Horsley and Mapperley Federation of Schools

Mobile Phone Policy

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1. Introduction

In line with Department for Education guidance, the school operates as a mobile phone-free environment by default during the school day.

We recognise that digital technology can offer valuable benefits for teaching, learning and school operations. However, personal mobile phones and similar devices should be managed carefully so they do not negatively affect learning, behaviour, safeguarding or wellbeing.

This policy sets out the Federation of Horsley and Mapperley CE Primary Schools' approach to the use of mobile phones and similar devices during the school day. It reflects the Department for Education Mobile Phones in Schools Guidance and supports the creation of a calm, safe, and focused learning environment where pupils can learn and thrive.

The school aims to balance clear expectations with reasonable flexibility, ensuring that mobile phone use does not negatively impact learning, behaviour, safeguarding, or wellbeing.

Limiting access to mobile phones during the school day reduces opportunities for unsupervised online interaction and supports the school's preventative safeguarding approach.

2. Scope and Responsibilities

Overall responsibility for the implementation and oversight of this policy rests with the Headteacher, supported by the Senior Leadership Team. The governing body/trust board will have oversight of the policy and will seek assurance that it is being implemented consistently and reviewed in line with national guidance and the school's safeguarding and behaviour responsibilities. All staff are responsible for the consistent day-to-day application of this policy.

This policy applies to all pupils, staff, visitors, volunteers and contractors of the Federation of Horsley and Mapperley CE Primary Schools, where relevant.

It applies throughout the school day and while pupils are on the school site under the school's supervision, including lessons, transitions, breaktimes, lunchtimes and any agreed before- or after-school provision, unless different arrangements have been communicated in advance.

For educational visits, residential trips, fixtures and off-site activities, the school will set out specific mobile phone arrangements in advance, taking account of safeguarding, supervision, travel and communication needs.

Visitors, volunteers and contractors should avoid using mobile phones in pupil areas unless this has been agreed for a specific school-related purpose.

3. Definitions

Devices with mobile phone functionality are covered by this policy even if they are branded or marketed differently. For the purposes of this policy, 'mobile phones' include:

- Smartphones and mobile phones
- Devices capable of sending or receiving messages
- Devices that access mobile networks
- Devices capable of recording audio or video
- Smartwatches or wearable devices with communication, camera, recording, internet or notification functions

This policy does not apply to:

- School-owned devices used for learning

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- Laptops or tablets approved under a Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) scheme (where applicable)

4. National Context and Expectations

The Department for Education expects all schools to be mobile phone-free environments by default, with any exceptions being limited and clearly justified.

This policy has been developed with regard to:

- Mobile phones in schools (DfE)
- Behaviour in Schools guidance
- Keeping Children Safe in Education

Ofsted Considerations

Ofsted inspectors may consider whether the school has a clear and well-defined mobile phone policy, how effectively it is communicated to staff, pupils, and parents, how consistently it is applied in practice, and the extent to which it has a positive impact on pupils' behaviour, learning, and wellbeing.

5. Policy Aims

This policy aims to reduce distraction and disruption to learning, support positive behaviour and calm routines, reduce safeguarding risks associated with mobile phone use, promote positive wellbeing, and provide clarity and consistency for pupils and staff across the school.

6. Expectations for Pupils

Pupils are not permitted to use mobile phones or similar devices at any point during the school day, from arrival on the school site until they leave the site at the end of the day. This includes lessons, transitions, breaktimes and lunchtimes.

- Mobile phones must be fully switched off and handed in to the agreed member of staff or the school office on arrival.

  Where pupils are permitted to bring mobile phones or similar devices onto the school site, they must be fully powered off for the duration of the school day and managed in line with the school's agreed arrangements. Silent, vibrate, sleep, locked and "Do Not Disturb" modes do not meet this requirement.

Pupils are expected to follow this requirement consistently, without negotiation, unless a reasonable exception has been formally agreed. In emergencies, pupils should speak to staff. The school will contact parents where required.

Once agreed, the school's mobile phone arrangements should be communicated clearly to pupils, parents, carers and staff, and applied consistently across the school.

Mobile phones brought onto the school site remain the responsibility of the pupil unless formally handed in under the school's agreed storage arrangements. The school is not responsible for loss, damage or theft where pupils have not followed the required procedures.

7. Reasonable Exceptions

The school recognises that limited exceptions to this policy may be required in specific circumstances, such as medical needs, SEND or disability-related requirements, or safeguarding and welfare considerations. Exceptions will be granted only where there is a clear and evidenced need. They will be agreed in advance, documented, shared with relevant staff, and reviewed regularly. Any exception will specify when, where and how the device may be used and who has approved the arrangement.

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8. Equality and Inclusion

In applying this policy, the school will:

- Have regard to its duties under the Equality Act 2010
- Make reasonable adjustments where required
- Ensure that individual needs are considered proportionately

Staff will be informed of any agreed exceptions to ensure consistency and fairness. Reasonable adjustments will be agreed through SEND/safeguarding processes and formally recorded.

9. Expectations for Staff

Staff are expected to understand and follow this policy, apply it consistently and calmly, model positive behaviour, adhere to agreed procedures for managing breaches, and avoid making informal or individual exceptions.

Staff mobile phone use during the school day should align with the school's staff code of conduct and safeguarding expectations.

Staff should not use personal mobile phones in front of pupils during the school day unless this is necessary for an agreed school purpose, emergency, safeguarding matter or reasonable adjustment.

Staff will support pupils in understanding and adjusting to this policy, particularly during periods of review or change.

10. Managing Breaches of the Policy

Breaches of this policy will be managed in line with the school's Behaviour Policy and established escalation procedures. Responses will be proportionate, consistent, support learning and behaviour improvement, and avoid confrontation where possible.

Where a mobile phone or similar device is seen, heard or used in breach of this policy, staff will follow the school's agreed behaviour procedures. This may include confiscation of the device, secure storage by the school, and return at the end of the school day or to a parent/carer, depending on the circumstances and the school's published procedures.

Repeated or serious breaches may result in further action in line with the Behaviour Policy. Staff should not routinely search the content of a pupil's device. Any search, screening, or confiscation must be managed in line with the school's procedures and relevant statutory provisions in the Education Act 2011 and DfE Searching, Screening and Confiscation guidance.

11. Safeguarding Considerations

Mobile phone use can introduce safeguarding risks, including:

- Unsupervised communication
- Recording and sharing of images or audio
- Online bullying or harassment
- Access to harmful or age-inappropriate content
- Rapid escalation of incidents through messaging, social media or group chats

The school will consider safeguarding and data-protection risks when deciding where pupil mobile phones and similar devices are stored. Storage locations should not be in offices, meeting rooms or other spaces where confidential or sensitive conversations may take place, as mobile phones and similar devices may retain listening, recording or sensor capability if they are not fully powered off.

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Maintaining a mobile phone-free environment supports the school's safeguarding duties under Keeping Children Safe in Education, particularly in relation to online safety and child-on-child abuse, and helps reduce related risks.

12. Communication of the Policy

The school will:

- Publish this policy on the school website
- Communicate expectations clearly to pupils and parents/carers
- Reinforce the rationale behind the policy
- Provide opportunities for questions and clarification

Clear communication supports understanding, consistency, and compliance.

Where the school introduces or changes its mobile phone arrangements, leaders will ensure that pupils, parents, carers and staff are given clear information in advance. Expectations will be reinforced through assemblies, tutor time, staff briefings and parent communications.

Parents and carers are encouraged to reinforce expectations at home and use the school's usual communication routes if they need to contact their child during the school day. Pupils who need to contact home should speak to a member of staff, who will support them in line with school procedures.

13. Monitoring and Review

As a minimum, this policy will be formally reviewed on an annual basis. The policy will be monitored by senior leaders and updated as necessary to reflect changes in national guidance or the school's context.

Senior leaders will monitor the implementation and impact of this policy through behaviour records, safeguarding records, staff feedback, pupil voice, parent/carer feedback, and any incidents involving mobile phones or connected devices. Feedback from pupils, staff, and parents may be used to inform future refinements and ensure the policy remains effective and appropriate.

The governing body will receive appropriate assurance that the policy is understood, applied consistently and reviewed in response to national guidance, safeguarding considerations and the school's context.

14. Related Policies

This policy should be read alongside:

- Behaviour Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- ICT Acceptable Use Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Searching, Screening and Confiscation Policy/procedures
- SEND Policy

Note on annexes: The annexes are optional supporting resources and should be adapted or removed according to the school's phase, context, and communication needs.

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Annex A: Mobile Phones in School - Information for Parents and Carers

Our school aims to provide a calm, safe, and focused learning environment where all children can thrive. To support this, we follow Department for Education (DfE) guidance which states that schools should be mobile phone-free during the school day by default.

Why does the school restrict mobile phones?

Mobile phones can:

- Distract pupils from learning
- Disrupt lessons and social time
- Increase the risk of bullying or unkind behaviour
- Introduce safeguarding risks, such as unsupervised online contact or image sharing

By limiting mobile phone use during the school day, we help pupils focus on learning, enjoy positive social interactions, and stay safe.

What does this mean for pupils?

Pupils are not allowed to use mobile phones during the school day, from arrival on the school site until they leave at the end of the day. This includes lessons, transitions, breaktimes and lunchtime.

Our school uses a clear and consistent approach to managing mobile phones, which is applied equally to all pupils.

Mobile phones must be handed to an agreed staff member or the school office at the start of the day and collected at the end of the day.

Where pupils are allowed to bring mobile phones or similar devices onto the school site, they must be fully powered off for the duration of the school day and managed in line with the school's agreed arrangements. Silent, vibrate, sleep, locked or "Do Not Disturb" modes do not meet this requirement.

Where pupils are permitted to bring phones onto the school site, they remain the responsibility of the pupil unless formally handed in under the school's agreed storage arrangements. The school is not responsible for loss, damage or theft where pupils do not follow the required procedures.

Are there any exceptions?

We recognise that limited exceptions may be needed in specific circumstances, such as:

- Medical needs
- SEND or disability-related requirements
- Safeguarding or welfare reasons

Any exception is agreed in advance, documented, and reviewed regularly to ensure it remains appropriate. Exceptions will set out when, where and how the device may be used.

How does this support safeguarding?

Restricting mobile phone use supports our safeguarding responsibilities under Keeping Children Safe in Education. It helps reduce risks related to:

- Online safety
- Child-on-child abuse
- Inappropriate recording, audio capture, or sharing of images or messages

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This is a preventative approach designed to protect all pupils.

What is expected of parents and carers?

Parents and carers play an important role in supporting this policy. We ask that you:

- Reinforce the school's expectations with your child
- Use the school's usual communication routes if you need to pass on urgent information or contact your child during the school day, rather than contacting pupils directly

This helps us maintain a consistent and calm environment for learning.

How is the policy enforced?

Staff apply the policy calmly and consistently, in line with the school's Behaviour Policy. If a phone is seen, heard or used in breach of the policy, this may include confiscation, secure storage and return at the end of the school day or to a parent/carer, depending on the school's published procedures. Repeated or serious misuse may lead to further action.

Where can I find the full policy?

The full Mobile Phones in Schools Policy is available on the school website. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the school - we are always happy to discuss our approach.

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Annex B: Pupil FAQs PRIMARY SCHOOL VERSION

Why can't I use my phone in school?

School is a place for learning, playing, and spending time with friends. Phones can be distracting and make it harder to concentrate or enjoy breaktimes properly. Keeping phones out of use helps everyone feel calm, safe, and focused.

Can I bring my phone to school?

That depends on the school's rules. If you are allowed to bring a phone, it must be fully switched off and kept where your teacher tells you. It must not be used during the school day.

What about breaktime and lunchtime?

Phones are not used at breaktime or lunchtime. These times are for talking, playing, and relaxing with friends.

What if I feel unwell or need help?

If you need help, speak to a teacher or another adult in school. They are there to help you and can contact home if needed.

Are there any exceptions?

Sometimes, a small number of pupils may need a phone for medical or other important reasons. This is agreed with the school in advance.

If this happens, adults will explain when, where and how the phone can be used.

What happens if I use my phone when I'm not allowed to?

Your teacher will follow the school rules. This might mean your phone is taken away safely for a while or your parents are contacted.

Who can I talk to if I'm worried?

Talk to your teacher or another adult in school. It's always better to ask for help than to worry on your own.

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Annex B1: SEND Friendly Pupil FAQs PRIMARY SCHOOL VERSION

Why do we not use phones in school?

School is for learning, playing, and spending time with friends. Phones can make it harder to concentrate or stay calm. When phones are not used, lessons are quieter, break times are happier, and everyone feels safer.

Can I bring my phone to school?

Some pupils are allowed to bring a phone. If you bring a phone, it must be fully switched off and kept where a teacher tells you.

Can I use my phone at break or lunch?

No. Break and lunchtime are for playing, talking with friends, and relaxing your mind.

What if I feel worried or unwell?

You do not need a phone. You can talk to your teacher or another adult in school at any time. Adults will help you and can contact home if needed.

Are there any special rules for some pupils?

Yes. Some pupils need a phone for medical reasons, learning needs, or keeping safe. These rules are agreed with the school and explained clearly.

What happens if I forget and use my phone?

If it is an honest mistake, adults will help you understand the rules. If it happens again, staff will follow the school's rules fairly.

Who can help me understand the rules?

Your teacher, teaching assistant, or another adult in school. You can always ask if you are unsure.

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