

Buglawton Primary School



The Use of Mobile Phones Policy 2026

This policy provides clear guidance on the use of mobile phones in school for staff, visitors and pupils

Introduction and Aims

At Buglawton Primary School, the welfare and well-being of our pupils is paramount. The aim of the Mobile Phone Policy is to allow users to benefit from modern communication technologies, whilst promoting safe and appropriate practice through establishing clear and robust acceptable mobile user guidelines.

This is achieved through balancing protection against potential misuse with the recognition that mobile phones are effective communication tools. It is recognised that it is the enhanced functions of many mobile phones that cause the most concern, offering distractions and disruption to the working day, and which are most susceptible to misuse - including the taking and distribution of indecent images, exploitation and bullying. However, as it is difficult to detect specific usage, this policy refers to ALL mobile communication devices.

Where mobile phones are referenced, it is used to include other devices such as iPads/tablets or wearable technology, such as smart watches.

Scope

This policy applies to all individuals who have access to personal mobile phones on site. This includes staff, volunteers, governors, children, young people, parents, carers, visitors and contractors. This list is not exhaustive.

This policy should also be read in relation to the following documentation:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Mobile Phones in schools statutory guidance June 2026

Camera Mobile Phones and Wearable Technology such as Smart Watches

Camera mobile phones are becoming increasingly popular and a built-in digital camera enables users to take high resolution pictures. These can be sent instantly to other mobile phone users or email addresses. They can also be posted on the internet or in chat rooms. There is a potential for camera mobile phones to be misused in schools. They can become an instrument of bullying or harassment directed against pupils or/and teachers.

The use of Smart Watches is not permitted in school. It is not appropriate to be communicating through a SMART watch during the school day.

Staff Policy

Staff are allowed to bring their phones to school, but they are only permitted to use them in areas **where no children are present**.

Staff use of mobile phones during their working day should be:

- outside of contracted hours
 - during breaks when children are not present
 - discreet and appropriate, e.g. not in the presence of pupils
- Mobile phones should be switched off and left in a safe place during lesson times. The school cannot take responsibility for items that are lost or stolen.
 - Staff should **never** contact pupils or parents/carers from their personal mobile phone or give their mobile phone number to pupils or parents/carers. If a member of staff needs to make telephone contact with a pupil, they should use the school telephone in the office. During trips or residentials, contact with parents should be via the school office or using a landline.
 - Staff should never send to, or accept from, colleagues or pupils, texts or images that could be viewed as inappropriate.
 - With regard to camera phones, a member of staff may use their mobile phone to take photographs if these are immediately deleted once used appropriately for school purposes.
 - This guidance should be seen as a safeguard for members of staff, the school and the Local Authority. Staff should understand that failure to comply with the policy is likely to result in the enforcement of the Whistleblowing Policy and associated procedures.
 - Staff may wear smart watches within school if the camera function is switched off.

We recognise that there are exceptional circumstances under which a member of staff may need to keep their mobile phone on their person. These occasions must be approved by a member of the Senior Leadership Team.

Mobile Phones for work related purposes

We recognise that mobile phones provide a useful means of communication on offsite activities. However, staff should ensure that:

- Mobile use on these occasions is appropriate and professional.
- Personal mobile phones should not be used to make contact with parents during school trips – all relevant communications should be made via the school office or if on a residential visit and the communication needs to take place out of school hours, using the school mobile phone or landlines away from the children.
- Where parents are accompanying trips, they are informed not to make contact with other parents (via calls, text, email or social networking) during the trip or use their phone to take photographs of children.

Furthermore, staff will need to use their mobile phone in the event of a lockdown or emergency situation in school.

Parents, visitors (including contractors) or volunteers

When parents, visitors or volunteers sign into school, they are reminded not to use mobile phones whilst on the school site.

Adults either in school or accompanying children on school trips should not use their mobile phones or use them to take pictures of pupils unless it is at a public event such as Sports Day or performances, and these should be only of their own children.

Adults, visitors or volunteers in school should only use their mobile phone within the confines of the school offices or staff rooms **where children are not present**. Personal cameras and mobile phone cameras must not be used to take pictures of children or information about children. If parents who accompany children on a school trip are asked by the teacher to take photos as a record of the educational visit, they will be issued with a school device. Parents accompanying children on school trips should not use their mobile cameras, tablets or wearable devices to take pictures of children.

Pupil Policy

We do not deem it appropriate for pupils to bring mobile phones to school. However, we recognise that there may be some exceptional circumstances where parents/carers of children

in upper key stage 2 wish their child to walk to/from school independently and provide a mobile phone for safety and supervision reasons. In these circumstances, a phone contract must be signed agreeing to the rules.

There may be exceptional circumstances whereby children may need to have a mobile phone to manage a medical need, eg those with diabetes. In these circumstances, reasonable adjustments will be made.

We recognise that many children have unlimited and unrestricted access to the internet via mobile phone networks. This access means there is potential for some children, while at our setting to sexually harass, bully, and control others, via their mobile and smart technology, share indecent images consensually and non-consensually and view and share pornography and other harmful content.

As such, children's mobile phones are collected by a member of staff and are stored securely during the school day. Children are only permitted to switch on their phones at the school gate.

Devices should be clearly marked so that each child knows their own. Devices should be turned off before handing in.

Parents/carers are advised that Buglawton Primary School accepts no liability for the loss or damage to mobile phones and other smart devices which are brought into school or school grounds.

Where a child is found by a member of staff to be using a mobile phone, the phone will be confiscated from the child, handed to a member of the office team who will record the name of the child and attach it to the phone. The mobile phone will be stored by the school office. The child may collect the phone at the end of the school day. If a member of staff has reasonable grounds to suspect a child has a phone, the Headteacher has a statutory power to search their possessions.

If a child is found taking photographs or video footage with a mobile phone or smart watch of either other children or teachers, the device will be confiscated, and this will be regarded as a serious offence.

If images of other children or teacher have been taken, the device will not be returned to the child until the images have been removed by the child in the presence of a senior leader.

Schools have the legal right to confiscate mobile phones or similar devices as a disciplinary penalty where the policy is clearly breached, for instance where a mobile phone is used by a pupil or is heard ringing in a pupil's bag. 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.

Should a child be found to be using their phone or devices inappropriately, the school reserves the right to withdraw this privilege. We ask that parents/carers should talk to their children about the appropriate use of text messages and images as they can often be used to bully

children. Should parents/carers need to contact children or vice versa during the school day, this should be done via the usual school procedure of contacting the school office via phone or email. In any circumstance of the phone contract being broken, parents will be contacted and appropriate action agreed.

Children are not permitted to take mobile phones or electronic devices on any trips or residential visits.

September 2024

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