

Mobile Phone and Device Policy

Issued: June 2024

Next Review: June 2025

Created by Tom Knight, Deputy Headteacher

This policy will be reviewed annually

1. Introduction and aims

At Welling School we recognise that mobile phones and similar devices, including smartphones and smart watches, are an important part of everyday life for our pupils, parents/carers and staff, as well as the wider school community. We also recognise the pressure mobile phones and similar devices can place upon the day to day lives of young people and this policy sets out to protect them from some of those pressures whilst at school so that they can focus on their academic and personal development without interruption or distraction.

Our policy aims to:

- Implement DFE Guidance for schools nationally
- Promote and set an example for safe and responsible use of mobile phones and devices.
- Set clear guidelines for the use of mobile phones and devices for pupils, 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 such as smart watches.

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

- 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 school Governors alongside the Headteacher are 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.

When a phone is confiscated, staff must ensure it is placed in a named envelope and handed to reception straightaway for secure storage. Confiscated phones must not be left unaccompanied, such as on a teacher's desk. The schools On Call system can be used to collect the phone to ensure it is placed securely at reception.

4. Use of mobile phones by staff

4.1 Personal mobile phones

The DfE's 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 make or receive personal calls or messages while pupils are present. 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 staff room or office areas).

There may be circumstances in which it is appropriate for a member of staff to have use of their phone during contact time, special arrangements will be decided on a case-by-case basis by the Headteacher or a staff member who has been assigned to deputise in their absence. 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).

More detailed guidance on data protection can be found in the TKAT Data Protection Policy, ESafety Policy and the TKAT Data retention policy located on our website.

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 are strongly advised to avoid publicising their contact details on any social media platform or website to avoid unwanted contact by parents 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's necessary to take photos or recordings as part of a lesson/school trip/activity, this must be done using school equipment. Staff must secure their personal phone or device and failure to do so could result in a data breach.

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
- Supervising off-site trips
- Supervising residential visits

Please note, when students are taken off site for a trip or visit, staff will be issued a school trip phone which can be used to speak with parents/carers, whilst away.

- 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

For more information please view our trips and visits policy, located on the school website.

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 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.

Staff must secure any work phone provided to them as failure to do so could result in a data breach.

5. Use of mobile phones by pupils

The DfE's non-statutory mobile phone guidance says that pupils should not use mobile phones throughout the school day.

Pupils are permitted to bring a mobile phone into the school, but it should be switched off before they enter the school gate and only switched back on at the end of the day when pupils are outside of the main external gates.

Pupils' mobile phones should not be used, seen or heard during the school day, including during lessons, in the time between lessons, at break times and at lunchtimes. Staff will not allow or request students to use their phone for any reason. We also strongly recommend that expensive devices are not brought into school to avoid loss, theft or damage as pupils may be involved in activities, such as Physical Education, which means they cannot always have their items with them.

If a pupil is found using their mobile phone (this includes the device ringing, vibrating or making sounds to notify the user of alerts etc.) it will be confiscated immediately. 'Schools have the power to confiscate mobile phones or similar devices as a disciplinary penalty' (DFE 2024).

All confiscated phones will be labeled and taken immediately to the school office and securely stored until it is collected.

In the event a child's phone is confiscated it will only be returned to a parent or carer. Parents/carers will be able to come and collect it from the school main office at their convenience but between office hours which are between 08:00 and 16:00. As well as confiscation, it may also lead to a sanction such as a detention, internal exclusion or even a fixed term suspension.

Please note the law protects staff from liability in any proceedings brought against them for any loss or damage to items they have confiscated as a sanction, (DFE 2024).

If it is suspected a child has a mobile device that is on and has been used, seen or heard, designated staff will be able to search the student and confiscate the phone. 'Headteachers, or staff they authorise, have a statutory power to search a pupil or their possessions where they have reasonable grounds to suspect that the pupil is in possession of a prohibited item including devices'. (DFE 2024). In addition, staff have the power to search pupils' phones as set out in the Department for Education's (DfE's) guidance on searching, screening and confiscation. Under the direction of the Headteacher, staff can search a pupil's phone if they have reason to believe the phone contains pornographic images, or if it is being/has been used to commit an offense or cause personal injury. All searches must be authorised by the Headteacher or the Designated Safeguarding Lead (as a delegated power).

If a student does not hand over their phone immediately when requested by a member of staff, they will be taken to our

internal suspension center (Berwick Centre). At this point, students will have a second chance to hand the phone over, failure will result in an external suspension from school. If the student complies and hands over on the second time of asking they will receive an 90 Minute same night detention and remain in isolation in the Berwick center till the end of the school day.

Repeated breaches of the rules in this policy will follow the same process. When a pattern of non-compliance is identified it will be dealt with in line with the school's Behaviour Policy. The second time this occurs within a term a parental meeting will be required along with the collection of the phone. The third time this occurs the phone will be confiscated for 5 days.

Please note there are no circumstances for amendment to this process.

Extenuating Circumstances

Where a device is required for medical reasons, such as for diabetic monitoring, this will be permitted and will form part of the care plan for the student.

Emergency Contact During the School Day

If there are emergencies or concerns that mean the student needs to be contacted urgently this should be communicated through the school office and the student's care team.

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:

- Consensual and non-consensual sharing nude or semi-nude images or videos
- Upskirting
- Threats of violence abusive calls, emails, social media posts or texts directed at someone on the basis of ethnicity, religious beliefs, sexual orientation etc.

If during an investigation, staff believe that an indecent image of children or adults on the phone or device they should not view the image. The Designated Safeguarding Lead and the Headteacher should be informed and the phone or device will be confiscated and secured by the Designated Safeguarding Lead, the police will then be contacted to continue the investigation. The return of the phone or device will only be sanctioned on the conclusion of the police investigation.

The rules of this policy also applies to school day trips. Rules on the use of mobile phones and devices when on a residential or international trip will form part of the risk assessment for that trip and will be communicated to students and families as part of the trip information. The Headteacher will make a decision with the Educational Visits Coordinator on a case-by-case basis which will depend on the location, trip type and any safety considerations

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.
- 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 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. In the event of a school trip the mobile contact number will be issued to families with children on the trip.

7. Loss, theft or damage

Pupils must secure their mobile phones as much as possible, including using passwords or pin codes to protect access to the phone's functions. A suitable protective case and screen protector are also strongly advisable.

The school accepts no responsibility for mobile phones or devices that are lost, damaged or stolen on school premises, on transport during school visits or trips, or while pupils are traveling to and from school. During practical lessons such as PE students should hand their phone into staff rather than leaving them unaccompanied in a changing room. Staff will do this but they will not take responsibility for any loss, theft or damage of these items.

Confiscated phones will be stored in the CCTV monitored school office, locked in a secured cabinet.

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

8. Further information and related documents

8.1 Parents

Parents can seek further guidance on keeping children safe online from the following organisations and websites:

- UK Safer Internet Centre: <https://saferinternet.org.uk/>
- Childnet: <https://www.childnet.com/>

8.2 Related documents

This Mobile Phone and Devices policy is linked to Welling Schools'

- E Safety Policy
- Behaviour and Anti-Bullying Policy
- Safeguarding Policy
- Complaints Policy
- TKAT Data Protection Policy
- TKAT Data Retention Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Staff Disciplinary Procedures
- RSE Policy

8.3 Legislation and Guidance

This policy is based on the Department of Education's (DfE's) statutory safeguarding guidance [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#) and its advice for schools on:

- [Teaching online safety in schools](#)
- [Preventing and tackling bullying](#)
- [Cyber bullying: advice for headteachers and school staff](#)

- [Relationships and Sex Education](#)
- [Searching, Screening and Confiscation](#)
- [Meeting digital and technology standards in schools and colleges](#)
- [Cyber security standards for schools and colleges](#)
- [Protecting children from radicalisation](#).

This policy also takes into account the National Curriculum computing programmes of study

It reflects existing legislation including but not limited to [Education Act 1996](#) (as amended), the [Education and Inspections Act 2006](#) and the [Equality Act 2010](#). In addition, it reflects the [Education Act 2011](#), which has given teachers stronger powers to tackle cyber-bullying by (if necessary) searching for and deleting inappropriate images or files on students' electronic devices where they believe there is a 'good reason' to do so.

9. 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