

Mobile phone and smart devices Policy

Policy owner	Inclusion Lead/Bodmin AHL
Policy approved by	MAT Board
Policy last reviewed	May 2026
Review frequency	Every 3 years
Next review	May 2029

1. Introduction and aims

At St Barnabas Trust 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 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 Head Teacher/Head of School/Lead Teacher/DSL is responsible for monitoring the policy every 2 years, reviewing it, and holding staff and pupils accountable for its implementation.

Staff are expected to model safe, responsible and appropriate use of technology and to ensure that the use of mobile phones and other devices does not compromise supervision, safeguarding or the care of children.

Members of staff will ensure that the use of any mobile and smart technology, including personal phones, wearable technology and other smart devices, will take place in accordance with the law, and relevant federation policy and procedures. This includes but is not limited to confidentiality, child protection, data security, staff code of conduct and Acceptable Use Policies.

In line with our expectations regarding mobile phone free or restricted environments, staff must not use personal mobile phones or smart devices in a way that undermines behavioural expectations or the learning environment.

Staff are expected to:

- be responsible for ensuring that personal devices are configured appropriately so that their use complies with this policy. This includes disabling notifications, messaging, image display, recording and sharing functions where these could compromise safeguarding, professional boundaries or the learning environment. Where devices cannot be configured to meet these expectations, they must not be worn or usekeep personal mobile and smart devices in a safe and secure place during teaching, learning time such as a locker or drawer.
- ensure personal mobile and smart devices are switched off or set to 'silent' or 'do not disturb' modes during teaching sessions and other times when supervising children.
- disable or hide Bluetooth, 'AirDrop' or similar sharing and communication functions during teaching and learning sessions or when supervising children.
- not use personal mobile phones or smart devices during teaching, learning or supervision periods, unless written or verbal permission has been given in advance by the headteacher, for example, in emergency circumstances.
- ensure that any content brought onto site via personal mobile or smart devices is appropriate to their professional role and consistent with our behaviour and safeguarding expectations.
- Members of staff are not permitted to use their own personal mobile or smart devices for contacting pupils or their parents/carers.
- Any preexisting relationships or circumstances that may compromise this requirement will be discussed with the DSL and/or headteacher and be formally recorded.

Staff will only use school provided equipment:

- to take photos or videos of pupils in line with our image use policy.
- to work directly with pupils during learning/educational activities.
- to communicate with parents/carers.

Where remote or online learning takes place, staff will use school-provided equipment wherever possible, in accordance with our Acceptable Use Policies. Where use of a personal device is unavoidable, this will be agreed in advance by the headteacher and supported by a risk assessment and clear safeguards.

Any breach of this policy by a member of staff will be managed in line with the staff code of conduct policy, child protection policy and/or allegations management procedures.

Where there is concern that a member of staff may have accessed, created or stored illegal content on a personal or school-provided device, or may have committed a criminal offence using a device, the matter will be reported to the police and the Local Authority Designated

Officer (LADO) in line with our staff code of conduct and allegations management procedures.

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 phone, while children 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 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 (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.

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).

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.

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:

- Issuing homework, rewards or sanctions
- 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

4.6 Sanctions

Staff that fail to adhere to this policy may face disciplinary action.

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.

We require that mobile phones and smart devices are not brought onto the school site at all, however if for purposes such as travelling to and from school unsupervised, personal mobile phones or smart devices are to be handed in to the class teacher or the school office at the start of the school day and returned at the end of the day.

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

If a pupil needs to contact their parents or carers whilst on site, they will be allowed to use the phone in the office.

Parents are advised to contact their child via the school office; exceptions may be permitted on a case-by-case basis, as approved by the headteacher (or other member of SLT)

Where pupils' personal mobile or smart devices are used when learning at home, this will be in accordance with our Acceptable Use Policy

Mobile phones and smart devices (unless for medical reasons) should be handed in to the class teacher or school office on arrival. If pupils do not abide by this policy, staff have the right to confiscate a pupil's personal mobile or smart device. Parents/carers will be informed.

Confiscated devices will be stored securely and released to parents/carers in line with the school behaviour policy at the end of the school day.

Where a concern involves potentially indecent images or videos of children, including AI generated content, staff will respond in line with the child protection policy. Devices will be confiscated, staff will not view the content, and the matter will be referred to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or deputy without delay.

Where there is reasonable suspicion that data or files on a device may be illegal or may constitute evidence of a criminal offence, the device will be confiscated and handed over to the police for further investigation.

Mobile phones and similar smart devices are identified in the school's behaviour policy as items that may be searched for, in line with statutory powers and the DfE Searching, Screening and Confiscation' guidance. Searches of children and their possessions will only be carried out in accordance with our behaviour policy and the DfE Searching, Screening and Confiscation' guidance.

Staff will respond in line with our child protection policy and follow the most appropriate safeguarding response if they find images, data or files on a child's electronic device that they reasonably suspect are likely to put a person at risk.

The DSL (or a deputy) will always be informed of any searching incidents where authorised members of staff have reasonable grounds to suspect a child was in possession of prohibited items, as identified in our behaviour policy which can be found on our website.

The DSL (or a deputy) will be involved without delay if staff believe a search of a child's personal mobile or smart device has revealed a safeguarding risk.

If the headteacher or a member of staff finds any data or files that they suspect might constitute a specified offence, they will be delivered to the police as soon as is reasonably practicable.

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. 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.

Smartwatches should not be worn in school.

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. To request such permission, pupils or parents/carers should contact the Head of School/Lead Teacher/DSL

Any pupils who are given permission must then adhere to the school's [code of conduct / acceptable use agreement] for mobile phone use

Possible exceptions:

- Pupils travelling to school by themselves
- Young carers who need to be contactable
- Pupils with diabetes who use their phones to monitor their blood sugar

5.3 Sanctions

All members of the community are expected to report concerns or breaches of this policy in line with existing Trust policies and procedures. This includes Child Protection Policy, Acceptable Use Policy, Staff Code of Conduct and Behaviour Policy.

Where pupils breach this policy, the school will respond proportionately and appropriately.

Appropriate sanctions and/or pastoral/welfare support will be implemented in line with our behaviour policy.

Parents/carers will be informed of concerns or breaches as appropriate.

Where there is a concern that a child is at risk of harm, the school/setting will respond in line with the child protection policy.

Where incidents are investigated, leadership staff will review the circumstances, identify any lessons learned and implement changes to policy, procedures or curriculum provision where required.

The school expects staff, parents/carers and pupils to work in partnership to resolve concerns and support positive outcomes.

All members of the school community are expected to respect confidentiality and to follow official procedures when reporting concerns.

Pupils and parent/carers will be informed of our complaints procedure and staff will be made aware of the whistleblowing procedure.

Where the school/setting is unsure how to proceed with an incident or concern, the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), a deputy DSL or the headteacher will seek advice from the local authority or other relevant agencies, in line with the child protection policy.

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:

- Sexting (consensual and non-consensual sharing nude or semi-nude images or videos)
- Upskirting
- 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
- 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 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 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 or Dojo 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.

The Head Teacher/DSL may allow access to mobile phones or smart devices where required for professional purposes, for example as part of agreed multi-agency working arrangements i.e. social workers/Police.

Visitors, including volunteers and contractors, who are on site for regular or extended periods of time are expected to comply with the setting's acceptable use of technology policy and other relevant safeguarding policies, including child protection. Where a visitor requires access to mobile phones or smart devices as part of their role when working

directly with pupils, this will be discussed and agreed in advance with the headteacher or delegated senior leader. Any agreed arrangements for visitor access to mobile or smart technology will be documented and recorded by the school and with appropriate leadership approval. Where appropriate, this may include undertaking a risk assessment.

Members of staff are expected to challenge visitors if they have concerns about their use of mobile and smart devices and will report any breaches of this policy to the DSL or headteacher

7. Loss, theft or damage

Pupils bringing mobile phones to school must ensure that the phones are appropriately labelled and are stored securely when not in use.

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.

Confiscated phones will be stored in the school office.

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

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

