

Mobile Phone Policy



Approved by: *The Governing Body*

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Signed

Howard Park Community School

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Mobile Phone Policy

Introduction and Aims

At Howard Park, our policy aims to:

- Ensure our environment is mobile phone-free by default
- Ensure the safe, responsible and lawful use of mobile phones, where applicable
- Provide clear guidelines for the use of mobile phones for pupils, staff, parents/carers, visitors and volunteers
- Support the school's other policies

This policy also aims to address some of the challenges posted by mobile phones in school, such as:

- Risks to child protection
- Data protection issues
- Risk of theft, loss or damage
- Appropriate use of technology for learning purposes

Note: throughout this policy, 'mobile phones' refers to mobile phones and similar devices.

Relevant Guidance

This policy meets the requirements of section 36 of the [Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act 2026](#), and the Department for Education (DfE)'s [mobile phone guidance](#) and [behaviour guidance](#). Further guidance that should be considered alongside this policy includes [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#), which sets out the expectation that all schools should be mobile phone-free environments by default.

Roles and Responsibilities

All staff (including teachers, support staff and supply staff) are required to actively enforce this policy and challenge any breach of mobile phone restrictions immediately and consistently.

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 monitoring the policy and reviewing it every 3 years, 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.

Use of Mobile Phones By Staff

Personal Mobile Phones

Staff (including volunteers, contractors and anyone else otherwise engaged by the school) are not permitted to use their personal mobile phone during the school day, [while pupils are present / 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 (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.

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 Gemini).

More information can be found in our GDPR policy.

Safeguarding

Staff must not give their personal contact details to parents/carers or pupils, including by 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.

Using Personal Mobiles For Work Purposes

In some circumstances, it may be appropriate for staff to use personal mobile phones or a similar device during the school day in front of pupils for work. Such circumstances may include, but are not limited to:

- Use of multi-factor authentication
- Emergency evacuations
- Supervising off-site trips (for contact between staff)
- Supervising residential visits (for contact between staff)

If contact needs to be made with parents whilst on trips, the school mobile phone will be used.

Sanctions

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

Use of Mobile Phones By Pupils

Pupils must not use their mobile phones during the school day, including during lessons, in the time between lessons, at breaktimes and at lunchtimes, unless explicitly authorised by a member of staff (for example, for a specific medical reason).

Our approach to mobile phones:

- All phones must be turned off when entering the school premises
- Phones must be handed in when entering the school building
- Phones will be returned to pupils when they are leaving at the end of the school day
- Parents will be required to complete a form to identify the reason why their child needs to bring a phone to school.

Pupils will be taught the risks that are associated with the use of mobile phones, both in school and more broadly, to make sure they understand the decision to prohibit the use of mobile phones throughout the school day. These risks can include a loss of focus in lessons, classroom disruption and an increase in bullying. Pupils will be encouraged to see a mobile-phone free environment as desirable and valuable.

Exemptions to pupils may be made where there are medical issues. For example, a child has diabetes and a phone is used to monitor blood glucose levels. There will still be expectations around the use of these devices and that their use should be limited to the appropriate medical need.

Sanctions

Where pupils are found to be in breach of this policy:

- The mobile phone will be confiscated and be collected by the Headteacher. (This is permitted under [Section 91](#) and [94O](#) of the Education and Inspections Act 2006)
- Parents will then be informed and they will have to collect the phone from school themselves. This will be for an appropriate length of time as deemed by the Headteacher in line with the [DfE's guidance on mobile phones in schools](#)

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 (SEN), 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 Keeping Children Safe in Education. This will include speaking with the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) or deputy, who will consider whether pastoral support, an early intervention, or a referral to children's social care is appropriate

In specific circumstances, as set out in the [DfE's guidance on searching, screening and confiscation](#), school has the power to search pupils' phones.

If a search is deemed necessary, the Headteacher will be informed immediately and authorise the search. All searches will be conducted by two members of staff to ensure transparency and safeguarding, with at least one member being part of the Senior Leadership Team. This dual-staff approach protects both the pupil and staff members involved, ensures appropriate oversight, and maintains a clear record of the search process. Searches will only be carried out when there are reasonable grounds to suspect that a phone contains evidence related to a breach of school rules or poses a risk to safety, and pupils will be informed of the reason for the search. Parents will be contacted as soon as reasonably practicable following any search.

All mobile phone searches will be formally documented. The record will include the date and time of the search, the names and roles of both staff members present, the reason for the search, what was found (if anything), any action taken as a result, and when parents were informed. These records will be kept securely and reviewed by the Senior Leadership Team to ensure our approach remains proportionate and effective.

Use of Mobile Phones By Parents/Carers, Volunteers and Visitors

Parents and carers are encouraged to reinforce and discuss this policy at home as appropriate, including the risks associated with mobile phone use and the benefits of a mobile phone-free environment.

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, when working with pupils or while children are present

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, but must refer any proposed 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.

Loss, Theft or Damage

The school accepts no responsibility for mobile phones that are lost, damaged or stolen on school premises or transport, or while pupils are travelling to or from school.

Confiscated phones will be stored in the Headteachers office. In these cases school can be held responsible for loss, theft or damage.

Review

The Governing Body reviews this policy every three years. They may, however, review the policy earlier than this if the government, or the LA, introduces new regulations, or receives recommendations on how the policy might be improved.