Mobile phone policy

The Calcot Schools

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1. Introduction and aims

At Calcot School, 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:

- Ensure our school environment is mobile phone-free by default during the school day.
- Minimise distraction and maximise learning opportunities.
- 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. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of Section 36 of the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act 2026 and the Department for Education's guidance *Mobile phones in schools.* It should be read alongside the Department for Education's guidance on *Behaviour in schools*, *Searching, screening and confiscation in schools*, *Keeping children safe in education* and *Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions*.

The policy also reflects the school's duties under the Equality Act 2010, the Children and Families Act 2014, data protection legislation and the statutory Early Years Foundation Stage safeguarding and welfare requirements.

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 Staff

All staff (including teachers, support staff and supply staff) are required to actively enforce this policy and challenge any breach immediately and consistently.

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 three years, 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 governing board has overall responsibility for ensuring that the school has an effective policy prohibiting pupils' use of mobile phones and similar devices during the school day. It will hold the headteacher to account for the consistent implementation of this policy and ensure that the policy remains aligned with safeguarding, behaviour, staff conduct, data protection and online safety requirements.

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 during the school day.

4.1 Personal mobile phones

Staff must not use personal mobile phones for personal reasons in front of pupils during the school day. Personal use must normally be limited to non-contact time in an area where pupils are not present, such as the staffroom. 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 0118 942 8727 (Juniors) / 0118 941 8189 (Infants) 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, Google Gemini or other generative AI tools).

See the school's Data Protection policy or ICT acceptable use policy for more information.

4.3 Safeguarding

Staff must not communicate with pupils or parents/carers through personal social media accounts, messaging services or personal mobile numbers.

Staff must avoid publicising their contact details on any social media platform or website, to avoid unwanted contact by parents/carers or pupils.

Refer to the ICT acceptable use or online safety policy.

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.

4.4 Using personal mobiles for work purposes

Staff should use school-issued devices and approved school systems for school business wherever these are available.

Personal mobile phones may only be used for an authorised work purpose where this is necessary and proportionate, for example:

- multi-factor authentication;
- an emergency or evacuation;
- an off-site visit where an agreed communication arrangement is required; or
- use of the school's approved 3CX application.

Staff must not use a personal device to take photographs or recordings of pupils, store pupil information locally, communicate with pupils or parents through a personal number or account, or access school information through an unapproved application. Where 3CX is used, communications must remain within the approved school system.

Any exceptional arrangement must be agreed by the headteacher or visit leader and must comply with the Staff Code of Conduct, Data Protection Policy, Acceptable Use Agreement and Online Safety Policy.

4.5 Early Years Provision

Personal mobile phones, cameras and other personal devices capable of taking images or recordings must not be used while staff are caring for or supervising children in the early years provision. Personal devices must be stored securely and must not be accessible to children. Only school-authorised equipment may be used to take photographs or recordings of children. Images and recordings must be taken, stored, used and deleted in accordance with the school's safeguarding, data protection, online safety and image-use arrangements.

Visitors, contractors, volunteers and parents must follow the school's restrictions on mobile phones, cameras and recording devices while in the early years provision.

4.6 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

Pupils must not bring a mobile phone or similar device to school unless the school has agreed that they may do so:

- because they travel to or from school independently; or
- because an individually assessed medical, disability, safeguarding or other exceptional need makes this necessary.

Parents/carers must complete the school's Mobile Phone Permission form via MCAS before the device is brought onto the school site. This form outlines the conditions of use and must be completed even if a form has been submitted previously. Permission is subject to compliance with this policy and may be reviewed or withdrawn.

Pupils will be taught about the risks associated with mobile phone use, including online safety, cyberbullying, distraction from learning and safeguarding risks. They will also be supported to understand the benefits of a mobile-phone-free school environment.

Use of Mobile Phones on School Site

- Mobile phones are **not permitted to be used anywhere on the school premises**, including before and after school.
- Phones must be **switched off immediately upon arrival** and must remain off until the pupil has left the school site.

Arrival Procedures

- Pupils should not arrive before **8:15am**, as school gates (including the Bath Road gate) will remain closed until this time.
- Upon arrival:
    - Between **8:15am and 8:30am**: phones must be switched off and handed to the member of staff on duty on the junior playground.
    - If classroom doors are open: phones must be switched off and handed directly to the class teacher.

All phones will be stored securely during the school day and returned to pupils at the end of the day.

Compliance
Pupils must not bring a mobile phone to school without a completed permission form. Failure to follow this policy will result in consequences in line with the school's behaviour policy and the signed agreement.

Parents/carers are asked to support the school by discussing these expectations with their child.

5.1 Use of smartwatches by pupils

The DfE's non-statutory mobile phone guidance includes in the term 'mobile phones' all devices with communications and smart technology that the school chooses to include in their 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 smart watches have wellness and health-related features.

Smart Watches

- Watches that only display the time and/or count steps are permitted.
- Smart watches with features such as **connectivity, cameras, video recording, messaging, or gaming** are not allowed.

- Any prohibited watch will be collected, stored securely, and returned at the end of the school day.

5.2 Medical needs, disability and exceptional circumstances

The school will consider individual exceptions and reasonable adjustments on a case-by-case basis. This includes its duties under the Equality Act 2010 and its arrangements for supporting pupils with medical conditions under the Children and Families Act 2014.

Permission may be considered where access to a device is necessary for:

- monitoring or managing a medical condition;
- a reasonable adjustment connected with a disability or special educational need;
- a young carer or pupil with an exceptional safeguarding or family circumstance; or
- another individually assessed need.

Any agreed exception will be documented in the pupil's individual healthcare plan, support plan or other written agreement. This will specify the permitted purpose, times, locations, supervision arrangements and any restrictions. Permission to use a device for a particular purpose does not provide unrestricted access to it during the school day.

5.3 Sanctions

Failure to comply with this policy may result in:

- the mobile phone, smartwatch or similar device being confiscated;
- the device being retained securely until it can be collected by a parent/carer;
- permission to bring the device to school being reviewed or withdrawn; and
- additional sanctions under the school's Behaviour Policy.

Any sanction or period of confiscation will be reasonable and proportionate. The school will take account of the pupil's age, special educational needs, disability, medical needs and any relevant safeguarding circumstances

Serious misuse, safeguarding concerns and criminal behaviour

Some use of a mobile phone or similar device may give rise to a safeguarding concern or may constitute a criminal offence. This may include, but is not limited to:

- creating, requesting, possessing or sharing nude or semi-nude images or videos of a child, including digitally manipulated or AI-generated images;
- taking photographs or recordings underneath a person's clothing without their consent;
- threats of violence, assault, stalking, coercive or controlling behaviour;
- bullying, harassment or abusive communications;
- communications targeting a person's race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, disability or another protected characteristic;
- recording or sharing images, video or audio without permission where this causes, or is intended to cause, harm;
- accessing another person's account or data without permission; or
- using a device to commit, plan or provide evidence of an offence.

Such incidents will be treated seriously and referred immediately to the designated safeguarding lead or deputy. The school will consider whether the pupil may be suffering, or may be at risk of harm and will follow its safeguarding and child protection procedures. The police, children's social care or another appropriate agency may be contacted where necessary.

Any search, confiscation or sanction will be reasonable and proportionate. In deciding what action to take, the school will consider:

- the seriousness and circumstances of the incident;
- the pupil's age, understanding and intent;
- whether the conduct was deliberate, repeated, coercive or exploitative;
- any relevant special educational need, disability or medical need;
- whether the pupil may have been pressured, groomed, exploited or harmed;
- the effect on other pupils, staff and the school community;
- whether evidence must be preserved; and
- whether safeguarding support, rather than or alongside a disciplinary response, is required.

Safeguarding action and support will not be delayed because the school is also considering a sanction. In serious cases, sanctions may include suspension or, in exceptional circumstances, permanent exclusion, in accordance with the school's Behaviour Policy and the statutory guidance on suspensions and permanent exclusions.

Searching for a mobile phone or similar device

Mobile phones, smartwatches and other unauthorised communication or recording devices are items for which the school may conduct a search where their possession or use is contrary to this policy and the school's Behaviour Policy.

A search may be carried out where:

- the pupil agrees to the search after the reason and proposed process have been explained; or
- there are reasonable grounds to suspect that the pupil has a mobile phone or similar device in their possession in breach of this policy.

Only the headteacher or a member of staff specifically authorised by the headteacher may conduct a search. The authorised member of staff must first seek the pupil's co-operation and explain why and how the search will take place.

A search may include the pupil's outer clothing, pockets, bag, desk, locker or other possessions. Staff must not require a pupil to remove any clothing other than outer clothing. A search of the pupil must normally be carried out by a member of staff of the same sex as the pupil and in the presence of another member of staff. A search of the pupil's possessions must normally take place in the presence of the pupil and another member of staff.

The limited exception to the same-sex and witness requirements applies only where the authorised member of staff reasonably believes that there is a risk of serious harm if the search is not carried out urgently and it is not reasonably practicable to comply with those requirements.

Reasonable force must not be used to search for a mobile phone or similar device solely because it is prohibited by the school's rules. If a pupil refuses to co-operate, the matter will be referred to the headteacher or another senior member of staff and may be dealt with under the Behaviour Policy.

Any search must be necessary, proportionate and sensitive to the pupil's age and individual needs. Reasonable adjustments will be made for pupils with SEND or disabilities.

Examining data or content on a device

Confiscating a device does not automatically give staff permission to examine its contents.

Only the headteacher or a member of staff specifically authorised by the headteacher may examine data or files on a device that has been lawfully confiscated following a search. At Calcot Schools, this will normally be the headteacher, the designated safeguarding lead or a deputy designated safeguarding lead acting with the headteacher's authority.

Content may be examined only where there is a good reason to do so. A good reason exists where there are reasonable grounds to suspect that data or a file:

- has been, or could be, used to cause harm to another person;
- has been, or could be, used to commit an offence;
- contains evidence relating to a suspected offence;
- seriously undermines the safety or good order of the school; or
- is likely to cause significant disruption to teaching or learning.

Staff must not examine a device merely to check whether a pupil has been using it or to look generally through the pupil's messages, photographs, applications, browsing history or social-media accounts. Examination must be limited to what is necessary to establish and respond to the particular concern.

If there is reason to suspect that a device contains a nude or semi-nude image of a child, the member of staff must not intentionally view, copy, print, share, store or save the image. The device must be secured without further examination and referred immediately to the designated safeguarding lead or deputy.

Where staff find or reasonably suspect content that:

- may constitute evidence of an offence;
- may place a child or another person at risk;
- contains a nude or semi-nude image of a child; or
- may require police involvement,

they must stop examining the device, secure it and refer the matter immediately to the designated safeguarding lead. The content must not be copied, forwarded, photographed, downloaded or deleted.

Data or files must not be deleted where they may constitute evidence of an offence. If the material is not suspected to be evidence of an offence, deletion may be considered only where its continued existence is likely to cause harm and the pupil or parent/carer refuses to delete it. Any decision to delete content must be authorised by the headteacher, following consultation with the designated safeguarding lead.

Recording and informing parents

The school will record any search and any examination of a device on CPOMS, including:

- the date, time and location;
- the reason for the search or examination;
- the pupil involved;
- the staff and witnesses present;
- what was searched or examined;
- anything found or confiscated; and
- the action subsequently taken.

Parents/carers will be informed as soon as reasonably practicable where a device has been searched for, its contents have been examined, or it has been retained because of a safeguarding or suspected criminal concern, unless doing so would create a safeguarding risk or prejudice an investigation.

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

Parents/carers, visitors, volunteers, governors and contractors must comply with the following requirements while on the school premises or participating in a school activity.

During the school day

They must:

- keep mobile phones switched off or on silent and out of sight while pupils are present, unless use has been authorised by a member of staff;
- not make or receive calls in areas where pupils are present;
- not photograph, film or make an audio recording of any pupil, member of staff, pupil work, display, document or school activity without prior authorisation;
- not use a mobile phone, camera or recording device in classrooms, the early years provision, toilets, changing areas, first-aid or medical areas, intimate-care areas or any other location in which privacy is expected; and
- not livestream or make a video or audio call that includes pupils or staff.

Anyone who needs to use a phone must move to an area identified by a member of staff, such as the staffroom or school office.

School performances, assemblies, sports events and celebrations

Parents/carers may take photographs or recordings of their own child at an event that is open to families, provided that:

- the school has not prohibited photography or recording at that event for safeguarding, privacy, copyright or performance-licensing reasons;
- the photograph or recording is taken from the parent's/carer's allocated place and does not disrupt the event or obstruct other people's view;
- particular children whom the school has identified as not being photographed are not included;
- no photography or recording takes place in toilets, changing areas or other private areas; and
- any image or recording that includes other identifiable children or members of staff is kept for personal or family use and is not published or shared publicly.

Photographs and recordings containing identifiable children other than the parent's/carer's own child must not be:

- uploaded to a public social-media account, website or online group;

- used for advertising, fundraising or commercial purposes;
- accompanied by the name or other identifying information of another child;
- altered, manipulated or entered into an artificial-intelligence system; or
- otherwise circulated beyond private personal or family use without the appropriate consent.

Before publishing an image or recording containing another identifiable child, the parent/carer must obtain consent from that child's parent/carer. The consent of an identifiable member of staff must also be obtained before publishing their image or recording.

Where practical, parents/carers should frame, crop or edit photographs so that other children are not identifiable before sharing them.

The school may prohibit all photography or recording where this is necessary to safeguard an individual child, protect privacy or comply with performance or licensing restrictions. The school will explain any such restriction at the event without identifying the child or family concerned.

Volunteers and parents accompanying visits

Volunteers and parents accompanying a school trip, residential visit or activity must not:

- use their phone for personal purposes while responsible for supervising pupils;
- contact other parents/carers directly about pupils or the visit;
- photograph or record pupils using a personal device; or
- publish or share information, photographs or recordings relating to the visit.

Any necessary communication must be made through the visit leader or school office.

Anyone who does not comply with these requirements may be asked to stop using the device, put it away, delete an unauthorised image where appropriate, or leave the premises or event. A serious or repeated breach may be dealt with under the school's safeguarding, complaints, data-protection or site-access procedures and may be reported to the police or another agency where appropriate. 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 their personal mobile during the school day.

7. Loss, theft or damage

Pupils bringing mobile phones to school must ensure that the phones are appropriately labelled and are handed to the class teacher or office on arrival.

Pupils must secure their mobile 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.

Pupils and staff are responsible for taking reasonable care of any mobile phone or similar device they bring onto the school premises or take on a school visit. The school will take reasonable care of a device that has been handed in or lawfully confiscated. However, devices are brought onto school premises, school transport and school visits at the owner's risk. The school cannot accept responsibility for mobile phones or similar devices that are lost, stolen or damaged on school premises, on school transport, during school visits or activities, or while pupils are travelling to or from school, except where liability arises under the law.

Parents and carers are notified of this disclaimer on our home-school agreement and also on our mobile phone permission form.

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

8. Monitoring and review

This policy will be formally reviewed by the headteacher and governing board at least every three years. It will be reviewed sooner where there is a change in legislation or statutory guidance, a significant safeguarding or data-protection incident, a change to the school's operational arrangements, or evidence that the policy is not being implemented effectively.

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

If there are any concerns regarding this policy, these should be brought to the attention of the headteacher in a timely manner.

Links to other policies

- ICT acceptable use or online safety policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Suspensions and Exclusions Policy
- Staff disciplinary policy

Appendix 1: Pupil Acceptable use agreement for mobile phones and similar devices

Pupil Acceptable use agreement for mobile phones and similar devices

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

1. You may not use your mobile phone on the school site, during lessons, at play or lunchtime or during school trips.
2. On arrival to school phones and smartwatches must be switched off (not just put on 'silent').
3. On arrival to school phones and smartwatches must be handed in immediately to the office, class teacher or member of the senior leadership team.
4. You may not use your mobile phone in the toilets or changing rooms. This is to protect the privacy and welfare of other pupils.
5. You cannot take photos or recordings (either video or audio) of school staff or other pupils without their consent.
6. Avoid sharing your contact details with people you don't know, and don't share other people's contact details without their consent.
7. Don't share your phone's password(s) or access code(s) with anyone else.
8. 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
9. Don't use your phone to send or receive anything that may be criminal. For example, sharing nude or semi-nude images, racist content, threats or other unlawful material.
10. Rules on bullying, harassment and intimidation apply to how you use your mobile phone even when you aren't in school.
11. 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.
12. Don't use your phone to view or share harmful content.
13. 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.
14. Mobile phones are not permitted in any formal assessment or test environment and must be handed in before entering the test area.

Parent/carer confirmation

I have read the pupil acceptable use agreement and shared its rules with my child in a way they can understand. We have discussed when their phone must be switched off and handed in, and what will happen if the rules are not followed. I understand that permission to bring a phone to school depends on my child following these rules.

Child's name: _____ Parent/carer name: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

10. Appendix 2: Permission form allowing a pupil to bring their phone to school

Mobile Phone Permission Form

For Pupils Who Walk to and From School Independently

The school recognises that some pupils walk to and from school without an adult. Parents or carers may wish for their child to carry a mobile phone for safety during this journey. Mobile phones are **not required in school** and are only permitted when this form has been completed.

Important: Mobile phones **must not be used anywhere on the school premises**, including before and after school.

Pupil Details

- **Child's Name:** _____
- **Class:** _____

Agreement for Mobile Phone Use

I confirm that my child walks to and from school independently and I give permission for them to bring a mobile phone **for communication during their journey only**.

I have read and understood the rules below and agree that my child will follow them:

Mobile Phone Rules

Please tick to confirm your understanding:

- ☐ The phone **must be switched off as soon as my child arrives on the school site**.
- ☐ The phone **must not be switched back on until my child has left the school premises**.
- ☐ Mobile phones **must not be used anywhere on the school site**, including before or after school.
- ☐ On arrival, the phone will be **handed to a member of staff**:
    - ☐ Between 8:15–8:30am: **member of staff on the junior playground**
    - ☐ If classroom door is open: **handed to class teacher**
- ☐ The phone will be **stored safely by the school during the school day** and returned to my child at the end of the day.
- ☐ The school **cannot accept responsibility for loss, theft, or damage** to mobile phones brought to school.
- ☐ **Failure to follow these rules will result in the phone being collected and stored safely by the school, and a parent or carer will need to come to school to collect it. Continued breaches may result in permission to bring a phone being withdrawn.**

Parent/Carer Declaration

I confirm that I have read and understood the rules above and give permission for my child to bring a mobile phone to school.

- **Signature (digital/typed for MCAS):** _____

- **Date: _____**

Pupil Agreement

I have read and understood the rules regarding mobile phones at school and agree to follow them.

- **Name: _____**
- **Signature (digital/typed for MCAS): _____**
- **Date: _____**

11. Appendix 3: Mobile phone information for visitors (added to SignIn App)

Use of mobile phones and similar devices in our school

- Please keep your mobile phone switched off or on silent/vibrate and kept out of sight while on the school grounds
- Please do not use phones where pupils are present. If you must use your phone, you may go to the staffroom
- Do not take photos or recordings of pupils 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 from the school office.