



Three Towers
An Alternative Provision Academy
Expanding Horizons

Mobile Phone Policy

Including smartwatches and other smart devices

Adopted: September 2026

Review period: Annually

Statutory: Yes

Required on website: No

THREE TOWERS



Policy Document Version Control

Responsibility for Policy:	<i>Headteacher</i>
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Minor Revisions:	
Major changes:	
Full re-write:	

1 Introduction

In line with statutory guidance, our school is a mobile phone-free environment by default.

Learners are not permitted to have access to or use their mobile phones or smart technology with similar functionality to mobile phones (e.g., smart watches), which we refer to collectively as 'mobile phones', during the school day.

This prohibition includes all lessons, the time between lessons, breaktimes, and lunchtimes unless exceptionally authorised by the Headteacher.

Any deviation from this mobile phone-free baseline will be by exception only (for example, approved arrangements for specific medical tracking or documented safeguarding needs) and must be explicitly authorised by the headteacher. Where there is an arrangement by exception, any use of mobile devices in school by learners must be in line with our acceptable use of ICT agreement.

Any breach of the acceptable use agreement by a learner may trigger disciplinary action in line with our Behaviour & Relationships Policy, which may result in the confiscation of their device.

2 Aims

This policy aims to:

- ensure that our school remains mobile-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 learners, staff, parents/carers, visitors and volunteers;
- support our other policies, especially those related to child protection and behaviour;
- address some of the challenges posed by mobile phones in school, such as:
 - risks to child protection;
 - data protection issues;
 - risk of theft, loss or damage;
 - appropriate use of technology for learning purposes.

3 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 includes [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#), which sets out the expectation that all schools should be mobile phone-free environments by default.

4 Roles and responsibilities

4.1 The Headteacher is responsible for monitoring the policy and holding staff and learners accountable for its implementation.

4.2 Heads of House will address any questions or concerns from parents/carers quickly and clearly communicate the reasons for prohibiting the use of mobile phones.

4.3 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.

4.4 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.

4.5 Parents/carers are expected to support us in this policy by not telephoning their child's mobile during school hours. If parents/carers need to get in touch with their child, they should call the school office, and a message will be passed to on to the child at a convenient point in the day.

4.6 Learners are expected to comply with school procedures outlined in Section 6 of this policy.

5 Use of mobile phones by staff

5.1 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 learners are present. Use of personal mobile phones must be restricted to non-contact time, and to areas of the school where learners are not present (such as the staffroom).

There may be circumstances in which it is 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 as a point of emergency contact.

5.2 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 and Google Gemini). *Please refer to the trust's Code of Conduct, policies on data protection and Acceptable Use of ICT Agreement*

5.3 Safeguarding - staff must not give their personal contact details to parents/carers or learners, including by 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 learners.

Staff must not use their personal mobile phones to take photographs or recordings of pupils, their work, or anything else that could identify a learner. If it is necessary to take photos or recordings as part of a lesson/school trip/activity, this must be done using school equipment.

Staff are allowed to use their mobile phones when multi-factor authorisation (MFA) or identification is required in line with trust's policies.

5.4 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 learners for work. Such circumstances may include, but are not limited to:

- use of multi-factor authentication;
- emergency evacuations;
- supervising off-site trips/residential visits.

Certain staff, approved by the headteacher may access their school email and TEAMS accounts via their mobile phones e.g., outreach staff and those lone working who need to use them to maintain contact with school. In these circumstances, staff will:

- use their mobile phones in an appropriate and professional manner, in line with our staff code of conduct;
- not use their phones to take photographs or recordings of learners, their work, or anything else that could identify a learner or colleague;
- refrain from using their phones to contact parents/carers. If necessary, contact must be made via the school office.

5.5 Work phones

Some members of staff may be provided with a mobile phone by the school for work purposes. Only authorised staff are permitted to use school phones, and access to the phone must not be provided to anyone without authorisation. Staff must:

- only use school phone functions for work purposes, including making/receiving calls, sending/receiving emails or other communications, or using the internet;
- make sure that all communication and conduct linked to the device is appropriate and professional at all times, in line with our staff code of conduct.

5.6 Sanctions - staff that fail to adhere to this policy may face disciplinary action under the trust's disciplinary policy.

6 Mobile phone use by learners

Learners who attend Three Towers generally travel considerable distances. Primary learners are mainly transported in a taxi provided by school; but secondary learners usually travel to school and any vocational learning or work experience placements, independently using public transport. We recognise that parents/carers will feel that they are safer if they carry their phones to and from school.

We also know that learning is significantly affected by the constant distraction of a mobile phone, and we recognise that social networking during the school day can be harmful and/or distressing. This raises safeguarding issues. We are also concerned that some learners may video, photograph or record adults and/or learners without permission. The publication of such media online is illegal.

With this in mind our procedures are outlined below.

Primary - any mobile phones/devices that are brought into school must be handed in at reception where they will be kept securely until the learner leaves at the end of the day.

Secondary - on arrival at school, learners must:

- switch off their phones or put them on silent;

- put their phones into their locker where it can be stored securely until the end of their school day; or
- hand them in at the office to be charged;
- not take any personal items to off-site activities where they return to school at the end of the day. If they are not returning (e.g. an all-day trip) the lead member of staff will look after their items and distribute them as they disembark.

Learners are taught the risks that are associated with the use of mobile phones, both in school and more broadly, to make sure they understand the decision to stop them accessing them during the school day. These risks can include a loss of focus in lessons, classroom disruption and an increase in bullying. Learners are encouraged to see a mobile-phone free environment as desirable and valuable.

Smartwatches - the DfE's statutory [mobile phones guidance](#) includes in the term 'mobile phones' for all devices with communications and smart technology that the school chooses to include in its 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 smartwatches have wellness and health-related features.

We treat smartwatches in exactly the same way we treat mobile phones.

6.1 Exceptions for special circumstances

In **exceptional circumstances**, we permit learners to use mobile phones. For example: learners with diabetes, who normally use their mobile phones to monitor their blood sugar levels will be allowed to access their mobile phones under supervision of staff during the school day.

There may be times when family issues/responsibilities may mean that they need to contact parents/carers during the school day. We may make arrangements for them to be able to call home from the school phone at agreed points during the day. However, we prefer that news which may distress learners is broken to them by members of staff who are then able to support the learner in dealing with the news.

The best way of parents/carers getting any message to their child during the school day is by contacting the school office and giving the details/message to a member of staff who will then pass this message on to the learner at a convenient point.

6.2 Sanctions

Learners may choose to deny they have a phone with them. Learners who are found to have a phone (or any other electronic device) on them at any time during the school day will be asked to hand it over and it will be stored as above. The incident will be recorded on the behaviour log.

If learners persistently deny having a phone and are later found with one, there will usually be a consequence (e.g. loss of reward points or removal of privilege such as reward trips).

If the learner refuses to hand in their mobile phone, the incident will be recorded on the behaviour log as a serious incident, and the learner may:

- have the phone confiscated for the rest of the day;
- the parent/carer may be asked to come and pick it up;

- be refused entry to the building until they have handed their phone in.

Repeated refusal to comply with the school's policy may result in suspension from school.

Misuse of mobile phones involving certain types of conduct, bullying or harassment can be classified as criminal conduct. We will take such conduct extremely seriously and will involve the police or other agencies as appropriate. Such conduct includes, but is not limited to:

- making of or sharing nudes and semi-nudes including images that are digitally altered or wholly generated using AI (such as 'deepfakes' or 'deep nudes');
- 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;
- recording incidents, including physical assaults, and sharing them via social media;
- recording staff or others.

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

Parents/carers 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/recordings of learners or staff, unless it is at a public event (such as a school fair), or of their own child;
- only using any photographs or recordings for personal use, and not posting on social media without consent;
- not using phones in lessons, when working with learners 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 learners, their work, or anything else that could identify a learner.

Parents/carers or volunteers supervising trips are also responsible for enforcing the school's policy for learners using their phones but must refer any proposed sanctions to a member of staff, as they do not have the power to search or confiscate devices.

8 Loss, theft or damage

Learners bringing mobile phones to school must make sure that their phones are labelled appropriately, ready to be stored away securely in their lockers during the school day. They

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.

We **do not** accept any responsibility for mobile phones that are lost, damaged or stolen on school premises or transport, during school visits or trips, or while learners are travelling to or from school, unless they have been confiscated by a member of school staff.

Confiscated phones will be stored in the school office in a locked cabinet.

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

9 Monitoring and review

This policy will be reviewed annually by the headteacher and updated in line with relevant advice from the DfE, the local authority and any other relevant organisations.

UNICEF - UNCRC

The UN Convention of the Rights of the Child sets out human rights of every person under 18 and applies to every child without discrimination, whatever their ethnicity, gender, religion, language, abilities, or any other status, whatever they think or say, whatever their family background (Article 2). Articles directly relating to this policy are:

3 (Best interests of the child)	15 (Freedom of association)
12 (Respect the views of the Child)	16 (Right to Privacy)
13 (Freedom of expression)	28 (Right to education)
14 (Freedom of thought, belief & religion)	29 (Goals of education)

Appendix 1: An overview for learners

Mobile phones (including smart watches) are not allowed in any school with effect from September 1st 2026.

Primary - any that are brought into school, must be handed in at reception where they will be kept securely until the learner leaves at the end of the day.

Secondary - On arrival learners must:

- switch off their phones or put them on silent;
- put their phone into their locker where it can be stored securely until the end of the school day, or until the learner leaves; or
- hand them in at the office to be charged;
- not take any personal items to off-site activities where they return to school at the end of the day. If they are not returning (e.g. an all-day trip) the lead member of staff will look after their items and distribute them as they disembark.

In **exceptional circumstances**, we permit learners to use mobile phones e.g. learners with diabetes, who normally use their mobile phones to monitor their blood sugar levels will be allowed to access their mobile phones under supervision of staff during the school day.

There may be times when family issues/responsibilities may mean that they need to contact parents/carers during the school day. We may make arrangements for them to be able to call home from the school phone at agreed points during the day. However, we prefer that news which may distress learners is broken to them by members of staff who are then able to support the learner in dealing with the news.

We ask that parents/carers support us in this policy by not telephoning their child during school hours. If you need to get in touch with your child, call the school office and a message will be passed to your child at a convenient point in the day.

Learners may choose to deny they have a phone with them but if they are found to have a phone (or any other electronic device) on them at any time during the school day they will be asked to hand it over and it will be stored as above. The incident will be recorded on the behaviour log. If learners persistently deny having a phone and are later found with one, there will usually be a consequence (e.g. loss of reward points or removal of privilege such as reward trips).

If the learner refuses to hand in their mobile phone, the incident will be recorded on the behaviour log as a serious incident, and the learner may:

- have the phone confiscated for the rest of the day;
- the parent/carer may be asked to come and pick it up;
- be refused entry to the building until they have handed their phone in.

Repeated refusal to comply with the school's policy may result in suspension from school.

Misuse of mobile phones involving certain types of conduct, bullying or harassment can be classified as criminal conduct. We will take such conduct extremely seriously and will involve the police or other agencies as appropriate. Such conduct includes, but is not limited to:

- making of or sharing nudes and semi-nudes including images that are digitally altered or wholly generated using AI (such as 'deepfakes' or 'deep nudes');
- 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;
- recording incidents, including physical assaults, and sharing them via social media or recording staff and others.

Appendix 2: Mobile phone and smartwatches information for visitors

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 learners are present. If you must use your phone, you may go to the school office who will make arrangements for you to do so in private;
- Do not take photos or recordings of learners (unless it is your own child), or staff;
- Do not use your phone in lessons, when working with learners or while children are present.

We **do not** accept any 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.