

Heritage Park Primary School

Mobile Phone and Electronic Devices Policy



Approved by: Senior Leadership Team

Last reviewed on: September 2025

Next review due by: September 2026

HERITAGE PARK PRIMARY SCHOOL **MOBILE PHONES AND ELECTRONIC DEVICES POLICY**

Introduction

Mobile phone and smart watch technology has advanced significantly over the last few years and continues to evolve. Many phones and smart watches now offer internet and e-mail access, alongside standard functions of messaging camera, video and sound recording.

Mobile phones and smart watches are changing the way and speed in which we communicate. They can provide security and reassurance; however there are also associated risks. Pupils need to understand these risks in order to help them develop appropriate strategies for keeping themselves safe.

This policy applies to all individuals who have access to personal or work-related mobile phones and smart watches with camera functions in school.

Any person bringing their mobile phone or electronic device onto school site does so at their own risk and school will not be held liable for any loss or damage to property.

Aims

The aim of the mobile phone and electronic devices policy is to promote safe and appropriate practice through establishing clear and robust acceptable use guidelines. This is achieved through balancing protection against potential misuse with the recognition that mobile phones are effective communication tools which, in turn, can contribute to safeguarding practice and protection.

The School's Approach – Pupils

Pupils will be taught the risks that are associated with the use of mobile phones, both in school and more broadly, to ensure they understand the decision being taken by their school to prohibit the use of mobile phones throughout the school day. These risks can include a loss of focus in lessons, classroom disruption and an increase in bullying.

Pupils should also be taught the benefits of having a mobile phone-free environment and be encouraged to see such an environment as desirable and valuable. This will help to create intrinsic motivation to support the school culture.

Pupils are discouraged from bringing mobile phones or smart watches onto school site (both during the school day and at events held outside of normal school hours). Where a parent/carer feels their child may need a phone (for safety when travelling to and from school) the parents/carers will inform the school office that a phone is on site. On entry to the school, each pupil will hand in their device to school staff and collect at the end of the school day.

The School's Approach – staff

It is recognised that mobile phones and smart watches can cause an unnecessary distraction during the working day and can be intrusive when used in the company of others. It is also recognised that it is the enhanced functions of many mobile phones and smart watches that cause the most concern and which are most susceptible to misuse. Misuse includes the taking and distribution of indecent images, exploitation and bullying.

It is appreciated that it can be very difficult to detect when mobile phones and smart watches are present or being used, particularly in relation to enhanced functions, such as cameras. The use of all mobile phones and smart watches containing camera facilities are, therefore, limited regardless of their capabilities.

Other than in exceptional circumstances, members of staff should store their mobile phone and smart watches with camera functions and/or mobile phone connectivity in their staff locker and have it switched to silent. Calls and texts should not be taken or made during the school day, except during designated break times (unless agreed with the Senior Leadership Team in exceptional circumstances), and any calls should be made in the staffroom, the offices or outside the front of school, away from pupils. Staff must not give their mobile phone numbers to pupils and/or parents and not enter into instant messaging communications with pupils. Staff are not permitted to use their phone or smart watch for taking, recording or storing images; school equipment is provided for this purpose. Staff should only use their personal phones to contact families if they precede any phone call with a blocking system so their phone number is not shared, e.g. such as dialling 141 before the number or using a specialised app. Staff are strongly encouraged to use a school telephone wherever possible.

In circumstances such as off site visits, staff will agree with the Head or Deputy Head the appropriate use of personal mobile phones in the event of an emergency.

Any individual bringing a personal device into the school must ensure that it contains no inappropriate or illegal content.

This policy should be seen as a safeguard for members of staff and the school. Any breach of school policy may result in disciplinary action against that member of staff.

The School's Approach – visitors

Supply teachers, new staff, contractors and visitors are given a Safeguarding Leaflet which includes guidance on the appropriate use of technology when they enter the school. Reminders are displayed around school to ensure all stakeholders remain aware of the school expectations regarding the use of mobile technology (see appendix 1).

Parents and visitors on the school site may use their phones, or other technology, to take photographs of their child during school performances or Sports Day but are reminded of the fact that these photographs must be for personal use only and no photographs or videos containing other pupils may be shared on any form of social media. The school reserves the right to view any images taken.

Photos of pupils must be taken in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018 and the school 'Parental Conduct Policy'.

Any individual bringing a personal device into the school must ensure that it contains no inappropriate or illegal content.

Inappropriate or Illegal Content

Where there is a suspicion that the material on a mobile phone may be unsuitable and may constitute evidence relating to a criminal offence, the 'Dealing with Allegations or Concerns about an Adult Working with Children' process will be followed (please refer to the school's 'Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy' Appendix B).

Staff, pupils or volunteers remain responsible for their own property and will bear the responsibility of any losses.

The use of pupil sanctions

A range of sanctions for breaching the mobile phone and electronic devices policy may be used, appropriate to their context, including confiscation and/or loss of playtime. Schools have the power to confiscate mobile phones or similar devices as a disciplinary penalty. The law protects staff from liability in any proceedings brought against them for any loss or damage to items they have confiscated as a sanction, providing they have acted lawfully. Staff should consider whether the confiscation is proportionate and consider any special circumstances relevant to the case.

The Headteacher is backed by the DfE to confiscate mobile phones and similar devices for the length of time deemed proportionate. In considering whether a confiscation is a proportionate penalty, we will consider what outcome the confiscation is intended to achieve and whether there are other ways to achieve the same outcome. We acknowledge that confiscation, as a sanction, can be an effective deterrent for a specific pupil or a general deterrent for all pupils at the school.

Searching pupils

Headteachers, or staff they authorise, have a statutory power to search a pupil or their possessions where they have reasonable grounds to suspect that the pupil is in possession of any item identified as being prohibited in school. Mobile phones and similar devices are something that may be searched for within the school behaviour and discipline policy. Staff should consult with the Headteacher and refer to the searching, screening and confiscation in schools guidance when considering searching a pupil.

Adaptations and reasonable adjustments

There may be other exceptional circumstances where school will consider making adaptations to this policy for specific pupils. School will assess each case on its own merits. E.g Schools have a duty under the Equality Act 2010 to take such steps as is reasonable to avoid substantial disadvantage to a disabled pupil caused by the school's policies or practices. We also have a duty under the Children and Families Act 2014 to have arrangements in place to support pupils with medical conditions. In some circumstances, supporting a pupil with their medical condition can involve the use of a mobile phone. For example, pupils with diabetes might use continuous glucose monitoring with a sensor linked to their mobile phone to monitor blood sugar levels. Where mobile phone use allows pupils to manage their medical condition effectively, it would not be reasonable for a school to prevent this.

Beyond these specific duties, we recognise that a need for mobile phone access for some pupils may depend on their individual circumstances, including at home.

Allowing flexibility for individual pupils does not mean that these pupils should be exempt from all restrictions on the use of their mobile phone. We will work with pupils to develop practices which enable them to use their mobile phone for a specific purpose at specific times and locations.

Conclusion

By following this policy we at Heritage Park Primary School will ensure that there are effective procedures in place to safeguard the adults and pupils in school by preventing the unacceptable use of mobile phones and smart watches in school.

Related Policies and Guidance

Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy (September 2025)

Guidance for Safer Working Practice for Adults who work with Children and Young People in Education Settings (February 2022)

Keeping Children Safe in Education (latest edition)

Data Protection: A toolkit for schools, DfE, (August 2018)

DfE guidance: Searching, screening and confiscation in schools (July 2023)

DfE guidance: Mobile phones in schools: Guidance for schools on prohibiting the use of mobile phones throughout the school day (February 2024)

DfE guidance: Behaviour in schools: Advice for Headteachers and School Staff (February 2024)

Safeguarding at Heritage Park Primary School

For all staff and visitors to our school:

Smartwatches are not permitted in our school.

Mobile phones must not be used when children are present and use should be restricted to break times.

