head is responsible for monitoring the policy year, reviewing it annually and suggesting changes to the board if needed, 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.

Parents/carers are responsible for:

- Ensuring the permission form regarding bringing a mobile phone to school is signed and returned.
- No smart technology being worn to school.

Pupils are responsible for:

- Ensuring they hand their mobile device into school at the start of the day following school procedures.

Use of mobile phones by staff

The DfE's statutory mobile phone guidance states 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 for personal reasons in any place where pupils are present. Personal 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).

Class based staff and those who work directly with children are not permitted to have their mobile phone on their person during the school day. Mobile phones must be kept either in the staffroom, or in a secure storage space within the classroom/office.

Staff who do not work directly with children should not use their personal mobile phones for personal use while they are working.

There may be circumstances in which it's appropriate for a member of staff to have use of their phone during contact time, for example:

- If awaiting a call from a medical profession
- In the case of acutely ill dependents or family members
- If a pupil leaves the school site without permission, and the member of staff is despatched to follow or find them.
- If they are on a residential trip and are using their personal mobile phone to stay in touch with the trip leader.

The head of school will decide on a case-by-basis whether to allow for any other special arrangements.

School staff can use the school office number as a point of emergency contact.
The contact number is 0191 4906453

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 which 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 aren't limited to:

- 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 which could identify a pupil
- Refrain from using their phones to contact parents/carers. If necessary, contact must be made via the school office or using a work mobile.

Work mobile phone

Some members of staff have access to 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 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 always appropriate and professional, in line with our staff code of conduct.

Use of mobile phone by pupils

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

Pupils in year 5 and year 6 are permitted to bring a mobile phone to school if they walk to and from school without adult supervision. The procedures for pupils to follow is as follows:

- Each pupil must have permission to bring a mobile phone to school. Parents/carers must complete a school form authorising this.
- All phones must be turned off when on school premises.
- Mobile phones must be placed in the box inside the year 5 and year 6 classrooms at the start of the school day. These boxes are then held securely in the main school office.
- All phones must be collected at the end of the school day. They should remain turned off until the pupil has left the school premises.

Under sections 91 and 94 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006, George Washington Primary School is permitted to confiscate phones. The Head of School can confiscate mobile phones and similar devices for the length of time deemed proportionate, according to the DfE's guidance on mobile phones in schools. If a mobile phone is not handed in, and subsequently found later in the day, it will be confiscated and only returned to a responsible adult.

Use of smartwatches by pupils

The DfE's 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.

The rules for smartwatches are the same as those for mobile phones.

- Pupils are discouraged from bringing smartwatches to school
- If a pupil brings a smartwatch to school, they must hand it in to staff at the beginning of the school day

- Smartwatches will be stored securely in the main school office in a lockable drawer/cabinet during the school day and returned to pupils at the end of the day.
- If a smartwatch is not handed in, and subsequently found later in the day, it will be confiscated and returned to a responsible adult.

Expectations for special circumstances

The school may permit pupils to use a mobile phone in school, due to exceptional circumstances. This will be considered on a day-to-day basis. Such circumstances may include, but are not limited to:

- Pupils with diabetes who use their mobile phone to monitor their blood sugar levels

To request such permission, parents/carers should contact the school and speak to the Head of School.

Any pupil who is given permission must adhere to the school's code of conduct/acceptable use agreement for mobile phone use.

Sanctions

Schools are permitted to confiscate phones from pupils under sections 91 and 94 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006.

The Head of school 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.

Staff 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 allows school 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 such cases, a member of the safeguarding team will carry out and/or oversee the searching of the phone.

Safeguarding procedures will be followed at all times.

If the content on the mobile phone indicates that the pupil may be suffering, or at risk of, harm, 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 which 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 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. At George Washington Primary School, this will be in a locked cupboard in the main office.

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.

Confiscated phones will be stored in a locked cupboard in the school main office. The Head of School will be responsible for the safe storage.

If a mobile phone is found on the school site, it should be handed in to the school office. 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 of 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 Department for Education, the local authority and any other relevant
- If there are any concerns regarding this policy, please contact the Head of School.



Acceptable Use Agreement for Pupils Allowed to Bring their Phones to School

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

1. You must hand your phone in at the beginning of the school day.
2. You cannot take photos or recordings (either video or audio) of school staff or other pupils without their consent.
3. Avoid sharing your contact details with people you don't know, and don't share other people's contact details without their consent.
4. Don't share your phone's password(s) or access code(s) with anyone else.
5. 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
6. Don't use your phone to send or receive anything that may be criminal. For instance, by sending private images of others.
7. Rules on bullying, harassment and intimidation apply to how you use your mobile phone even when you aren't in school.
8. 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.
9. Don't use your phone to view or share adult or other harmful content.
10. 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.

Signed	
Name	
Date	



Permission Form Allowing a Pupil to Bring their Mobile Phone to School

PUPIL DETAILS	
Pupil name:	
Year group/class:	
Parent/carer(s) name(s):	

The school has agreed to allow the pupil named above to bring their mobile phone to school because they: (please highlight or tick)

- Travel to and from school alone
- 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

Pupils who bring a mobile phone to school must abide by the school's policy on the use of mobile phones and have completed the *Acceptable Use Agreement for Pupils Allowed to Bring their Phones to School*.

The school reserves the right to revoke permission if a pupil does not abide by the policy.

Signed	
Name	
Relationship to pupil	
Date	

FOR SCHOOL USE ONLY	
Authorised by:	
Date:	



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 pupils are present. If you must use your phone, please ask a member of staff for directions to somewhere you can privately do this.
- > Do not take photos or recordings of pupils (unless it is your own child), 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.

A full copy of our mobile phone policy is available from the school office.