



Otterburn Primary School and Nursery Mobile Phone Policy

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Last reviewed on:	February 2026	
Next review due by:	February 2027	

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1. Introduction and aims

At Otterburn Primary School and Nursery, 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 Headteacher is responsible for monitoring the policy annually, reviewing it 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.

3.2 Governors

The Policy and Resources Committee oversees the regular review of this policy on behalf of the Governing Body.

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.

Where classroom apps, online systems or security processes require the use of a member of staff's mobile phone (for example to receive verification or authentication codes from systems such as CPOMS or email accounts), this is permitted strictly for professional purposes. Staff mobile phones may also be used to access the internet where this is necessary to support teaching, safeguarding or operational duties. Personal use during working hours should be kept to a minimum and staff are expected to ensure devices are used appropriately, securely and in line with the school's Acceptable Use and Safeguarding policies.

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

4.5 Sanctions

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

See the school's staff disciplinary policy for more information.

5. Use of mobile phones by pupils

In line with DfE non-statutory guidance, pupils are not permitted to use mobile phones during the school day. This includes during lessons, between lessons, at breaktimes and at lunchtimes. This approach reflects current DfE guidance to ensure that mobile phones do not disrupt learning or compromise safeguarding.

The majority of our current pupils do not bring mobile phones to school. However, in previous years some pupils have brought a mobile phone due to individual family circumstances. This has included pupils walking home independently, attending another parent's home after school or where families are separated and contact arrangements require flexibility.

Where a pupil needs to bring a mobile phone to school, parents must inform the school in advance. On arrival, the phone must be handed to a member of staff and will be stored securely in the school office for the duration of the school day. The phone will be returned to the pupil at the end of the day.

Mobile phones must not be used, seen or heard on the school premises. If a pupil fails to follow this procedure, appropriate action will be taken in line with the school's behaviour policy.

5.1 Use of smartwatches by pupils

In line with DfE non-statutory guidance, the term 'mobile phones' includes devices with communication and smart technology. This includes smartwatches.

Smartwatches are not permitted to be used during the school day. This includes during lessons, between lessons, at breaktimes and at lunchtimes. As smartwatches may allow pupils to send or receive messages, make calls or access the internet, they present the same potential safeguarding and disruption risks as mobile phones.

The majority of our pupils do not bring smartwatches to school. Where a pupil wears a smartwatch that has communication functions, parents must inform the school in advance.

Where permitted, smartwatches must be handed to a member of staff on arrival and will be stored securely in the school office for the duration of the school day, in line with our mobile phone procedures. They will be returned to the pupil at the end of the day.

Simple digital watches that only tell the time are permitted.

Smartwatches must not be used, seen or heard on the school premises. If a pupil fails to follow this procedure, appropriate action will be taken in line with the school's behaviour policy.

5.2 Exceptions for special circumstances

The school recognises that, in limited circumstances, a pupil may need to bring a device to school. This may include pupils who travel to or from school independently, young carers who need to be contactable or pupils with medical needs that require access to monitoring technology, such as Type 1 diabetes.

Any such requests will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Parents or carers must contact the Headteacher in advance to request permission and explain the circumstances.

Where permission is granted, devices must normally be handed to a member of staff on arrival and will be stored securely in the school office for the duration of the school day. However, where there are medical grounds, for example where a device is required for continuous monitoring of a health condition such as Type 1 diabetes, alternative arrangements may be agreed to allow the device to remain with the pupil. This will be discussed with parents or carers and relevant medical professionals as appropriate.

Pupils who are given permission to bring or use a device in school must follow the school's Acceptable Use and Behaviour Policies. Devices must not be used, seen or heard on the school premises unless specific arrangements have been agreed. Failure to follow these expectations may result in permission being withdrawn.

5.3 Sanctions

If a pupil breaches this policy, the school will take appropriate action in line with the Behaviour Policy. Any sanction applied will be reasonable and proportionate, taking account of the pupil's age, individual circumstances and any special educational needs or disabilities.

Where a device is brought into school or used without permission, staff may confiscate it in line with the Education and Inspections Act 2006. Confiscated devices will be stored securely in the school office and may only be collected by a parent or carer at the end of the school day or at another agreed time.

Repeated breaches may result in permission to bring a device to school being withdrawn.

If staff have reason to believe that a device contains inappropriate content, has been used to cause harm or has been involved in unsafe or unlawful activity, the Headteacher or a delegated senior member of staff may search the device in line with DfE guidance on searching, screening and confiscation. Any concerns will be dealt with in accordance with the school's Safeguarding Policy.

Staff will consider whether the behaviour indicates that a pupil may be suffering or at risk of harm. Where appropriate, safeguarding procedures will be followed in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education and concerns will be recorded on CPOMS.

The school recognises that certain types of behaviour involving digital devices may constitute bullying, harassment or criminal conduct. This may include sharing inappropriate images, making threats, abusive messages or online harassment. Such incidents will be taken seriously and may be referred to external agencies, including the police, where appropriate.

Parents or carers will be informed of any incidents involving misuse of devices. The school accepts no responsibility for loss or damage to personal devices brought onto the school premises.

6. Use of mobile phones by parents/carers, volunteers and visitors

Parents or carers, visitors and volunteers (including governors and contractors) must adhere to this policy as it relates to staff when they are on the school site during the school day.

This means:

- Not taking pictures or recordings of pupils unless this is 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 mobile phones in lessons or when working directly with pupils

Parents or 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. A summary of expectations is displayed at reception and staff are available to clarify procedures if required.

Parents or carers or volunteers supervising school trips or residential visits must not:

- Use their phone to make contact with other parents or carers
- Take photos or recordings of pupils, their work or anything else that could identify a pupil

Parents or carers or volunteers supervising trips are also responsible for supporting the school's policy for pupil device use, as set out in section 5 above, but must refer any concerns or breaches to a member of staff, as they do not have the authority to search or confiscate devices.

Parents or 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 attempt to contact their child directly on their personal mobile device during the school day.

7. Loss, theft or damage

Where pupils are permitted to bring a device to school, it must be clearly labelled with the pupil's name and handed to a member of staff on arrival, unless alternative arrangements have been agreed for medical reasons. Devices will be stored securely in the school office for the duration of the school day.

Pupils and staff are expected to secure devices as much as possible, including the use of passwords or PIN codes where applicable. Staff must also secure their personal mobile phones, as well as any work devices provided to them, to prevent unauthorised access or data breaches.

The school accepts no responsibility for devices 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.

Parents or carers will be made aware of this disclaimer through this policy and via communication from the school where permission is granted for a pupil to bring a device to school.

Where a device is confiscated, it will be stored securely in the school office and may only be collected by a parent or carer. While the device is held by the school following confiscation, it will be kept in a secure location.

Any lost devices should be handed 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 or carers and pupils
- Feedback from staff
- Records of behaviour and safeguarding incidents
- Relevant advice from the Department for Education, the local authority and other relevant organisations

Any concerns regarding this policy should be brought to the attention of the Headteacher in a timely manner.

This policy is reviewed regularly by the Policy and Resources Committee on behalf of the Governing Body.

Appendix 1:

Acceptable Use Agreement for Pupils Allowed to Bring a Device to School Due to Exceptional Circumstances

This agreement applies only to pupils who have been given permission to bring a device to school due to exceptional circumstances.

Pupil Acceptable Use Agreement

If you are allowed to bring a device to school, you must follow these rules:

1. Your device must be handed to a member of staff as soon as you arrive at school unless special medical arrangements have been agreed.
2. Your device must remain switched off and stored securely in the school office for the whole school day.
3. You must not use your device anywhere on the school premises unless specific permission has been given.
4. You must not take photos or recordings of pupils or staff.
5. You must not use your device to send unkind messages or upset anyone.
6. You must follow all school behaviour and safeguarding rules at all times.
7. If a member of staff asks for your device, you must hand it over straight away.
8. Your device will be returned to you at the end of the school day.
9. If you do not follow these rules, permission to bring a device to school may be withdrawn.

Pupils are reminded that bringing a device to school is a privilege, not a right.

The school accepts no responsibility for loss or damage to personal devices.

Appendix 2:

Permission form allowing a pupil to bring their phone to school

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

The school has agreed to allow _____ to bring a device to school due to exceptional circumstances. This may include:

- Travelling to and from school independently
- Being a young carer
- Medical needs that require access to monitoring technology
- Attendance at a school trip or residential visit where use of devices is permitted
- Attendance at a before- or after-school activity where a device is required to contact parents or carers

Pupils who bring a device to school must follow the school's Mobile Phone Policy and the Pupil Acceptable Use Agreement (Appendix 1). Devices must normally be handed to a member of staff on arrival and stored securely in the school office unless alternative arrangements have been agreed.

The school reserves the right to withdraw permission if the pupil does not follow the policy.

Parent/carer signature: _____

Pupil signature (where appropriate): _____

Date: _____

FOR SCHOOL USE ONLY	
Authorised by:	
Date:	

Appendix 3:

Template mobile phone information slip for visitors



Use of mobile phones and similar devices in our school:

- Please keep your mobile phone on silent or vibrate while on the school grounds
- Please do not use mobile phones where pupils are present.
 - If you need to take a call, you may go to the staff room or the main school office
- Do not take photographs or recordings of pupils or staff, unless it is your own child at a public event
- Do not use your phone in lessons or when working with pupils

The school accepts no responsibility for phones that are lost, damaged or stolen while you are on the school grounds.

A full copy of our Mobile Phone Policy is available from the school office.