



THE GILLFORD CENTRE

MOBILE PHONE POLICY

Approved by ¹			
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Position:	Head teacher		
Signed:			
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1. 1. Policy statement

The school is committed to providing a calm, safe and focused environment. In accordance with Department for Education guidance, pupils must not have access to mobile phones or other personal smart devices during the school day. The default position is therefore that the school day is phone-free.

Pupils may bring one mobile phone to school where this is needed for travel, safety or communication before or after school. Every such phone must be switched off and handed to the designated member of staff immediately on arrival. It will be securely stored and returned at the end of the pupil's school day.

2. 2. Scope

This policy applies to all pupils attending the Gillford Centre, School 180 or HHTS, including pupils on dual placements, part-time timetables, educational visits, off-site activities and alternative provision arranged or supervised by the school. It also applies to smartphones, basic phones, smartwatches, tablets, earbuds and any personal device capable of messaging, internet access, photography, video or audio recording.

Separate professional expectations for staff, volunteers, contractors and visitors are set out in section 11.

3. 3. Daily procedure

Arrival. Before entering the building, the pupil must switch the device off completely. Silent or vibrate mode is not sufficient.

Hand-in. The pupil must hand the device to the designated member of staff at the agreed hand-in point as soon as they arrive. The device will be identified, logged where appropriate and placed in secure storage.

During the day. The pupil must not retain, access or use another mobile phone or smart device. A pupil bringing more than one device must hand in every device.

Collection. The device will normally be returned to the pupil at the end of their individual school day, once they are leaving the premises or transport is ready.

Communication. Parents and carers who need to contact a pupil during the day must contact the relevant school office. Pupils who need to contact home should speak to a member of staff, who will facilitate appropriate contact.

4. 4. Failure to hand in a device

If a pupil has not handed in a phone or smart device and it is seen, heard, found in their possession or there is reasonable evidence that it has been used, the pupil will be instructed to hand it to a member of staff immediately. The device will be confiscated, recorded and stored securely.

The response will be proportionate and consistent with the Behaviour Policy. The usual arrangements are set out below.

Circumstance	School response	Who collects
First straightforward breach	Device confiscated for the remainder of the pupil's school day; incident recorded and expectations reinforced.	The pupil may normally collect it when leaving school.
Repeated breach	Device confiscated; parent/carers informed. An individual hand-in	A parent/carers must collect it.

Circumstance	School response	Who collects
	agreement or further Behaviour Policy sanction may be applied.	
Serious misuse	Device confiscated; senior leader and DSL informed. The incident is managed under the Behaviour, Safeguarding and Online Safety policies.	A parent/carer must collect it.
Refusal to surrender	Treated as a separate and more serious failure to follow a reasonable staff instruction. Parent/carer contacted and further sanctions considered.	A parent/carer must collect it.

The Headteacher or delegated senior leader may vary the collection arrangement where justified by the circumstances, the pupil's needs, safeguarding considerations or the practical availability of a parent/carer. A confiscated device will not normally be retained overnight unless this is necessary and reasonable, and the collection arrangement has been explained to the parent/carer.

5. 5. Serious or harmful misuse

Serious misuse includes, but is not limited to: recording or photographing pupils or staff without permission; bullying, harassment, threats or discriminatory abuse; attempting to coordinate violence or disruption; accessing or sharing sexual, violent, extremist or otherwise harmful material; compromising examination security; impersonating another person; or using a device in a way that creates a safeguarding, data-protection or criminal concern.

Such incidents may lead to enhanced sanctions, safeguarding action, suspension and/or referral to the police or another agency where appropriate. The school will preserve relevant evidence and avoid unnecessary viewing or onward sharing of harmful content.

6. 6. Searching and examining devices

Any search, confiscation or examination of data will be undertaken only by authorised staff and in accordance with current Department for Education guidance on searching, screening and confiscation, the school's Behaviour Policy and safeguarding procedures. A device will not be searched merely because it has not been handed in.

Where there is good reason to suspect that a device contains evidence of harm, an offence or a breach of school rules, a senior leader and, where relevant, the DSL will decide the appropriate action. Staff must not forward, copy or print indecent images of children. The DSL will follow the school's safeguarding procedures and current national guidance.

7. 7. Reasonable adjustments and authorised exceptions

The school recognises its duties under the Equality Act 2010 and the Children and Families Act 2014. An individual pupil may be authorised to access a device where this is necessary because of disability, medical need, safeguarding need or another exceptional circumstance. Convenience or a preference to contact home directly will not normally justify an exception.

Any exception must be agreed in advance by the Headteacher or delegated senior leader, documented in the pupil's plan or a separate agreement, specify when and how the device may be used, and be reviewed regularly. Staff will apply this policy in a way that takes account of pupils' SEND and communication needs while maintaining the phone-free expectation.

8. 8. Educational visits, transport and off-site provision

The trip leader or provision lead will state the arrangements before each visit or placement. Unless an authorised exception is agreed, phones must be handed in at the start and stored by staff for the duration of the activity. School-arranged transport forms part of the school's behaviour expectations; any specific transport arrangement will be communicated to pupils and parents.

Where a pupil attends another provider, the stricter applicable rule will normally be followed. The school will communicate agreed arrangements to the provider and the pupil.

9. 9. Loss, damage and secure storage

Pupils bring devices onto school premises at their own risk. The school does not accept responsibility for loss, theft or damage before a device is handed in or after it has been returned. Once a device has been handed in or confiscated, staff will take reasonable care by recording it as appropriate and storing it in the designated secure location.

Any concern about loss or damage while a device is in school custody must be reported immediately to a senior leader and investigated.

10. 10. Responsibilities of parents and carers

Parents and carers are expected to support the phone-free school day, ensure that their child understands the hand-in procedure, avoid calling or messaging their child during school hours, use the school office for urgent communication, and collect a confiscated device when required. Parents and carers should not encourage a pupil to conceal a device or refuse a reasonable staff instruction.

11. 11. Staff, volunteers, contractors and visitors

Adults must model safe and professional behaviour. Personal phones must be kept out of sight and must not be used in front of pupils except where authorised for an operational, medical or emergency purpose. Personal devices must never be used to photograph, film or record pupils. Staff must follow the Staff Code of Conduct, data-protection requirements and the school's arrangements for educational visits and lone working.

Visitors and contractors will be informed of the school's expectations. Any necessary call should be taken away from pupils and must not compromise supervision or confidentiality.

12. 12. Safeguarding, recording and support

A safeguarding concern arising from mobile-phone use must be reported immediately to the DSL and recorded on CPOMS in line with school procedures. Routine hand-in and first-breach records may be kept through the school's behaviour or administrative system; CPOMS should be used where the incident contains a safeguarding concern, pattern of risk or significant contextual information.

The school will provide appropriate online-safety education and support. A sanction does not replace the need to assess harm, support affected pupils and address the underlying behaviour.

13. 13. Monitoring and review

The Headteacher will monitor implementation, patterns of breaches, safeguarding concerns, the use of exceptions and consistency between provisions. The Management Committee will review this policy at least annually, or sooner following changes to legislation or statutory guidance, a significant incident or evidence that the arrangements are not effective.

14. 14. Related policies and guidance

- Behaviour Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Online Safety Policy and Acceptable Use Agreements
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Data Protection Policy
- Special Educational Needs and Disability Policy
- Educational Visits Policy
- Department for Education: Mobile phones in schools (statutory guidance; applies from 1 September 2026)
- Department for Education: Searching, screening and confiscation
- Keeping Children Safe in Education