

The Bellbird Primary School



Mobile phone policy

March 2024

(To be reviewed March 2027)

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1. Introduction and aims

At The Bellbird Primary School we 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, behaviour and the code of conduct

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](#).

[Mobile phones in schools - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/mobile-phones-in-schools)

[Keeping children safe in education - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/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 and should take action to enforce the policy or report any concerns to the headteacher or another leader as appropriate.

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 so that appropriate action can be taken.

The headteacher is responsible for monitoring the policy every 3 years, 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 making reference to the policy and/or the information slip summarising the policy as appropriate.

3.2 Governors

Governors will approve this policy and review it as detailed above.

4. Use of mobile phones by staff

4.1 Personal mobile phones

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.

Staff (including volunteers, contractors and anyone else otherwise engaged by the school) are not permitted to use their personal mobile phone, while children are present at any time during the normal school day. 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 or the school offices; an empty corridor is not appropriate.

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. Staff should not assume they can have their phone ready for use.

If special arrangements are not deemed necessary, school staff can use the school office number 01223 833216 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).

The school's data protection and ICT acceptable use policies have further information on the storage of data.

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 is necessary to take photos or recordings as part of a lesson/school trip/activity, this must be done using school equipment (standard school equipment to be used is the class iPad).

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 aren't limited to:

- To use multi-factor authentication
- Emergency evacuations or other emergency situations
- 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 which could identify a pupil
- Refrain from using their phones to contact parents/carers unless it is an emergency situation and the 141 code is used to ensure the staff member's number is not detectable. If non-emergency situations arise when staff are off site, contact must be made with school staff who will make any calls to parent/carers.
- Never use their phone with a child (e.g. to search for information or take photographs) or allow a child to use their phone for any purpose.

4.5 Work phones

The Bellbird primary school has one school mobile phone for use on trips.

Only authorised staff are permitted to use the school mobile phone, and use of the phone must be agreed.

Staff must:

- Only use mobile 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.

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 pupils

Pupils should not use their mobile phones during the school day, including during lessons, in the time between lessons, at breaktimes and at lunchtimes.

- Pupils are allowed to bring mobile phones to school on a needs basis if they are walking home alone or if there is another specific need (upper key stage two only)
- Pupils must turn their mobile phones off on arrival on the school premises
- On arriving in class, pupils must give their turned off phone to their class teacher or an agreed adult
- The class teacher or agreed adult will keep mobile phones in a secure location and return them to pupils at the end of the day

The headteacher will review the above usage agreement should any specific circumstances arise that mean any of the above may need to be reviewed and a specific plan created, for example for a diabetic child where technology is needed to meet medical need.

5.1 Use of smartwatches by pupils and staff

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 and can take photographs.

Smart watches are not allowed for pupils in school to allow the smooth running of teaching and learning.

Smart watches can be worn by school staff but should only be used for the function of time telling within the school day. Should there be a concern that a member of staff is using one for any other purpose, this should be reported to the headteacher or deputy head so appropriate action can be taken.

The headteacher will review the above usage agreement should any specific circumstances arise that mean any of the above may need to be reviewed and a specific plan created, for example for a diabetic child where technology is needed to meet medical need.

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.

5.2 Sanctions

Should a pupil not follow any of the above rules, the school may review the decision for the pupil to be allowed to bring the phone to school and a temporary or permanent ban may be enforced. This may be in isolation or in addition to other consequences in line with the school's behaviour policy and according to the individual situation that arises.

Should the school have any information that a child has brought their phone to school and has not handed it in the school will request the phone is handed in as per the policy guidance in section 5 and appendix 1. If the pupil will not hand it over then parents will be contacted.

Whilst school staff have the power to search pupils phones in specific circumstances as set out in the DfE's guidance on searching, screening and confiscation guidance, this would only be done if there was reason to believe the phone contained pornographic images or it had been used to commit an offence or cause direct harm to another person. Any member of staff with such a concern should go directly to the headteacher, to discuss the concern before such action was taken. The headteacher may seek the advice of other professionals before taking such action.

In any such cases, a sanction may be given that is reasonable and proportionate to the issue. 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

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 if needed.

Such conduct includes, but is not limited to:

- Sexting (consensual and non-consensual sharing nude or semi-nude images or videos)
- Up skirting
- 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

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 at a school event such as a class assembly and they have been verbal permission to do so

- 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
- Never use their phone with a child (e.g. to search for information or take photographs) or allow a child to use their phone for any purpose.

Parents/carers, visitors and volunteers will be informed of the rules for mobile phone use when they sign in at reception (given the mobile phone information slip to read) or attend an event at school (verbal sharing of expectations at the start of a class assembly).

Parents/carers or volunteers supervising school trips or residential visits must not:

- Use their phone to make contact with other parents/carers (unless asked to do so in an emergency situation)
- 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 pupils using their phones, as set out in section 5 above. Should they notice any non-compliance they should refer it to a member of staff as they do not have the authorisation to issue consequences, confiscate or search 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 under no circumstances try to contact their child on their personal mobile device during the school day.

7. Loss, theft or damage

Pupils bringing mobile phones to school must ensure that the phones are handed to the class teacher, turned off on arrival in class as detailed in section 5. Even though it should be turned off on arrival, 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 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.

Lost phones should be returned to the school office as with any other lost property. The school will then attempt to contact the owner or hold onto the device for identification and collection.

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:

- Any feedback from parents/carers and pupils relating to the policy
- Feedback from staff
- Records of behaviour and safeguarding incidents relating to the policy
- 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 the headteacher in a timely manner.

The Governors will approve this policy to support the smooth running of the school.

9. Appendix 1: Acceptable use agreement for pupils allowed to bring their phones to school due to exceptional circumstances

Acceptable use agreement for pupils in year 5 or 6 who bring a mobile phone to school

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

1. You/your parent must have requested to bring your mobile phone to school
2. Phones must be switched off on arrival on the school premises (not just put on 'silent').
3. On arrival to the classroom you must hand your mobile phone to your class teacher for storage for the duration of the school day.
4. The class teacher will keep the mobile phone in a secure location and return it at the end of the day.
5. Your phone must be kept turned off until you leave the school premises.
6. Rules on bullying, harassment and intimidation apply to how you use your mobile phone even when you aren't in school. Any reported inappropriate behaviour may affect any decision to allow you to bring your phone to school.
7. The school reserve the right to withdraw permission to bring your phone to school at any time.
8. The headteachers will review on a case by case basis should any individual circumstances arise that mean any of the above should need to be changed and a specific plan may need to be created (for a diabetic pupil for example)
9. 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.

11. Appendix 2: Mobile phone information slip for visitors

Use of mobile phones and similar devices at The Bellbird Primary School

- Please keep your mobile phone out of sight of pupils and on silent/vibrate whilst on the school premises.
- Please do not use phones where pupils are present. If you must use your phone, you may go to the staffroom, outside the front of the school building or one of the school offices (requesting permission from the office user).
- Do not take photos or recordings of pupils (unless it is your own child at an event where permission has been given).
- Do not take photos of staff unless at an event and permission has been sought or given.
- Do not use your phone in lessons, or when working with pupils, your phone should not be visible at any time within the school day unless in the staffroom, outside the front of the school or in one of the school offices.

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 or on the school website.