



Mobile Phone Policy

2024 - 2026

Embrace Multi Academy Trust strives to maintain and improve good provision and outcomes at each of its member schools. Based upon our shared ethos and our values of wisdom, collaboration, respect, integrity, inclusivity, and compassion, we aim to support the learning and development of every person within the trust and our policies are written from this perspective.

Version	Approval Level	Document History	Date	Review Period
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1. Introduction and aims

At Swinford Church of England Primary School, we recognise that mobile phones and similar devices, including smartphones, are an important part of everyday life for many members of our community.

Our policy aims to:

- › Promote safe and responsible phone use
- › Set clear guidelines for the use of mobile phones for 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.

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 Co-Headteachers are responsible for monitoring the policy and holding staff and pupils accountable for its implementation. The policy will be reviewed every two years.

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

The DfE's non-statutory mobile phone guidance says that staff should not use their own mobile phone for personal reasons in front of pupils throughout the school day.

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 phones while they are in the presence of pupils. 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 is 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.

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 (eg ChatGPT and Google Bard).

More detailed guidance on data protection can be found in the trust data protection policy and acceptable use of IT 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 which could identify a pupil. If it is 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

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:

- › To use multi-factor authentication
- › Emergency evacuations
- › Supervising off-site trips
- › Supervising residential visits (if possible, it is better to provide a school mobile instead, or a SIM card with a separate number)

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

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 and smart watches by pupils

At Swinford CE Primary School, pupils are not permitted to bring mobile phones to school. Neither are they allowed to bring smart watches or indeed any other devices which are capable of sending or receiving messages, connecting to the internet or capturing photos, video or audio. This also applies when the children are taking part in trips, including residential.

5.1 Sanctions

If a pupil is found to have brought a mobile phone, smart watch or similar device, this will be confiscated (schools are permitted to confiscate phones from pupils under sections 91 and 94 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006).

In this situation, the pupil's parents/carers will be contacted and they will be invited to come into school at a mutually agreeable time, to collect the device and meet with one of the Co-Headteachers so they can reinforce expectations.

6. 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 is 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 the banning of mobile phones, smart watches or similar devices for pupils (as set out in section 5 above) but they must refer any sightings to a member of staff, as they do not have the power to confiscate devices.

7. Loss, theft or damage

As pupils are not permitted to bring mobile phones or similar devices to Swinford CE Primary School, the school accepts no responsibility for mobile phones which 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 cabinet in the school office until a time has been agreed for parents/carers to come and collect them.

8. 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 organisations

If there are any concerns regarding this policy, these should be brought to the attention of one of the Co-Headteachers in a timely manner.

9. Appendix 1: Mobile phone information slip for visitors

Use of mobile phones and similar devices at Swinford CE Primary School

- Please keep your mobile phone on silent while on the school grounds.
- Please do not use phones where pupils are present. If you must use your phone, you may go to the staffroom.
- 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.

Appendix 4: Additions Required for Compliance with Updated DfE Mobile Phone Guidance (2026)

This appendix outlines the policy elements that will be included in the next full policy review to ensure full alignment with the Department for Education's updated Mobile Phones in Schools guidance (2026) **to be adopted from April 2026**.

1. Phone-Free Environment (Mandatory Policy Requirement)

The school will operate as a mobile phone-free environment by default, prohibiting the use of mobile phones throughout the entire school day, including lessons, transitions, breaktimes and lunchtimes. Anything other than a phone-free environment must be an *exception only*.

- “Our school is a mobile phone-free environment by default. Mobile phones and similar smart devices must not be used, seen or heard at any point during the school day.”

2. Inclusion of All Smart Technology with Similar Functionality

The DfE guidance defines mobile phones to include all devices capable of sending/receiving messages or notifications, or recording audio/video (e.g., smartwatches, wearable tech).

- “This policy applies to *all* smart devices with communication/recording functionality (e.g., smartwatches, wearable devices), unless explicitly excepted for SEND or medical needs.”

3. Consistency of Implementation Across the School

Ofsted will evaluate how consistently staff and pupils understand and follow the phone-free policy across the day.

- Clear expectations ensuring 100% consistency across all staff and contexts.
- Staff must model adherence by not using personal mobile phones in front of pupils except where necessary.
- Leaders must regularly monitor consistency through walkthroughs, pupil voice, and staff feedback.

4. Communication Requirements

We recognise the importance of clear communication to pupils, parents and staff.

- The mobile phone policy will be communicated through:
 - Website visibility (policies page).
 - Parent newsletters and start-of-year briefings.
 - Pupil assemblies and form-time reminders.
 - Classroom signage and site posters.

- Parents will be informed that the school operates a default phone-free environment and that consistent reinforcement and support of this at home is expected.

5. Reasonable Adjustments and Equalities Act Duties

The DfE stresses the need to make reasonable adjustments for pupils with disabilities, medical needs (e.g., diabetes monitoring), SEND or caring responsibilities.

- Reasonable adjustments may be made in accordance with the Equality Act 2010, with examples such as:
 - Diabetes monitoring via connected apps
 - Emergency access for young carers
 - SEND-related communication needs

6. Behaviour Policy Alignment and Clear Sanctions

Mobile phone rules will be integrated within the school's behaviour policy, including proportionate sanctions, confiscation rules, and search powers.

- Explicit link to behaviour policy.
- Clear confiscation procedures (duration, storage, collection).
- Clarification of when searching a device may be permitted, referencing DfE *Searching, Screening and Confiscation*.
- Sanctions must be reasonable, proportionate and consistently applied.

7. Rules for Trips, Residential and Sixth Form

DfE guidance allows schools to decide rules for use outside the school day (e.g., residential) while maintaining a strict school-day ban, there will be:

- Clear expectations for:
 - School trips
 - Residential visits
 - Sixth-form privileges
- Any permitted use must not undermine the phone-free environment for younger pupils.

8. Monitoring and Evaluation

- Leaders must evaluate policy implementation, including:
 - Staff/pupil understanding
 - Patterns of breaches
 - Impact on behaviour, wellbeing and learning
- Evidence will be stored on CPOMs with regards to adherence to the policy and used to inform Trust-level reporting.

9. BYOD Clarification (New Requirement)

The DfE states that BYOD schemes must not include mobile phones.

For schools that use this:

- “Our Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) arrangements apply only to tablets/laptops. Mobile phones cannot be used as part of any BYOD or digital learning scheme.”

10. Safeguarding Rationale

Updated guidance emphasises the link between a phone-free environment and reduced disruption, bullying, online harm, and wellbeing risks.

- *“Our no-mobile-phones policy is a core safeguarding measure designed to promote pupils’ safety, wellbeing, and positive behaviour. By maintaining a mobile-phone-free environment throughout the school day, we reduce distractions and support pupils’ ability to engage fully with learning in a calm, focused atmosphere. This approach also helps prevent online harm and image-based abuse, as highlighted in national guidance emphasising the risks associated with smart devices in schools, including messaging, recording and social media misuse.”*
- *“Removing mobile phones from the school day further minimises peer-on-peer issues, such as bullying, intimidation, and inappropriate sharing of content, which the updated guidance notes can be exacerbated by mobile and smart technology. Through this policy, we create a safer, more predictable environment where children are protected from avoidable pressures and digital risks, and where safeguarding remains at the centre of our practice.”*