

Court Schools Mobile Phone Policy



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1. Introduction and Aims

At Court Schools, 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 learners, 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 CEO is responsible for monitoring the policy and reviewing it every 2 years, and holding staff and learners 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 volunteers, contractors and anyone else otherwise engaged by the school) are not permitted to use their personal mobile phone throughout the school day. Use of personal mobile phones are restricted to non-contact time, and to areas of the school where learners 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, in the case of acutely ill dependents or family member. This must be agreed in advance with the headteacher.

The headteacher will decide on a case-by-basis whether to allow for special arrangements.

School staff can always use the main school 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 Gemini).

For more detailed guidance on data protection see the Data Protection and ICT Acceptable Use policies.

4.3 Safeguarding

Staff must not give their personal contact details to parents/carers or learners, 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 learners.

Staff must not use their personal mobile phones to take photographs or recordings of pupils, their work, or anything else that could identify a learner. 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

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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 learners for work. Such circumstances may include, but are not limited to:

- Checking in as part of lone working
- Supervising off-site trips

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 learner
- Refrain from using their phones to contact parents/carers. If necessary, contact must be made via the school office

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 school phone functions for work purposes, including making/receiving calls, sending/receiving emails or other communications, or using the internet
- Make sure that all communication and conduct linked to the device is appropriate and professional at all times, in line with our staff code of conduct

4.6 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 Learners

The DfE's mobile phone guidance says that the use of mobile phones should be prohibited throughout the school day.

Learners 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).

Court School's approach to learners bringing mobile phones to school is that:

- Staff collect mobile phones on arrival
- Learners mobile phones are kept in a secure location and handed out as learners reach the exit gate at the end of the school day.

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- Year 11+ learners are permitted to take their mobile phone with them if they are spending their lunch break off site.

Learners are 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. Learners will be encouraged to see a mobile-phone free environment as desirable and valuable.

5.1 Use of Smartwatches by Learners

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.

At Court Schools Learners are advised that smart watches should not be used throughout the school day. Mobile phones are stored in another building to decrease the chance of the smart watches being able to be used for other purposes than telling the time.

5.3 Sanctions

Mobile phones may be confiscated if they're not handed as requested (Schools are permitted to confiscate phones from pupils under sections 91 and 94 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006). They will be returned at the end of the day unless there's been continual refusal or inappropriate use of them in which case staff may request that parents come and collect the mobile phones.

The DSL has the power to search learners' phones in specific circumstances, as set out in the DfE's guidance on searching, screening and confiscation. The DfE guidance allows the searching of a learner'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).

The school will also consider whether the learner'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 Keeping Children Safe in Education. This will include speaking with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or deputy, who will consider whether pastoral support, an early intervention, or a referral to children's social care is appropriate

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:

- Making of or sharing nudes and semi-nudes including images that are digitally altered or wholly generated using AI (such as 'deepfakes' or 'deep nudes')
- Upskirting
- Threats of violence or assault

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- 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

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.

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, when working with lessons 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 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

Learners bringing mobile phones to school must make sure that their phones are placed in their class box by handing their mobile phone into a member of staff when they come into school. This means they will then be stored away securely 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.

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 learners are travelling to or from school.

We will make sure pupils and parents/carers are aware of the disclaimer above through the signs at the school entrances.

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Confiscated phones will be stored in the Headteacher's office in a secure location.

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

8. Monitoring and Review

The school is committed to making sure that this policy has a positive impact on learners' education, behaviour and welfare. When reviewing the policy, the school will take into account:

- Feedback from parents/carers and learners
- Feedback from staff
- Records of behaviour and safeguarding incidents
- Relevant advice from the DfE, the local authority and any other relevant organisations

