



Mobile Phone Policy

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Approved by:	Education Committee
Review Date:	

Policy Information:

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Updates made since the last review:

Review date	Changes made	By whom
N/A	New Policy	Director of Education

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Note: throughout this policy, 'mobile phones' refers to mobile phones and similar smart devices.

1. Introduction and aims

At Forward Education Trust, we are committed to creating calm, safe and purposeful learning environments across our schools. In line with Department for Education guidance, we expect all of our schools to operate as mobile phone-free environments throughout the school day.

We recognise that mobile phones and similar smart devices are part of everyday life for many pupils, families and staff. However, in our school context, where consistency, structure and positive interactions are critical, it is essential that the use of such devices does not hinder learning, wellbeing, communication or relationships.

This policy sets out a clear, consistent Trust-wide approach to mobile phones and smart devices, supporting our commitment to high standards of behaviour, safeguarding and inclusive practice.

This policy aims to:

- Establish a mobile phone-free culture across the school day, supporting focus, engagement and positive behaviour
- Provide clear and consistent expectations for pupils, staff, parents/carers, visitors and volunteers
- Support safe, calm and well-regulated environments that meet the needs of pupils across our special school settings
- Ensure that mobile phone use does not compromise safeguarding, privacy or data protection
- Align fully with the Trust's Behaviour and Relationships Policy, Safeguarding Policy and other key procedures

This policy also addresses the challenges associated with mobile phones in school, including:

- Risks to safeguarding and exposure to inappropriate content
- Increased potential for anxiety, distraction or dysregulation
- Disruption to learning, routines and social interaction
- Data protection and privacy concerns (e.g. photography, recording)
- Risk of loss, theft or damage of personal devices
- Ensuring technology is used appropriately and only where it supports learning or individual need

1. Relevant guidance

This policy reflects the Department for Education's guidance on mobile phones in schools, which sets the expectation that schools operate as mobile phone-free environments throughout the school day.

2. Roles & responsibilities

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 is responsible for monitoring the policy, reviewing it, 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 . Use of mobile phones by pupils

We operate a no mobile phone policy on school premises. This helps maintain a low-arousal, safe and relational learning environment. Where mobile devices are brought into school, the following rules apply:

We believe in the power of connection, trusted adult relationships and coregulation strategies.

While we acknowledge that mobile devices can offer comfort or familiarity to some pupils, we also recognise that they may inhibit social connection, delay regulation, and add complexity to relational support.

3.1 Mobile Devices Procedure

See appendix 2 for details around each schools procedures

3.2 Why We Have This Protocol

- To create a predictable and low-demand start to the day.
- To promote independent regulation strategies.
- To avoid over-reliance on digital coping tools which may interrupt face-to-face relational support.
- To protect the emotional safety and privacy of all pupils.
- To prevent the potential misuse of devices and reduce online safeguarding risks.

3.3 Exceptions for special circumstances and for sixth-form pupils

The school may permit pupils 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, 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).

Sixth-form pupils are allowed access to their mobile phones during the school day, to reflect their increased independence and responsibility, but must not compromise our policy on the use of mobile phones for other pupils.

Therefore, they are only permitted to use their mobile phones out of sight of younger pupils.

Misuse of mobile phones by pupils in the sixth form will lead to sanctions according to our behaviour policy.

3.4 Sanctions

The Trust adopts a proportionate, relational and safeguarding-led approach to sanctions related to mobile phone use. Any response will take account of the pupil's age, SEND, communication needs, emotional regulation, intent and the impact of the behaviour.

Sanctions are not intended to be punitive, but to support safety, learning, and positive behaviour, and to reduce the likelihood of repeated misuse.

Graduated Responses

Where a pupil breaches this policy, one or more of the following actions may be taken, depending on the seriousness, frequency and context of the incident:

- A reminder of expectations and a restorative conversation with a trusted adult.
- A parent/carer discussion or meeting to review expectations, risks and support needs.

- Review, creation or update of an individual behaviour, regulation or risk management plan, where appropriate.

Refusal to Comply

If a pupil refuses to comply with a reasonable request from staff to switch off or hand over a mobile device, this will be treated as a breach of the school's Behaviour and Relationships Policy and managed accordingly. Any response will remain calm, proportionate and focused on minimising escalation and distress.

Serious Misuse

Any misuse of a mobile device that raises safeguarding concerns (including, but not limited to filming others without consent, threatening or abusive communication, online bullying, or sharing harmful or illegal content) will be treated as a serious incident and managed in line with the Trust's safeguarding, behaviour and child protection procedures. This may include escalation to senior leaders, Trust-level review, or involvement of external agencies where required.

SEND and Reasonable Adjustments

As a Trust of special schools, we recognise that mobile phone misuse may sometimes be linked to distress, dysregulation or unmet need. In such cases, sanctions will not be applied in isolation but alongside supportive interventions and reasonable adjustments, ensuring responses are inclusive, individualised and in the best interests of the pupil.

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 pupils 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.

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

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). Personal mobile phones may be used solely to complete multi-factor authentication when accessing secure school platforms on a school-issued device.

More detailed guidance on data protection can be found in the data protection policy and ICT acceptable use policy.

4.3 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 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. Personal mobile phones may be used solely to complete multi-factor authentication when accessing secure school platforms on a school-issued device.

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 are not limited to:

- 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.

The Headteacher will determine and authorise any organised or planned use of staff personal mobile phones.

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

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 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
- The Trust reserves the right to access and review the content of any mobile phone provided for work purposes; all Trust-issued devices must be returned when a member of staff leaves the organisation.

4.6 Sanctions

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

See the Trust's staff disciplinary policy for more information.

5. Use of mobile phones by parents/carers and visitors

Parents/carers and visitors (including Trustees and contractors) must adhere to this policy if they are on the school site or off site supporting pupils during the school day.

This means:

- Not taking pictures or recordings of pupils, other than 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. (See appendix 3)

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, 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.

6. 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, in line with the school's storage procedures (see appendix 2).

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 an appropriate secure location.

Schools that confiscate phones from pupils become responsible for the phone and can be held responsible for loss, theft or damage.

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

7. Monitoring and review

This policy will be reviewed annually, or sooner if required in response to changes in statutory guidance, safeguarding requirements, or emerging Trust priorities. The policy owner is the Director of Education, who is responsible for ensuring the policy remains up to date, clearly communicated and consistently implemented across all Trust schools.

The Education Committee holds responsibility for formally approving the policy and for maintaining strategic oversight of its effectiveness. Following each review cycle, the Committee will consider any recommended amendments and approve a final version for Trust-wide adoption.

Monitoring Adherence

Headteachers are responsible for ensuring that mobile phone expectations are implemented consistently in their school. This includes:

- maintaining clear procedures for staff
- communicating expectations to pupils and families
- monitoring day-to-day adherence
- addressing any concerns or patterns of non-compliance

If there are any concerns regarding this policy, these should be brought to the attention of the Headteacher in a timely manner. The Headteacher should raise any concerns with the Director of Education.

8.Links to other policies

- Staff code of conduct
- Behaviour & Relationships policy
- Acceptable use of ICT
- Staff Disciplinary policy

Appendix 1 – Mobile Device Acceptable Use Agreement for Exceptional Circumstances

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

1. You may not use your mobile phone during lessons, unless the teacher specifically allows you to.
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 without their consent.
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. 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 criminal. For instance, by 'sexting'.
9. Rules on bullying, harassment and intimidation apply to how you use your mobile phone even when you aren't in school.
10. Do not use rude, offensive or unkind language when using a phone or social media. This is not allowed and will be dealt with 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.

Signed: (Pupil)

Signed: (Parent)

FOR SCHOOL USE ONLY	
Authorised by:	
Date:	

Appendix 2 – School process and storage arrangements

- Upon arrival, all pupils are expected to switch off their mobile phones.
- Each pupil places their device into their personalised, labelled safe pouch.
- Pouches are stored securely in the year group tray in a locked location.
- Phones will be returned to pupils at the end of the school day or during their scheduled departure (e.g., part-time timetable).
 - Any smart devices will be switched to Airplane mode- this is for both staff and pupils whilst in school

Reasonable adjustments

For a very small number of children, and following negotiation involving parents a small amount of the start of the school day will be allocated to some time with their phone, this will be in the school family room, not in the main school building.

Some pupils at The Heights feel that they need to have time on their phone during the day due to anxiety or previous trauma. This can happen with the support of staff in the family room/ foyer area for a short period.

A very small number of pupils struggle with giving their phones in to school. In such cases we have an agreement where phones are switched off, placed in a lockable box- with the key held in the school office and then kept in the pupil's bag.

All pupils requiring reasonable adjustments have had a meeting with school SLT and their parents to understand the issues with not having a phone in school, as pupils see them, and problem solved to overcome them. Mobile phone contracts are issued to these pupils with clear guidance and terms of use.

Medical Needs

Should a pupil require use of a mobile phone to monitor a medical condition, eg diabetes, then a mobile phone contract would be issued to the pupil following discussion. Any episodes of misuse of a phone in school would be dealt with using the Behaviour and Relationships Policy.

Appendix 3 – Parent/visitor information slip

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 to make calls where pupils are present. If you must use your phone, you may go to the school office where staff will advise you of a private space that you can use
- 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.

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