



# Mobile Phone Use Policy

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## 1. Introduction and purpose

This Mobile Phone Use Policy sets out the expectations and procedures for the use of mobile phones and similar personal devices at Bracken Hill School. It aligns with the school's Online Safety Policy and ICT & Internet Acceptable Use Policy and reflects the Department for Education's non-statutory guidance Mobile phones in schools (updated February 2026).

Bracken Hill School is a specialist setting. Many pupils are particularly vulnerable to online harm due to SEND, communication needs, reduced risk awareness and a reliance on adult supervision. Mobile phone use therefore presents safeguarding, wellbeing and data protection risks that must be carefully controlled.

The purpose of this policy is to:

- safeguard pupils from online and offline risks associated with mobile technology
- provide clear, consistent expectations for pupils, staff, parents/carers, visitors and volunteers
- support a calm, disruption-free learning environment
- ensure compliance with statutory safeguarding, data protection and online safety guidance

Throughout this policy, the term mobile phone refers to smartphones and any personal device with communication, recording or internet capability, including smartwatches and similar smart technology.

## 2. Relationship to other policies and guidance

This policy operates as part of the school's wider safeguarding and information governance framework and must be read alongside:

- Online Safety Policy
- ICT & Internet Acceptable Use Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Positive Behaviour Policy
- Searching, Screening and Confiscation Procedures

It is informed by, and aligned with, Department for Education guidance, including:

- [Mobile phones in schools](#) (DfE, February 2026)
- [Behaviour in schools](#) (DfE, February 2024)
- [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#) (DfE, September 2025)

Where there is any conflict, safeguarding considerations take precedence.

## 3. Roles and responsibilities

### 3.1 All staff

All staff, including supply staff, volunteers and contractors, are responsible for:

- consistently enforcing this policy

- modelling safe, professional behaviour in relation to mobile phone use
- reporting any concerns or breaches in line with safeguarding procedures

### **3.2 Senior leaders and DSL**

The Executive Headteacher, Head of School and Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) are responsible for:

- oversight and implementation of this policy
- ensuring alignment with online safety, filtering and monitoring arrangements
- responding to breaches or safeguarding concerns arising from mobile phone use

## **4. Use of mobile phones by staff**

DfE guidance makes clear that staff should not use personal mobile phones for personal reasons in front of pupils during the school day.

### **4.1 Personal mobile phones**

Staff should not have their mobile phone on them when working with students. Or something to this effect. Do we also need to clarify our expectations when staff are on educational visits. My expectation is that staff can have them in their bags but they should only be used in case of emergency or for contact with school

Staff must not use personal mobile phones:

- in the presence of pupils
- during contact time
- in classrooms, corridors or shared pupil areas

Personal mobile phone use is permitted only:

- during non-contact time
- in staff-only areas

Exceptions (for example, urgent family matters) may be agreed by senior leaders on a case-by-case basis.

### **4.2 Safeguarding and professional boundaries**

Staff must:

- not share personal phone numbers with pupils or parents/carers
- not communicate with pupils via personal messaging apps or social media
- not take photographs, videos or audio recordings of pupils using personal devices

All communication and recording must take place via approved school systems and devices only.

### **4.3 Data protection**

Personal mobile phones must not be used to:

- access safeguarding systems
- store pupil data

- photograph or record personal information
- input personal or safeguarding data into AI tools or external platforms

These expectations align with the ICT & Internet Acceptable Use Policy.

## **5. Use of mobile phones by pupils**

DfE guidance states that schools should be mobile-phone-free environments by default, with any access by pupils being by exception only.

### **5.1 General rule**

Bracken Hill School does not permit the use of personal mobile phones on site.

Pupils may bring a mobile phone to school only for travel or safety reasons, but:

- the phone must be handed in to Reception immediately on arrival
- it is stored securely in a designated, supervised location during the school day
- it is returned to the pupil at the end of the school day
- the phone must not be accessed or used on site at any time
- This includes
- social times

### **5.2 Failure to comply**

Any failure to follow these arrangements will be treated as a breach of school rules and managed in line with behaviour and safeguarding procedures. Safeguarding considerations will take precedence.

## **6. Smartwatches and similar devices**

In line with DfE guidance, devices with messaging, internet access or recording capability are treated as mobile phones.

Smartwatches and similar wearable technology are therefore not permitted on site unless explicitly agreed as part of an approved specialist, medical or access arrangement.

## **7. Exceptions: AAC, specialist access devices and medical need**

DfE guidance is clear that schools must make reasonable adjustments and support pupils with medical needs, even within a mobile-phone-free environment.

Approved Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) or specialist access devices are not classed as personal mobile phones.

Some pupils may require access to a personal mobile device for medical reasons, for example where a device or app is used to:

- monitor blood glucose levels
- support other approved health monitoring or alert systems
- enable communication with medical equipment or services

Where such devices are permitted:

- use is explicitly authorised by the school
- arrangements are documented and shared with relevant staff
- use is purpose-specific and limited to the agreed function
- appropriate safeguarding, supervision, filtering and monitoring controls apply

These devices are treated as assistive or health-support tools, not discretionary personal technology.

## **8. Parents, carers, visitors and volunteers**

Parents/carers, visitors and volunteers must:

- not take photographs or recordings of pupils
- not use mobile phones in lessons or pupil areas
- follow staff instructions regarding phone use on site

Parents/carers must contact Reception if they need to communicate with their child during the school day and must not contact pupils directly via mobile phones.

## **9. Searching, confiscation and safeguarding response**

The school may confiscate mobile phones or similar devices where there is reasonable cause, in line with the Education and Inspections Act 2006 and DfE guidance.

Mobile phones are identified as items that may be searched for under school rules. Any search will be proportionate and take account of a pupil's age, SEND and individual circumstances.

Where there is reason to believe a device contains safeguarding evidence or illegal material, staff will not view content and will immediately involve the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

## **10. Loss, theft or damage**

The school accepts no responsibility for personal mobile phones that are lost, damaged or stolen while on school premises, transport or visits.

Devices handed in are stored securely in line with school procedures.

## **11. Monitoring and review**

This policy will be:

- monitored by senior leaders and the Designated Safeguarding Lead
- reviewed at least every two years, or sooner if statutory guidance or risk changes

Review will take account of DfE guidance, safeguarding incidents and feedback from staff, pupils and parents/carers.