Connect Alliance Trust

Excellence - Collaboration - Respect

Mobile Phone and Smart Device Policy

Adopted by

Brookburn Community Primary School

Approved by:	Connect Alliance Trust Board	Date: 17.11.26
Last reviewed on:	September 2026	
Next review due by:	September 2027	

Version Control Table

Version	Date	Author	Rationale/Summary of changes	Ratified Date
V1.1	18/09/26	Liz Hardy	New CAT policy based on Brookburn PS policy by Jen Holden	

Overview and aims

Connect Alliance Trust is committed to safeguarding children, supporting their wellbeing and creating a learning environment free from distraction.
Our policy aims to:

- Set out a clear approach to mobile phone and smart devices at Schools within our Trust
- Support safeguarding, wellbeing and safe digital practice for all pupils
- Ensure our environments for children are mobile phone-free by default
- Ensure the safe, responsible and lawful use of mobile phones, where applicable
- Provide clear guidelines for the use of mobile phones for pupils, staff, parents/carers, visitors and volunteers
- Ensure pupils only have safe, filtered access to the internet through the school system

At Brookburn Primary School we are incredibly proud to be a Gold Rights-Respecting School. This means the UNCRC is at the heart of our ethos, our decision-making and our daily life. We believe that childhood is a precious time that should be filled with play, face-to-face friendships and uninterrupted learning. This policy has been developed in consultation with our pupils, staff, and parents and is a proactive measure designed to protect, respect and fulfill our children's fundamental rights.

We are committed to robustly protecting our pupils from the documented risks associated with smartphones, including:

- Exposure to harmful or age-inappropriate online content
- Cyberbullying and digital harassment
- Distraction from learning and social development
- Inappropriate photography or video recording

Note: throughout this policy, 'mobile phones' refers to mobile phones and similar devices.
This policy should be read in conjunction with our:

- Safeguarding Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Online Safety Policy
- Acceptable Use Policy
- Behaviour Policy

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 that should be considered alongside this policy is Keeping Children Safe in Education.

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 of mobile phone restrictions 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 and 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 Trustees and Governors

Our Trustees and Brookburn Community Primary School Governing Board will monitor and review this policy.

4. Use of mobile phones by staff

The DfE's mobile phone guidance says that staff should not use their own mobile phone for personal reasons in front of pupils throughout the school day. All schools should be mobile phone-free environments by default: anything other than this should be by exception only.

4.1 Personal mobile phones

Staff (including volunteers, contractors and anyone else otherwise engaged by the school) are not permitted to use their personal mobile phone during the school day, while children are present / during contact time. Use of personal mobile phones must be restricted to non-contact time, and to areas of the school where pupils are not present.

- Staffroom
- Offices

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:

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 as a point of emergency contact.

4.2 Staff Smartwatches

Staff are allowed to use smartwatches, but they follow the same policy as mobile phones

- Staff are not to use their watch to send messages, photos, make phone calls or transfer any other kind of data whilst working with children.
- Any communications using their smartwatch must be during their own lunch/break time and away from children.
- Staff are not permitted to take or store images of pupils on their smartwatch.

- Personal information about staff, pupils or the school is not to be taken on a smartwatch.
- Notifications must be turned off whilst using your smartwatch at school.

4.3 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 and Google Gemini).

4.4 Safeguarding

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 as part of a lesson / school trip / activity, this must be done using school equipment.

4.5 Using personal mobiles for work purposes

In some circumstances, it may be appropriate for staff to use personal mobile phones or a similar device during the school day in front of pupils 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

5. Use of mobile phones by pupils

Smartphone-Free school for pupils

Smartphone Free Childhood and Local Collaboration

Our Trust and Brookburn Community Primary School is proud to be working alongside other local primary and secondary schools. As a collective, we are committed to supporting families to reduce or delay smartphone use, protect childhood and promote healthier digital habits.

While we do not dictate what parents may choose for their children out of school, effective from September 2026, the following guidelines will be implemented:

Pupils may not bring smartphones to school unless a device is explicitly required to support the management of a medical condition, (as agreed upon in the child's Individual Healthcare Plan (IHP)

Brookburn Community Primary School:

- Strongly discourages pupils from owning or using smartphones, particularly in the primary years

- Works with parents/carers to promote simple ‘brick phones’ (where needed) for travel purposes only
- Promotes education around safe, age-appropriate technology use

We recognise that some pupils in Year 5 and 6 may walk to and from school independently and may require a mobile phone for personal safety. To balance safety with safeguarding, only ‘brick phones’ that are agreed with parental permission are to be brought to school by pupils. Parents may also wish to consider alternatives such as electronic tags or trackers for location monitoring.

What is a ‘Brick Phone’?
A ‘brick phone’ is a basic mobile device that has no access to the internet, apps or camera functions. This allows pupils to contact parents/ carers via call or text, while eliminating the risks associated with data roaming, messaging apps and internet use.
Finding an alternative: https://www.smartphonefreechildhood.org/alternatives

Strategies and procedures

1. **Eligibility & Permission:** Pupils in Year 5 and 6 may only bring a mobile phone onto school premises if parents/carers have applied for and received written permission from the Head of School. Approved devices must be a basic model restricted to voice calls and text messaging only (no smartphones or cellular-enabled smartwatches are permitted).
2. **Medical Exemptions:** Smartphones required for the continuous management of a verified medical condition (e.g., glucose monitoring) are permitted, subject to approval within the child’s Individual Healthcare Plan (IHP).
3. **Parental Agreement:** Parents/carers must sign the school’s permission agreement and ensure that appropriate parental controls are enabled on the device.
4. **Daily Routine:** Pupils with permission to carry a phone must switch it off before entering the school grounds. It must be handed into the front office immediately upon arrival. Pupils must collect their device at the end of the school day, and it must not be turned on until they have left the school grounds.
5. **Identification:** Devices brought to school must be clearly labelled with the pupil’s name.
6. **Confiscation & Enforcement:** Any device brought to school without permission, or any permitted device used in breach of these rules (e.g. turned on inside school grounds), will be confiscated immediately. Parents/carers must collect the device in person from the front office. Repeated breaches will result in permission being permanently withdrawn.

5.2 Use of smartwatches by pupils

The DfE’s mobile phones guidance includes in the term ‘mobile phones’ all devices with communications and smart technology that the school chooses to include in their policy.

Pupils are not permitted to use smartwatches or other wearable devices with messaging, internet or camera functions.

5.3 Exceptions for special circumstances

Devices used to support the management of a medical condition are permitted. Their purpose, and the arrangements for use, will be outlined in a child's Individual Health Plan. Appropriate training will be provided to the necessary staff team supporting the child.

5.4 Enforcement and Sanctions

If a pupil brings a phone to school and fails to hand it in on arrival, the school will operate a three-step sanction policy:

Breach Level	Action Taken
1st Instance	The phone will be confiscated and stored securely in the school office. Parents/carers will be contacted and must collect the phone in person. A formal reminder of the policy will be issued.
2nd instance	The phone is confiscated for parental collection (as above). A formal meeting will be arranged with the Class Teacher and/or Headteacher to discuss the breach.
Persistent Breaches	The school will contact parents regarding the risks associated with the pupil's irresponsible phone use to determine whether they should be permitted to bring a device to school.

Right to Search

In rare instances, if staff have reasonable grounds to suspect a pupil is in possession of a phone during the school day, school leadership is authorised to search the pupil's belongings. This search will be conducted with the pupil's consent. If the pupil refuses to cooperate, their parents will be contacted immediately.

Schools are permitted to confiscate phones from pupils under sections 91 and 94 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006.

Behaviour and conduct

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. This is inline with our Safeguarding Policy.

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 on the basis of someone's ethnicity, religious beliefs or sexual orientation

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

Parents are encouraged to reinforce and discuss this policy at home as appropriate, including the risks associated with mobile phone use and the benefits of a mobile phone-free environment.

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:

Not taking pictures or recordings of pupils, unless it's at a public event (such as a school fair), or of their own child

Using any photographs or recordings for personal use only, and not posting on social media without consent

Not using phones in lessons, when working with pupils or while children are present

Parents/carers, visitors and 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 in section 5 above, but must refer any sanctions to a member of staff, as they do not have the power to search or confiscate devices.

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

a. School Responsibilities

- We will ensure all handed-in phones are stored securely during the school day
- Staff will handle all devices with appropriate care

b. Parent/Carer Responsibilities

- Liability: The school cannot accept liability for the loss, theft, or damage of mobile phones brought onto school property.
- Labelling: Parents/carers must ensure the phone is clearly labelled with the child's name.
- Insurance: Parents/carers should ensure the device is covered under their own personal or home insurance arrangements.

Confiscated phones will be stored in the school office until they are collected by a parent/carer.

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

8. Monitoring and review

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

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Headteacher in conjunction with our Trust Board and School Governing Board. The next scheduled review date for this policy is September 2027.

Appendix 1

Mobile Phone and Smart Device Policy Agreement

Parent/Carer

I have read and understand Brookburn Community Primary School's Mobile Phone and Smart Device Policy and agree to the conditions set out within it.

I understand that:

- **Permitted Devices:** Any mobile device my child brings to school must be a basic model restricted to voice calls and text messaging. It must not have smartphone capabilities, internet access, or social media applications. This restriction includes smartwatches with cellular/calling capabilities.
- **On-Premises Rules:** My child must not use the phone on school premises, including the playground before school. The phone must be switched off before entering the school grounds and handed directly to the school office immediately upon arrival. Devices will be returned to students at the end of the school day.
- **Parental Responsibility:** I am responsible for ensuring parental controls are active on home devices and personal accounts and that these contain no inappropriate content.
- **Outside of School/Social Media:** I understand that while the school teaches online safety, the monitoring and regulation of social media use on personal devices outside of school—including adherence to age restrictions (such as 13+ limits)—is the sole responsibility of parents and carers.
- **Safeguarding:** I understand that the school will raise any concerns regarding online safety at the earliest opportunity, in line with Brookburn Community Primary School's Safeguarding Policy.
- **Liability:** The school cannot accept responsibility for the loss, theft, or damage of any personal electronic devices brought onto the premises.
- **Enforcement:** Any breach of this policy will result in the device being confiscated, and repeated breaches may result in the permission to bring a device being permanently withdrawn.

Parent's name (print): ……..

Parent's signature …….

Date: ……..

Pupil name (print):.....

Class: ……

For school use only	
Authorised by:	
Date:	

Appendix 2: Template mobile phone information slip for visitors

Use of mobile phones and similar devices in our school

Our school is a mobile phone-free environment.

- Please keep your mobile phone on silent/vibrate 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 (unless it is your own child), or staff
- Do not use your phone in lessons, when working with pupils or while children are present

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.

Appendix 3: Policy Expectations & Practical Procedures

Group	Expectations & Actions
Pupils (EYFS to Year 4)	Primary school pupils do not require mobile phones at school. Smartphones and smartwatches with cellular/camera capabilities are **not permitted** on school grounds.
Year 5 and 6	**Year 5 and 6:** Any mobile device my child brings to school must be a basic model restricted to voice calls and text messaging. It must not have smartphone capabilities, internet access, or social media applications. This restriction includes smartwatches with cellular/calling capabilities. The only exception to this rule is for devices explicitly required to support the management of a verified medical condition, as agreed upon in the child's Individual Healthcare Plan (IHP) If a child requires a phone for safety during an independent walk to/from school, the device must be switched off before entering the school gates and handed to the office immediately. It will be stored securely

	and returned at home time. Parents/ carers must complete a permission form.
Staff & Visitors	Staff model rights-respecting behaviour. Personal smartphones are kept out of sight during lesson times and when supervising children. **Usage:** Personal devices may only be used in designated staff-only areas (e.g., the staff room) during breaks.
Parents & Carers	We kindly ask parents to remain smartphone-free when entering the school building, attending assemblies, or collecting children from the playground. **Why:** This models positive digital boundaries and ensures children receive full attention during important transition times.