DDAT
Derby Diocesan Academy Trust

Mobile phone policy
May 2026

Approved by Trust Board on: 10th July 2026

Review date: May 2027

LTC reviewed September 2026

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1. Introduction and aims

All the schools within the Matlock and Dales Primary Partnership 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 such as:
    - Photos policy (DDAT)
    - Behaviour policy (Partnership)

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 is responsible for monitoring the policy every year 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.

4. Use of mobile phones by staff

4.1 Personal mobile phones

Staff (including the central team, volunteers, contractors and anyone else otherwise engaged by the school) are not permitted to use their personal mobile phone, while [children are present / during contact time]. 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). Further guidance on Data Protection can be found with the data protection 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.

Staff may use personal mobile phones for authorised work-related purposes, including accessing the Microsoft Authenticator app, in line with the school's safeguarding, data protection, and acceptable use policies.

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:

- Issuing homework, rewards or sanctions
- 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

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

As school can contact parents or carers in the event of an emergency, there is generally no need for pupils to access mobile phones during the school day. Exceptions may be made where a mobile phone is required to support a pupil's medical needs or other exceptional circumstances, subject to prior agreement with the school.

If parents send children with a phone, then mobile phones must be switched off before entering the school site and handed to staff at the start of the school day for secure storage. Phones are returned to pupils at the end of the day

5.1 Use of smartwatches by pupils

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.

Smart watches are not permitted for pupil use in school. Any smart watch brought onto the school site must be switched off and handed to staff at the start of the school day alongside any mobile phone for secure storage. Smart watches will be returned at the end of the school day. Exceptions may be considered where a smart watch is required to support a pupil's medical needs or other exceptional circumstances, subject to prior agreement with the school.

5.3 Sanctions

Explain the sanctions you will use if a pupil is in breach of this policy.

For example:

- Will mobile phones be confiscated? (Schools are permitted to confiscate phones from pupils under sections 91 and 94 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006)

- If they are confiscated, who is allowed to collect them, and when? What is the process for this? (Headteachers 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)
- How do the sanctions for mobile phone use link with your school's wider behaviour policy?

You may also wish to explain that 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 you 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).

Be as detailed as possible so that staff, pupils and parents/carers all understand what steps they should take if they find inappropriate content on a phone, or if they suspect inappropriate behaviour.

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 pupil'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 1 of Keeping Children Safe in Education

Depending on the age of your pupils, you may also wish to add:

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

Adapt this section as necessary. For instance, if you only allow staff to use phones in staff-only areas of the school, consider how and when parents/carers, volunteers and visitors may use their phones if they don't have access to these areas.

Parents/carers, visitors and volunteers (including the central team, LTC members 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.

Include more detail here based on your school's procedures. For example, if you will provide a copy of this policy, or a summary of the rules, include this detail here.

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.

7. Loss, theft or damage

If you allow pupils to bring phones to school, insert:

Pupils bringing mobile phones to school must ensure that the phones are appropriately labelled and are stored securely when not in use.

You should include details of how you would like pupils to label their phones and update the code of conduct in appendix 1 to also include these details.

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.

All schools continue with:

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.

Explain how you will make sure pupils and parents/carers are aware of the disclaimer above. For example, you could:

- Put signs up in the school entrance or office
- Include disclaimers in your permission forms for bringing a phone to school
- Include a disclaimer in your home-school agreement (if you have one)
- Provide a copy of your policy and disclaimer to new pupils and parents/carers

If your school confiscates phones from pupils, add:

Confiscated phones will be stored in the [school office / other appropriate location] in [a secure location / locked cabinet].

Schools that confiscate phones from pupils become responsible for the phone and can be held responsible for loss, theft or damage. Adapt the statement above to explain where and how confiscated phones will be stored and who is responsible for them.

All schools continue with:

Lost phones should be returned to [insert appropriate person or office]. The school will then attempt to contact the owner.

7.1 AirTags/Location Trackers

What are location trackers?

AirTags are small, remote tracking devices which are often used to keep track of the location of luggage and personal items such as keys and wallets. Some other devices, such as watches and smartphones, may also offer this functionality.

Although often not designed for this purpose, tracking devices are sometimes used by parents and carers to track their child's location.

Our policy on the use of trackers

[If your school **does not allow** these devices: use and adapt this section]

We understand that location trackers such as AirTags can provide reassurance to parents and carers, particularly those whose children travel a long distance to and from school or who are going on a school trip.

However, we're concerned about:

- **Unauthorised tracking:** where a pupil is tracked without their knowledge, or by a person who has no legal access to them. Trackers can also indicate the location of anyone travelling with the pupil who has not consented to be tracked in this way
- **Additional functions:** alarms, two-way communication, remote listening capability and other functions that some trackers provide can be disruptive and raise data protection and legal concerns
- **Increasing anxiety:** disruptions to expected location data – due to unavoidable changes of route or plan (e.g. on a school trip), or to device loss or malfunction – can cause anxiety to both parents/carers and to pupils and staff who are aware of potential parent/carer worry
- [Any other concerns relevant to your specific school]

For these reasons we have decided **not** to allow location tracking devices on school grounds, on school trips or at off-site events.

If we do find that a pupil is carrying or using a tracking device, we will confiscate it until the end of the school day.

8. Monitoring and review

The school is committed to ensuring 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 Department for Education, the local authority and any other relevant organisations

If there are any concerns regarding this policy, these should be brought to the attention of [name/role and contact details] in a timely manner.

You don't have to have your LTC members approve this policy. But if you want them to, explain their role in this section.

9. Appendix 1: [Code of conduct/acceptable use agreement] for pupils allowed to bring their phones to school due to exceptional circumstances

[Code of conduct / acceptable use agreement]

Adapt this agreement to reflect your school's approach as set out in section 5. You may also need to adapt the language to suit the age of your pupils.

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. 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.

10. Appendix 2: Permission form allowing a pupil to bring their phone to school

Use this form if you don't normally allow pupils to bring their phones to school, but are granting an exception.

It should be signed by parents/carers. In secondary schools, it may also be appropriate to get pupils to sign.

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

The school has agreed to allow [pupil name] to bring [their] mobile phone to school because they:

List the appropriate reasons here. We've listed some common reasons below (you can delete as required):

- Travel to and from school alone
- Are a young carer
- Need the phone to support their medical needs
- Are attending a school trip or residential where use of mobile phones will be allowed
- 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 its [code of conduct / 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 (where appropriate): _____

FOR SCHOOL USE ONLY	
Authorised by:	
Date:	

11. Appendix 3: Template mobile phone information slip for visitors

Print out and cut copies of this slip to give to visitors when they arrive at your school. Adapt the template to reflect section 6 of this policy.

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, you may go to [insert location]
- 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.

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, you may go to [insert location]
- Do not take photos or recordings of pupils (unless it is your own child), or staff
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