

Woodlands Primary School, Hedgehogs Nursery and Sunbeams Club



Mobile Phone Policy

Updated: September 2026

Review Date: September 2029

Woodlands Primary School, Hedgehogs Nursery and Sunbeams Club Mobile Phone Policy

Woodlands Primary School, Hedgehogs, Nursery and Sunbeams Club (the school), recognises that mobile phones and other communication devices are an important part of everyday life. We also acknowledge the benefits these devices can bring when used appropriately. However, we are equally aware of the potential risks they pose within a school setting, including safeguarding concerns, online bullying, cyber crime, disruption to learning, and issues around privacy and data security.

This policy sets out the school's approach to the use of mobile phones and similar smart devices that are capable of sending or receiving messages or notifications, accessing the internet or mobile networks, or recording audio or video, for example smartwatches worn by pupils, staff, governors, parents, and visitors. Its purpose is to promote the safe and responsible use of technology while ensuring that the welfare of children and the integrity of the learning environment remain our highest priority.

Rationale

Mobile phones are now a feature of modern society and an increasing number of staff, visitors and pupils own one.

Increasing sophistication of mobile phone technology presents a number of issues for schools:

- The integration of cameras into phones leading to potential child protection and data protection issues
- The increasing number of young children owning mobile phones
- The increasing number of social networking sites easily accessible to children
- Cybercrime and online bullying

Abiding by the terms of the school's mobile phone policy ensures that we all:

- Protect children from harm and abuse
- Prevent staff from being subject to false allegations
- Help staff remain focused on the care of children
- Work in an open and transparent environment

For the purposes of this policy, the school day includes lessons, breaktimes, lunchtimes and the periods between lessons. Where pupils attend a before or after-school club, Sunbeams or other school-run provision, the expectations of this policy continue to apply unless the provision has made alternative arrangements.

Staff / Governors and Volunteer Use of Mobile Phones

- Staff must not use personal mobile phones for personal purposes in the presence of pupils during the school day. Personal mobile phones must be switched to silent and kept out of sight when working with pupils.
- There may be occasions when staff need to use a mobile phone for an appropriate work-related purpose, such as multi-factor authentication, accessing an authorised work system or responding to an emergency. Such use should be kept to the minimum necessary and should not take place in front of pupils unless unavoidable.
- Staff must not charge their phones in the classroom.

- Mobile phones may be used for personal purposes during designated breaks or lunchtime in the staff room or PPA room.
- Children must never be allowed to use staff mobile phones.
- Personal mobile phones must not be used to photograph or record pupils. Staff must use school-owned devices for photographs and recordings wherever possible and in accordance with the school's safeguarding, data protection and image-use procedures.
- If a member of staff needs to make an urgent personal phone call they can use their phone at an appropriate non-contact time.
- If a member of staff has a family emergency or similar and needs to keep their mobile phone to hand, prior permission must be sought from their phase leader.
- Any staff member, volunteer or student found to be non-compliant with this policy will face disciplinary action.
- Staff may take mobile phones on school trips where necessary for communication and emergency purposes. Personal mobile phones must not be used to photograph or record pupils. Phones should be used for communication with the school and emergency purposes only, in accordance with this policy and the school's safeguarding and data protection procedures.

Children's' Use of Mobile Phones

- The school recognises that some pupils may own a mobile phone. However, pupils must not have access to or use mobile phones or similar smart devices during the school day, including lessons, breaktimes, lunchtimes and periods between lessons.
- Any pupils who need a mobile phone or similar smart device for their journey to and from school may bring it to school. On arrival, the phone must be switched off and handed to the designated member of staff. Phones will be stored securely and returned at the end of the school day.
- Children attending an after-school club must hand their phone into the school office and collect once the club is over. Children in Sunbeams will hand their phone into the leader of the club and will be handed back when the child goes home.
- Children must not take mobile phones on school trips.
- The school does not accept any responsibility for loss or damage to mobile phones brought to the school by the children.
- Children must not use their mobile phone to take photographs of any kind whilst in school, in the playground or on visits.
- If a child is found with a phone or similar smart device on their person or in their bag, the phone will be confiscated and handed to the main office. It will be returned to the child after a discussion with parents.

Searching for Mobile Phones

Mobile phones and similar smart devices are identified as items that may be searched for where there are reasonable grounds to suspect that a pupil is in possession of a device in breach of this policy. Any search will be carried out in accordance with the school's Behaviour Policy and the Department for Education guidance on Searching, Screening and Confiscation.

Parents and Visitors' Use of Mobile Phones

- Photography and recording by parents/carers may only take place where the school has specifically indicated that photography is permitted. Parents/carers must only photograph or record their own child unless the school has given specific permission otherwise. Images must not be shared publicly or on social media where they include other children without appropriate permission.
- Parents and carers should not contact pupils directly via their mobile phone during the school day. If a parent or carer needs to contact their child urgently, they should contact the school office. The school will facilitate contact where appropriate.
- Parents and carers are asked to support the school's mobile phone-free environment and discuss with their child the reasons for the school's expectations.
- Contractors and visitors should keep mobile phones and other personal smart devices switched to silent and out of sight while on the school premises, particularly when working with or supervising pupils. Where possible, phones should be switched off or stored securely on arrival.

Safeguarding and Data Protection

Mobile phones and smart devices can present safeguarding, privacy and data protection risks. This includes the unauthorised photographing or recording of pupils, sharing of images or information, access to social media, cyberbullying, inappropriate communication and the recording or distribution of harmful or abusive material. Any safeguarding concern arising from the use of a mobile phone or smart device must be reported to the DSL in accordance with the school's Child Protection Policy.

Reasonable Adjustments and Medical Needs

The school recognises that there may be exceptional circumstances where a pupil needs access to a mobile phone or smart device during the school day. This may include medical needs, disability-related requirements or other individual circumstances. Any agreed exception will be documented and will specify the purpose, times and location in which the device may be accessed.

This policy should be read alongside the school's Behaviour for Learning Policy, Safeguarding Policy, Online Safety Policy, Acceptable Use Policy and Data Protection Policy.