



Merridale Primary School Mobile Phone and Digital Device Policy

Policy reviewed by Headteacher: December 2023

Date for next review: December 2025

1. Introduction and aims

At Merridale Primary School we recognise that mobile phones, including smart phones, 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, and set an example for, safe and responsible phone use
- Set clear guidelines for the use of mobile phones for pupils, staff, parents/carers and volunteers
- Support the school's other policies, especially those related to safeguarding, 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

2. Roles and responsibilities

2.1 Staff

All staff (including teachers, support staff and supply staff) are responsible for 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 every 2 years, reviewing it, and holding staff and pupils accountable for its implementation.

3. Use of mobile phones by staff

3.1 Personal mobile phones

Staff (including volunteers, contractors and anyone else otherwise engaged by the school) are not permitted to make or receive calls, or send texts, in pupil areas or whilst children 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, main school office or other office areas when pupils are not present).

There may be circumstances in which it's appropriate for a member of staff to have use of their phone during contact time. For instance:

- 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 (01902 558760) as a point of emergency contact.

During the school day, staff must ensure that their phones are on silent or on airplane mode whilst in pupil/teaching areas and when children are present. Ideally, phones must be kept out of sight and reach of pupils and protected with a pin/password.

3.2 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).

3.3 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 mobile phones to take photographs or recordings of pupils, their work, or anything else which 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.

3.4 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 aren't limited to:

- 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 which could identify a pupil
- Refrain from using their phones to contact parents/carers. If necessary, contact must be made via the school office. If staff must contact parents/carers using their phone, they must withhold their number.

3.5 Sanctions

Staff that fail to adhere to this policy may face disciplinary action. See the school's staff code of conduct for more information.

4. Use of mobile phones by pupils

Some parents and carers may wish to send their child into school with a mobile phone in certain circumstances, such as those children that travel to and from school by themselves. This is only allowed for children in Years 5 and 6 who walk to and from school by themselves. Parents must complete a permission form to allow their child to bring their phone to school (appendix 2). Pupils must sign our code of conduct (appendix 1) before they are allowed to bring their phone to school.

If pupils bring phones into school, they must bring them to the main school office at the start of the day and collect them from the office at the end of the day (all phones must be set to silent or airplane mode during the school day).

Children must not keep their phones in their coats/bags or in the cloakroom/classroom during the school day. Children are not permitted to have or use their mobile phone during the school day. Staff are responsible for monitoring this and must report any child with a phone in school to the Headteacher.

4.1 Sanctions

If pupils breach this policy, phones will be confiscated and held in the school office until the end of the school day. Parents/carers will be contacted and asked to collect their child's phone from the school office at the end of the school day.

Staff have the power to search pupils' phones, as set out in the [DfE's guidance on searching, screening and confiscation](#). The DfE guidance allows staff to search a pupil's phone if they have reason to believe the phone contains pornographic images, or if it is being/has been used to commit an offence or cause personal injury.

Certain types of conduct, bullying or harassment can be classified as criminal conduct. The school takes such conduct extremely seriously and will involve the police or other agencies as appropriate.

Such conduct includes, but is not limited to:

- Sexting (consensual and non-consensual sharing nude or semi-nude images or videos)

- Upskirting
- Threats of violence or assault
- Abusive calls, emails, social media posts or texts directed at someone on the basis of someone's ethnicity, religious beliefs or sexual orientation

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

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 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, or when working with pupils

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. This is displayed in a poster in the school entrance (appendix 3) and also in our Health and Safety/Safeguarding leaflet – information for visitors.

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 which could identify a pupil

Parents/carers or volunteers supervising trips are also responsible for enforcing the school's policy for pupils using their phones, as set out in section 4 above.

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 his/her personal mobile during the school day.

6. Loss, theft or damage

Pupils bringing phones to school must ensure that phones are appropriately labelled and are stored securely when not in use.

Pupils must secure their phones as much as possible, including using passwords or pin codes to protect access to the phone's functions. Staff must also secure their personal phones, as well as any work phone provided to them. Failure by staff to do so could result in data breaches.

The school accepts no responsibility for mobile phones 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.

Confiscated phones will be stored in the main school office in secure location until it can be collected by a parent/carer.

Lost phones should be returned to the main school office. The school will then attempt to contact the owner.

7. Monitoring and review

The school is committed to ensuring that this policy has a positive impact of pupils' education, behaviour and welfare. When reviewing the policy, the school will take into account:

- Feedback from parents/carers and pupils
- Feedback from teachers
- Records of behaviour and safeguarding incidents
- Relevant advice from the Department for Education, the local authority or other relevant organisations

8. Appendix 1: Code of conduct (pupils)

Code of conduct – Mobile phones and digital devices

You must obey the following rules if you bring your mobile phone to school:

1. You may not use your mobile phone during the school day or during lessons.
2. You must bring your mobile phone to the main school office at the start of the school day and collect it at the end of the school day. If you do not hand in your phone at the start of the school day, it will be confiscated by school staff and a parent/carer will need to collect this from the main school office.
3. Phones must be on silent or on airplane mode during the school day.
4. You cannot take photos or recordings (either video or audio) of school staff or other pupils without their consent.
5. Do not share your contact details with people you don't know, and don't share other people's contact details without their consent.
6. Don't share your phone's passwords or access codes with anyone else.
7. Don't use your mobile phone to bully, intimidate or harass anyone. This includes bullying, harassing or intimidating pupils or staff via:
 - a. Email
 - b. Text/messaging app
 - c. Social media
8. Don't use your phone to send or receive anything that may be criminal. For instance, by 'sexting'.
9. Rules on bullying, harassment, and intimidation apply to how you use your mobile phone even when you aren't in school.
10. Don't use vulgar, obscene or derogatory language while on the phone or when using social media. This language is not permitted under the school's behaviour policy.
11. Don't use your phone to view or share inappropriate images, pornography or other harmful content.
12. You must comply with a request by a member of staff to switch off, or hand over, a phone. Refusal to comply is a breach of the school's behaviour policy and will be dealt with accordingly.

Pupil Name: _____ Year: _____

Signed: _____

Date: _____

9. 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 their mobile phone to school because they:

➤ Travel to and from school alone

Pupils who bring a mobile phone to school must abide by the school's policy on the use of mobile phones, and its code of conduct

The school reserves the right revoke permission if pupils don't abide by the policy.

Parent/carer signature: _____

Pupil signature (where appropriate): _____

FOR SCHOOL USE ONLY	
Authorised by:	
Date:	

10. Appendix 3: Template mobile phone information for visitors



Merridale Primary School

Mobile phones

Digital devices

Use of mobile phones/digital devices in our school - visitors/parents/carers

Please keep your mobile phone on **silent/vibrate** while on the school premises

Please **do not** use phones where pupils are present. If you must use your phone, you may go to the main school office or staffroom.

Do not take photos or recordings of pupils (unless it is your own child), or staff

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 on our website.

