



Mobile Phone Policy

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Role	Head of Site
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Chair of Governors Signature	<i>E. Watts</i>
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Next review date	Reviewed Date	Reviewed By	Changes made to the policy	Date and Minute number	Chair of Governors signature

MOBILE PHONE POLICY

LIFE SKILLS EXCEPTIONS 2025-2026

1. POLICY RATIONALE

The Department for Education (DfE) states that all schools should be "*mobile-phone-free environments by default; anything other than this should be by exception only.*"

It also states that schools may **adapt their policies to meet the needs and circumstances of specific pupils.**

As a special school, we recognise that **mobile phones can form an essential part of functional life-skills education** for some pupils when carefully planned, controlled and supervised.

This policy balances:

- Creating a **safe, calm, phone-free environment,**
- With providing **structured opportunities** to teach independence and digital-literacy skills safely.

2. DEFAULT RULE

- The school is a **mobile-phone-free environment** throughout the school day, including lessons, transitions, breaktimes and lunchtimes.
- Pupils must **not use or access mobile phones** unless explicitly authorised as part of a supervised educational activity-**the exception are post 16 students.**

3. LIFE-SKILLS CURRICULUM EXCEPTION

3.1 Purpose

Mobile phones may be used in **planned, curriculum linked sessions** to support learning in:

- independent travel
- navigation/map reading
- communication and social understanding
- using essential apps (timers, alarms, calendars, reminders)
- personal safety skills
- accessing support tools / assistive technology

These activities build independence and prepare pupils for adult life.

3.2 Conditions for Use

Use is permitted only when ALL conditions below are met:

1. **Planned** – The activity is identified in the lesson plan or scheme of work.
2. **Supervised** – Staff directly oversee all pupil phone use.
3. **School owned or controlled devices are preferred.**
 - If a pupil must use their own device (e.g., assistive technology), the decision is risk-assessed and documented in personal risk assessments.
4. **Restricted** – Phones remain locked away before and after the activity.
5. **No personal messaging, social media, photography or unsupervised browsing** is allowed.
6. **Time limited** – Phones are used only for the duration of the task.

4. INDIVIDUAL NEEDS

The DfE guidance confirms that **policies may be adapted to meet the needs of specific pupils**, including those with medical requirements.

Where a pupil requires access to a mobile phone for:

- communication (AAC apps)
- medical monitoring
- safety in the community
- home circumstances (e.g., young carers)

...this will be documented in an **Individual Risk Assessment** or **target plan**, with clear rules for use.

5. STORAGE AND HANDLING

- Phones brought to school must be **handed in**, stored securely, and only issued during the authorised session.
- After the supervised activity, they must be immediately returned to secure storage.

6. SAFEGUARDING CONSIDERATIONS

The policy aligns with safeguarding guidance, recognising that unsupervised phone use may pose risks such as distraction, bullying or exposure to harmful content.

The controlled exception model ensures pupils can learn essential digital life skills **without increasing safeguarding risks**.

7. STAFF AND PARENT COMMUNICATION

- Staff receive training on applying the policy consistently.
- Parents are informed that **phones remain prohibited except for planned educational purposes**, and that misuse will be managed under the school's Behaviour Policy.

8. MONITORING AND REVIEW

- Senior leaders will regularly monitor how well expectations are understood and followed, in line with Ofsted's updated inspection approach.
- The life-skills exception will be reviewed termly to ensure it remains safe, purposeful and effective.