



METROPOLITAN BOROUGH OF CALDERDALE

## Woodhouse Primary School

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### MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE DOCUMENTATION

### MOBILE PHONE POLICY – APRIL 2026

	Date	Chair of Governors	Headteacher
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## 1. Introduction and aims

At Woodhouse Primary School, we recognise that mobile phones and similar devices, including smartwatches, are an important part of everyday life for our pupils, parents/carers and staff, as well as the wider school community. They are a key way for children and adults to stay connected and communicate with friends and family.

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

Through our RESPECT lessons and Computing curriculum, we will teach pupils about the risks of overuse of mobile phones and about the benefits of a phone-free environment at school.

**Note: throughout this policy, 'mobile phones' refers to mobile phones, smartwatches, fitbits 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.

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 and smartwatches**

Staff (including volunteers, contractors and anyone else otherwise engaged by the school) are not permitted to use their personal mobile phone in front of children and must not use them during lesson time. 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). Phones should therefore be stored out of sight and reach of children in store cupboards or other similar spaces. Staff who wear smartwatches should not use them to access or make personal messages or calls when supervising children. They should be set to 'do not disturb' and notifications should be turned off.

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 though this must be with the express permission of the head. 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). More detailed guidance on data protection can be found in our Data Protection 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 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 or with express permission of a member of SLT. This must then be thoroughly deleted from the device used including from 'deleted items' folders or other such storage folders.

#### 4.4 Staff 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

In exceptional or emergency circumstances, teachers will use their phones to contact parents/carers. Though this should be done in such a way as to avoid parents having access to the staff member's numbers other than in exceptional circumstances ratified by the Head Teacher.

#### 4.5 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.

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 strongly discouraged from bringing mobile phones to school. However, pupils in Year 5 and 6 who walk home from school alone are permitted to bring their mobile phones to school for their own safety on their walk to and home from school, though the following will be the conditions under which this is permitted. Pupils in other year groups may also bring their mobile phones if they are moving between parents' homes.

Upon arrival, pupils with mobile phones will turn them off and hand them into their teacher who will store them safely in the store cupboard.

- These devices must not be accessed during the school day other than for exceptional circumstances agreed on by the school.
- At the end of the school day, the device will be handed back to the child who must not turn it on or use it until they have exited the school premises.

#### 5.1 Definition of "school day" and "school premises"

For the purposes of this policy:

- **The school day** begins when pupils enter the school site and ends when they leave the school site through the school gates
- **School premises** includes all buildings, playgrounds, sports facilities and the area within the school boundary fence/gates
- Pupils must keep their phones switched off from the moment they enter the school site until they have completely left the school site, even if:
  - They are attending breakfast club or after-school clubs
  - They are waiting on the playground for collection
  - They have finished their lessons but are still on school premises

## 5.2 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 that the school chooses to include in their policy.

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.

As these devices can, at times, act in a similar way to phones and can be used to both distract, communicate and search the internet, these will not be permitted within school. Although there are some devices which are not able to use messaging, search or internet services, allowing such devices would cause a huge amount of unnecessary time policing which for teachers would be better spent on maximising learning opportunities. Smart watches will therefore be prohibited. Children can wear watches, but the only function they should have is to tell the time.

If a pupil brings in a smart watch, they will be treated in the same way as mobile phones and placed in the same secure location.

## 5.3 Exceptions for special circumstances

There may be exceptional circumstances in which the Head Teacher authorises use of mobile phones during the day where they consider this to be a reasonable adjustment. This should be particularly considered when attempting to avoid substantial disadvantage to a disabled pupil whose disability requires access to a mobile phone.

Although not exhaustive, the following are a range of circumstances which this may apply to:

- Young carers who need to be contactable
- Pupils with diabetes who use their phones to monitor their blood sugar
- Other medical conditions that require access to a mobile phone

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 office and Appendix 2 completed. Any pupils who are given permission must then adhere to the school's rules for mobile phone use (see appendix 1).

## 5.4 Consequences

The following are the tiered sanctions that will be applied for pupils breaking these conditions in any way. This ensures consistency and fairness whilst allowing for appropriate escalation for repeat offenders.

### First breach:

- The mobile phone will be confiscated immediately by a member of staff and stored securely in the Head Teacher's office
- The pupil may collect their phone at the end of the day
- Parents/carers will be notified via Arbor on the same day

### Second breach (within the same academic year):

- The mobile phone will be confiscated immediately by a member of staff and stored securely in the Head Teacher's office
- A parent/carer must collect the phone in person from the school office (the pupil cannot collect it themselves)
- A conversation will be held with the parent/carer about the importance of following school rules

### **Third breach (within the same academic year):**

- The mobile phone will be confiscated immediately by a member of staff and stored securely in the Head Teacher's office
- A parent/carer must collect the phone in person from the school office (the pupil cannot collect it themselves)
- The pupil will lose permission to bring their mobile phone to school for the remainder of the year
- A meeting will be arranged with parents/carers and the Head Teacher to discuss alternative arrangements for the pupil's journey home

### **Searching pupils' phones**

Staff have the power to search pupils' phones in specific circumstances, as set out in the [DfE's guidance on searching, screening and confiscation](#). The DfE guidance allows you to search a pupil's phone if there is a good reason to do so (such as if it is being/has been used to commit an offence or cause harm to another person).

In each case, the sanction given must be reasonable and proportionate. 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](#)

## **6. Use of mobile phones by parents/carers 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 and visitors will be informed of the rules for mobile phone use when they sign in at reception or attend a public event at school. Volunteers will be informed of the rules during safeguarding training and on induction.

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 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.

## **7. Loss, theft or damage**

Pupils bringing mobile phones to school must ensure that the phones are appropriately labelled and that they are turned off.

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 Head Teacher's office in the cupboard.

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

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

## 9. Appendix 1: Rules for pupils who bring mobile phones (and other devices) to school

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

1. Phones must be switched off (not just put on 'silent') before entering the school site.
2. Phones must be handed in to the teacher at the start of each day.
3. You will not turn on your mobile phone until you are off the school site.
4. If a teacher asks you to turn off your phone or give it to them, you must do it. Not following this instruction means you are breaking the school rules and will result in additional consequences:

**First time:** Phone is confiscated and you must collect it from the office at the end of the day. Parents will be notified.

**Second time** (in the same academic year): Phone is confiscated and **parents** must collect it from the office at the end of the day.

**Third time** (in the same academic year): Phone is confiscated and **parents** must collect it from the office at the end of the day. You will not be able to bring your phone to school for the rest of the year.

## 10. Appendix 2: Permission form allowing a pupil to bring their phone to school due to exceptional circumstances (for school use only)

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

The school has agreed to allow \_\_\_\_\_ to bring their mobile phone to school because they:

- Are a young carer
- Need the phone to support their medical needs

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

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

Parent/carer signature: \_\_\_\_\_

FOR SCHOOL USE ONLY	
<b>Authorised by:</b>	
<b>Date:</b>	

**Be Safe**

**Be Caring**

**Be Bold**



**Achieving Success Together**  
[www.woodhouse.calderdale.sch.uk](http://www.woodhouse.calderdale.sch.uk)

**Be United**

**Be Creative**

**Be Healthy**