



Fingringhoe

Church of England (VA) Primary School

'Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go.' ~Joshua 1:9

Mobile phone policy

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1. Introduction and aims

At Fingringhoe CofE 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. This mobile phone policy is designed to support a safe, respectful and focused learning environment that nurtures responsibility, kindness and self-discipline, enabling pupils to use technology wisely while developing strong character, positive relationships and a sense of care for others.

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

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 implementing the policy.

Staff will address any questions or concerns from parents/carers quickly, and clearly communicate the reasons for prohibiting the use of mobile phones.

3.2 Governors

The Governing Body is responsible for monitoring the policy.

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, while 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.

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.

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).

See also the school's policy on the use of AI.

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.

Designated staff may, where necessary, use personal devices solely for authentication purposes (for example, to access an authenticator application); however, any platforms containing sensitive information, including safeguarding records, will only be accessed via secure school computer systems in line with data protection and security protocols.

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:

- 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 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 mobile phone, 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

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.

At Fingringhoe, pupils will hand devices to staff upon arrival at school, where they will be kept in a secure location until the end of the school 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. Smartwatches are wristwatches with smart technology in them and are included in the term 'mobile phones'.

5.2 Exceptions for special circumstances

The school may permit pupils to use a mobile phone in school, due to exceptional circumstances. This will be considered on a case-by-case basis and may include:

- Pupils travelling to school by themselves
- Young carers who need to be contactable
- Where required, pupils may use their personal device to support the monitoring and management of a medical condition (for example, through connected health applications or devices), in accordance with their agreed healthcare plan and under appropriate staff awareness and supervision.
- To request such permission, pupils or parents/carers should contact with the Headteacher via the school office.
- Any pupils who are given permission must then adhere to the school's acceptable use agreement for mobile phone use (see appendix 1).

5.3 Sanctions

In line with the Department for Education's guidance on searching, screening and confiscation and mobile phones in schools, the Headteacher and authorised staff have the statutory power to search pupils or their possessions where there are reasonable grounds to suspect a breach of school rules (including unauthorised mobile phone use), and may confiscate such devices as a proportionate disciplinary sanction; any confiscated device will be stored securely and returned to the pupil at the end of the school day.

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

There may be instances where visitors and volunteers may, where appropriate and with prior agreement from the school, use their personal devices to support educational or enrichment activities (for example, a peripatetic music teacher streaming accompaniment tracks or a visiting drama practitioner using sound, music or audio effects to enhance a performance), provided this is conducted in a professional manner, aligns with safeguarding expectations, and does not compromise pupil safety, privacy or school data security.

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 as part of the school's safeguarding procedures.

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

- Use their phone to make contact with other parents/carers during contact time with pupils
- 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.

This section of the policy should also be read in conjunction with the school's volunteers and visitors agreement.

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. 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 pupils are travelling to and from school.

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

Date Approved:	May 2026
Approved by:	Governing Board
Review frequency:	Biennial
Next Review:	May 2028

Appendix 1: Permission form allowing a pupil to bring their phone to school

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

The school has agreed to allow _____ to bring their mobile phone to school because they (delete as applicable):

- Travel to and from school alone
- Are a young carer
- Need the phone to support their medical needs
- In shared care arrangements, a pupil may bring a mobile phone to support communication with co-parents outside school hours, provided it remains switched off and securely stored during the school day in line with school policy.

Pupils who bring a mobile phone to school must abide by the school's policy on the use of mobile phones.

The school reserves the right to revoke permission if a pupil does not abide by the policy.

Parent/carer signature: _____

FOR SCHOOL USE ONLY	
Authorised by:	
Date:	