



Use of Mobile Phones & Similar Devices Policy 2026

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1. Purpose and aims

At Paxton Primary School, we want to provide a safe, respectful and inclusive environment in which children can learn without avoidable distraction or safeguarding risks. Our default position is that the school is a mobile phone-free environment.

This policy aims to:

- Protect pupils' safety, wellbeing and privacy.
- Reduce distraction and support learning, behaviour and positive relationships.
- Set clear expectations for pupils, staff, parents/carers, volunteers and visitors.
- Support the school's safeguarding, behaviour, data protection and online safety arrangements.
- Address risks including inappropriate recording, cyberbullying, loss, theft and damage.

In this policy, "mobile phones" includes smartwatches and other similar devices capable of communication, recording or accessing online services.

2. Relevant guidance

This policy should be read alongside the school's Adult Code of Conduct, Staff Code of Conduct, Behaviour Policy, Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, Online Safety Policy, Data Protection Policy and educational visits procedures. It has been adapted from the school's supplied mobile phone policy draft. Any statutory references and external guidance should be checked by the school before formal approval.

3. Roles and responsibilities

All staff, including teachers, support staff and supply staff, must apply this policy consistently and challenge breaches promptly. Volunteers, contractors and other adults engaged by the school should alert a member of staff to any breach they witness.

The Headteacher is responsible for implementation, responding to concerns and ensuring the policy is reviewed annually. The Full Governing Body is the review body, in keeping with the school's policy arrangements. Staff should explain the rationale for restrictions clearly and respond to parents' and carers' questions promptly.

4. Use of mobile phones by staff

4.1 Personal mobile phones

Staff, volunteers, contractors and others working for the school must not use personal mobile phones for personal reasons in front of pupils during the school day. Personal use should be limited to non-contact time and areas where pupils are not present, such as the staffroom.

The Headteacher may agree an exception where there is a genuine and pressing personal reason, such as an emergency involving a child or an acutely ill dependent. Where an exception is not agreed, the school office should be used for emergency contact.

4.2 Data protection and safeguarding

Personal phones must not be used to process personal data or confidential school information, including entering such information into generative AI tools. Staff must not share personal contact

details with pupils or parents/carers or connect with them through personal social media or messaging accounts.

Staff must not use personal phones to photograph or record pupils, their work or anything that could identify a pupil. School-approved equipment and procedures must be used for authorised photographs and recordings.

4.3 Personal phones used for work purposes

Use of a personal phone during the school day for a work purpose should be exceptional, for example during an emergency evacuation or while supervising an educational visit. Staff must act professionally, must not photograph or record pupils, and should contact parents/carers through the school office or approved school channels.

4.4 School phones

Only authorised staff may use school-provided phones. They must be used for legitimate work purposes and all communications must remain appropriate and professional.

4.5 Breaches

Failure by staff to follow this policy may be addressed under the school's relevant staff procedures, including disciplinary procedures where appropriate.

5. Use of mobile phones by pupils

Pupils must not bring or use mobile phones on the school site, except Year 5 and Year 6 pupils who have been expressly authorised by a member of the Designated Safeguarding Leadership Team to travel to or from school alone.

Pupils with permission must hand their phone to the school office immediately on arrival. The phone will be stored securely and returned at the end of the school day. Phones must be switched off. Pupils must not use phones during lessons, between lessons, at breaktimes or at lunchtimes unless a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or Deputy DSL explicitly authorises this for a specific reason.

Pupils must not bring phones or similar devices on school trips or residential visits. The school will teach pupils about the risks associated with mobile phone use and the benefits of a phone-free school environment.

5.1 Smartwatches and similar devices

The restrictions in this policy apply to smartwatches and other devices with communication, recording or smart functionality. Pupils must not use such devices to message, call, record or access online services during the school day.

5.2 Exceptions and permission

Permission is limited to authorised Year 5 and Year 6 pupils who travel to or from school alone. Parents/carers must complete Appendix 2 and agree that the pupil will follow Appendix 1. Permission may be withdrawn if the policy or agreement is breached.

5.3 Breaches, confiscation and searches

Where a pupil breaches this policy, staff may confiscate the phone and inform the parent/carer. The parent/carer may be required to collect the device; otherwise, it will be retained for a proportionate period determined by the Headteacher. Any sanction will be consistent with the Behaviour Policy.

Only the DSL or Deputy DSL, acting in accordance with applicable Department for Education guidance and school safeguarding procedures, should oversee any decision to access or search a pupil's device. Where inappropriate content or suspected harmful or criminal behaviour is identified, staff must record the concern and notify the DSL/DDSL immediately. The school will respond under its safeguarding and behaviour procedures and contact external agencies, including the police, where appropriate.

Responses will be reasonable and proportionate, taking account of the pupil's age, disability, special educational needs, religious requirements and any indication that the pupil may be at risk of harm. Concerns about possible harm must be referred to the DSL.

6. Use by parents/carers, volunteers and visitors

Parents/carers, visitors, volunteers, governors and contractors must follow the school's expectations for adult phone use while on site. Mobile phones must not be used where pupils are present, including in classrooms or while working with children. Adults should use the staffroom or a designated office away from pupils if phone use is necessary.

Adults must not photograph or record pupils or staff without specific school permission. At public events, any permitted photography must follow the school's instructions and privacy arrangements; images must not be shared online without appropriate consent. Adults supporting school trips must not contact other parents/carers using their phones or photograph/record pupils, their work or identifying information.

Parents/carers who need to contact their child during the school day must contact the school office and must not contact the child directly on a personal device. Visitors will be informed of the rules at sign-in and through appropriate signage.

7. Loss, theft or damage

Authorised pupil phones must be clearly labelled and handed to the school office immediately on arrival for secure storage. Pupils and staff should protect their devices with a password or PIN and take reasonable steps to keep them secure.

The school accepts no responsibility for phones that are lost, damaged or stolen on school premises or transport, during school visits or trips, or while pupils travel to or from school. Confiscated phones will be stored securely in the school office. Any phone found should be handed to the school office so that reasonable steps can be taken to identify its owner.

8. Monitoring and review

The Headteacher will review this policy annually, taking account of feedback from pupils, parents/carers and staff; behaviour and safeguarding records; and relevant advice from the Department for Education, the local authority and other appropriate organisations. Concerns should be raised with the Headteacher.

9. Related policies

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Online Safety Policy
- Data Protection Policy

- Behaviour Policy

Appendix 1: Pupil agreement

Pupils authorised to bring a phone to school must agree to the following:

- I have written permission to travel to or from school with a mobile phone.
- I will hand my phone to either my class teacher or school office as soon as I arrive.
- My phone will remain switched off and I will not use it on site unless a DSL/DDSL explicitly permits this for a specific reason.
- I will not take photographs or recordings of pupils or staff.
- I will not use my phone to bully, intimidate, harass or threaten anyone, or to share harmful, inappropriate or criminal content.
- I will respect other people's privacy and will not share their contact details or images without permission.
- I understand that the Behaviour Policy applies to misuse of my phone, including outside school where relevant.
- I will follow any reasonable instruction from staff to hand over my phone. I understand that permission may be withdrawn and sanctions may apply if I breach this agreement.

Pupil Name:

Class:

Pupil signature:

Date:

Parent/carers signature:

Date:

Appendix 2: Permission form

Pupil Name:

Class:

Parent/carer name(s):

Reason for request: The pupil has been authorised to travel to or from school alone.

I understand that the phone must be switched off and handed to the school office on arrival, and that the pupil must follow this policy and Appendix 1. I understand that permission may be withdrawn if the policy is not followed.

Pupil signature:

Date:

Parent/carer signature:

Date:

D(D)SL Authorisation:

Date:

Appendix 3: Visitor information

Use of mobile phones and similar devices at Paxton Primary School

Paxton Primary School is a mobile phone-free environment by default.

- Please do not use phones where pupils are present. If necessary, use the staffroom or a designated office away from pupils.
- Do not photograph or record pupils or staff without specific school permission.
- Do not use phones while working with pupils or in lessons.
- The school accepts no responsibility for phones that are lost, damaged or stolen while on school grounds.

A full copy of the policy is available from the school office.