THE STOKE POGES SCHOOL

Mobile Phone Policy for Staff, Visitors, Volunteers and Children

Date Approved	September 2026
Recommended Review Period	Annual
Date for Review	September 2027
Person Responsible for the Policy	Headteacher
Linked Lead	Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

1. Introduction and aims

The Stoke Poges School is committed to ensuring a safe, respectful and distraction-free learning environment, consistent with our values. This policy sets out clear expectations for the use of mobile phones and similar devices across the school community.

Our policy aims to:

- Promote safe and responsible phone use
- Set clear guidance 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:

- Data protection issues
- Potential for lesson disruption
- Risk of theft, loss or damage
- Appropriate use of technology in the classroom

2. Relevant guidance

This policy meets the requirements of section 36 of the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act 2026, and the Department for Education (DfE)'s mobile phone guidance and behaviour guidance. Further guidance to be considered alongside this policy includes Keeping Children Safe in Education, which sets out the expectation that all schools should be mobile phone-free by default.

3. Scope

This policy applies to:

- All pupils enrolled at The Stoke Poges School
- All staff members, including permanent, temporary and supply staff
- Parents, carers, governors, visitors and contractors on school premises
- School-related activities off-site (e.g. trips, residentials)

4. Roles and responsibilities

4.1 Governing Board

The Governing Board will:

- Approve and review this policy
- Monitor safeguarding implications
- Ensure compliance with statutory requirements

4.2 Headteacher

The Headteacher will:

- Implement and monitor this policy
- Determine any exemptions
- Ensure appropriate staff training

4.3 Designated Safeguarding Lead
The DSL will:

- Advise on safeguarding risks
- Respond to technology-related safeguarding concerns
- Maintain oversight of any incidents

4.4 Staff
All staff are responsible for:

- Following this policy
- Reporting concerns promptly
- Maintaining professional standards

4.5 Parents
Parents are responsible for:

- Supporting the school's mobile phone-free environment
- Ensuring any approved device complies with this policy
- Reinforcing expectations with their child

Many social media platforms have a minimum age requirement of 13 years. We ask parents to support the school by discussing responsible and safe use of technology with their child.

5. 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.

5.1 Personal mobile phones
Staff (including volunteers, contractors and anyone else otherwise engaged by the school) are not permitted to use their 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). Personal mobile phones must be stored securely out of sight and must not be carried on staff members' persons when working with pupils, unless specifically authorised for operational or safeguarding purposes. Staff who wear smartwatches must ensure that these are set to a 'Do Not Disturb' or equivalent setting whilst in the presence of pupils. Notifications, including calls, text messages, emails and app alerts, must not be visible, audible or accessed when supervising, teaching or otherwise working with children.

There may be circumstances in which it's appropriate for a member of staff to have use of their phone during the 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
- Awaiting a call back from a GP

The headteacher will decide on a case-by-case basis whether to allow for special arrangements. If it is deemed necessary, phones should be on vibrate and out of sight. The staff member should take the call away from the children.

If special arrangements are not deemed necessary, school staff can use the school office number as the emergency contact point.

Staff members providing intimate care must not have a mobile phone or smartwatch on their person whilst carrying out this task.

In some circumstances, a medical condition may require the use of a mobile phone. For example, staff with diabetes may use continuous glucose monitoring systems, where a sensor is linked to their mobile phone to track blood sugar levels. In these circumstances, staff will be permitted to use a mobile phone, while children are present, solely for monitoring/supporting their health.

5.2 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).

5.3 Safeguarding and privacy
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, this must be done using school equipment.

Staff and visitors should access the school's wi-fi for work purposes only.

The Stoke Poges School complies with the Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR regarding images and data captured on mobile phones.

5.4 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:

- Use of multi-factor authentication
- Emergency evacuations
- Supervising off-site trips
- Supervising residential visits

In these circumstances, staff will:

- Use their mobile phones appropriately and professionally, in line with our staff code of conduct
- Immediately download any photos or videos taken as soon as they can and delete them from their device.
- Refrain from using their phones to contact parents/carers (unless agreed with the headteacher). If necessary, contact must be made via the school office or appropriate system set up for the occasion.

5.5 Sanctions
Staff who fail to adhere to this policy may face disciplinary action.

6. Use of mobile phones by pupils

From September 2026, the Department for Education's statutory guidance requires schools to be mobile phone-free environments by default throughout the school day. In line with this guidance, The Stoke Poges School does not permit pupils to access mobile phones or smart technology whilst on school premises.

We recognise that some parents of children in Years 5 and 6 who walk to and from school independently may wish their child to carry a mobile phone for safety and emergency purposes. In these circumstances, and by prior agreement with the school, children may bring a basic mobile phone ("brick phone") only.

Smartphones and devices with internet access, cameras, apps, social media, messaging services beyond basic calling/texting, or other smart technology are not permitted.

To bring a mobile phone onto the school site, children must:

- Switch the phone off immediately upon entering the school grounds.
- Hand the phone to their class teacher at the start of the school day.
- Collect the phone at the end of the school day before leaving the premises.
- Ensure the phone remains switched off and is not used anywhere on the school site.

6.1 Use of smartwatches by pupils
The DfE's statutory mobile phones guidance includes in the term 'mobile phones' all devices with communications and smart technology that the school chooses to include in its policy.

Smartwatches are wristwatches with smart technology in them. They can be used to tell the time, send and receive text and voice messages, make calls and listen to music. Some smartwatches have wellness and health-related features.

The Stoke Poges School operates a ban on smartwatches for children.

6.2 Exceptions for special circumstances
In some circumstances, supporting a pupil with a medical condition may require the use of a mobile phone. For example, pupils with diabetes may use continuous glucose monitoring systems, where a sensor is linked to their mobile phone to track blood sugar levels. In these situations, pupils will be permitted to use a mobile phone solely for monitoring/supporting their health.

In addition, the school may allow pupils to bring a mobile phone in other special circumstances. Such requests will be considered on a case-by-case basis. To request permission, parents./carers should contact the headteacher.

6.3 Sanctions
If a pupil is in breach of this policy, their mobile phone will be confiscated in line with sections 91 and 94 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006. Parents will then be contacted, arrangements made for the phone to be collected, and sanctions discussed.

In each case, the sanction given will be reasonable and proportionate. The school will also consider whether:

- There are any relevant special circumstances (for example, age, religious requirements, special educational needs)
- The pupil's behaviour may indicate they are suffering, or at risk of, harm. If this is suspected, staff will follow the appropriate procedure set out in Part 1 of Keeping Children Safe in Education.

Staff have the authority to search a pupil's phone if there is a good reason to do so as set out in the DfE's guidance on searching, screening and confiscation.

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

7. 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:

- Visitors must follow safeguarding expectations and refrain from using mobile phones in areas accessible to pupils
- Use of mobile phones in classrooms or around the school is prohibited unless authorised (e.g. at a public event)

Parents/carers or volunteers will be informed of the rules for mobile phone use when they sign in at reception or attend a public event at school.

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 that 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 above, but must refer any sanctions to a member of staff, as they do not have the power to search or confiscate devices.

8. Loss, theft or damage

The school accepts no responsibility for mobile phones that are lost, damaged or stolen on school premises or transport, or while pupils are travelling to and from school.

Confiscated phones will be stored in the headteacher's office.

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

9. Monitoring and review

- The Senior Leadership Team will review the policy annually or sooner if required by changes in legislation or school context
- Feedback from pupils, staff and parents will be sought to assess the policy's effectiveness
- Incidents related to mobile phone use will be recorded on CPOMs and analysed to identify trends or areas for improvement

10. Links with other policies

This policy is linked to our:

- Behaviour policy
- Safeguarding and child protection policy
- Data protection and privacy notices
- Online policy
- Staff Code of Conduct

11. Summary

This policy reflects recent national expectations that schools operate as mobile phone-free environments by default to support learning, promote good behaviour, and protect pupil wellbeing. It balances safeguarding, practicality, and respect for individual needs – including medical expectations – while aligning with Ofsted's strengthened inspection focus on the clarity and consistency of mobile phone policies.

Headteacher		**Date**	
Chair of Governing Board		**Date**	

Appendix 1 **Letter to Parents/Carers**

Dear Parents and Carers,

As you may be aware, from September 2026, the Department for Education's statutory guidance requires schools to be mobile phone-free environments by default throughout the school day. In line with this guidance, The Stoke Poges School does not permit pupils to access mobile phones or smart technology whilst on school premises.

We recognise that some parents of children in Years 5 and 6 who walk to and from school independently may wish their child to carry a mobile phone for safety and emergency purposes. In these circumstances, and by prior agreement with the school, children may bring a basic mobile phone ("brick phone") only.

Smartphones and devices with internet access, cameras, apps, social media, messaging services beyond basic calling/texting, or other smart technology are not permitted.

To bring a mobile phone onto the school site, your child must:

- Switch the phone off immediately upon entering the school grounds.
- Hand the phone to their class teacher at the start of the school day.
- Collect the phone at the end of the school day before leaving the premises.
- Ensure the phone remains switched off and is not used anywhere on the school site.

In line with our mobile phone policy, smartwatches and other wearable devices (including Apple Watches, Fitbit devices, and similar products) must not be worn or brought into school unless specifically agreed by the Headteacher for medical reasons.

Any pupil who fails to follow these expectations may lose the privilege of bringing a mobile phone to school. Any proven incidents of cyberbullying, accessing inappropriate content, inappropriate messaging, or misuse of technology will result in the immediate withdrawal of permission to bring a phone to school. The Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher will determine the duration of this withdrawal.

Many social media platforms have a minimum age requirement of 13 years. We ask parents to support the school by discussing responsible and safe use of technology with their child.

If a child brings a mobile phone to school without prior agreement, or brings a smartphone or smart device in breach of this policy, the device may be confiscated. Parents or carers will be required to collect the device from school.

Whilst every reasonable precaution will be taken to safeguard devices handed in to staff, mobile phones are brought onto school premises entirely at the owner's risk.

If you would like your child to bring a basic mobile phone to school because they walk home independently, please complete and return the agreement below.

Yours sincerely,
Liz Astley
Headteacher

Mobile Phone Agreement

Child's Name: _____

Class: _____

Please tick each statement:

☐ I request permission for my child to bring a mobile phone to school because they walk to and from school independently.

☐ I confirm that the phone is a **basic mobile phone ("brick phone") only** and is not a smartphone or smart device.

☐ I understand that smartphones, smartwatches and other smart technology are not permitted.

☐ I understand that my child must switch off their phone on arrival at school and hand it to their class teacher immediately.

☐ I understand that failure to follow the school's mobile phone policy may result in permission being withdrawn.

☐ I acknowledge that mobile phones are brought onto school premises at the owner's risk.

I understand that any proven incidents of cyberbullying, inappropriate messaging, inappropriate content, or misuse of technology may result in my child losing permission to bring a phone to school. Any such decision will be made by the Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher.

Parent/Carer Signature: _____

Date: _____