POLICY DOCUMENT

Mobile Phone Policy

Princess May Primary School's approach to mobile phones — 2026–2027

Governing Body Representative (GBR)	Kristofer McGhee (Chair of Governors)
Signed by (GBR)	……
Date approved	Awaiting governor approval (3 December 2026)
Next review due by	September 2027
Related policies	Behaviour Policy; Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy; Prevent Duty Policy; SEND Policy and SEND Information Report; Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy
Aligned to	The Education Act 1996 and the Education and Inspections Act 2006, which set out schools' powers to discipline pupils, including search and confiscation; the Equality Act 2010; UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018; Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 (in force from 1 September 2026); the DfE's statutory guidance, Mobile Phones in Schools (June 2026 edition, in force from 1 September 2026); and the DfE's guidance on Searching, Screening and Confiscation in Schools

1. Introduction and aims

Mobile phones, including smartphones and smartwatches, are part of everyday life for our pupils, parents, staff and the wider school community. This policy sets out how mobile phones are used, and not used, at Princess May Primary School.

In line with the DfE's statutory guidance, Mobile Phones in Schools (June 2026 edition), which became statutory on 29 June 2026 and which schools should follow from 1 September 2026, Princess May Primary School is a mobile phone-free environment by default. Pupils do not have access to a mobile phone, or another device with similar functionality — including the ability to send or receive messages, or record audio or video — at any point during the school day, including lessons, the time between lessons, break and lunchtime.

This policy aims to:

- promote, and set an example for, safe and responsible mobile phone use;
- set clear guidelines for the use of mobile phones by pupils, staff, parents and volunteers; and
- support our other policies, especially those relating to safeguarding and behaviour.

It also addresses some of the challenges posed by mobile phones in school, including:

- risks to child protection;
- data protection issues;
- the potential for lesson disruption;
- the risk of theft, loss or damage; and
- the appropriate use of technology in the classroom.

2. Roles and responsibilities

All staff, including teachers, support staff and supply staff, are responsible for enforcing this policy. Volunteers, and anyone else engaged by the school, must alert a member of staff if they witness, or become aware of, a breach of this policy.

The Headteacher is responsible for monitoring this policy annually, reviewing it, and holding staff and pupils accountable for its implementation.

3. Use of mobile phones by staff

Personal mobile phones

Staff, including volunteers, contractors and anyone else engaged by the school, do not use their own mobile phone for personal reasons in front of pupils during the school day. This means not making or receiving personal calls, or sending texts, while pupils are present; personal phone use is restricted to non-contact time, in areas of the school where pupils are not present, such as the staff room.

There may be occasions where it is appropriate for a member of staff to use their phone during the school day — for example, for emergency contact by their own child or their child's school, or in the case of an acutely ill dependant or family member. The Headteacher decides on a case-by-case basis whether to allow special arrangements; where these are not needed, staff can use the school office number as a point of emergency contact.

Data protection

Staff must not use their personal mobile phone to process personal data, or any other confidential school information. Guidance on data protection can be found on Teachershared.

Safeguarding

Staff must not give their personal contact details to parents or pupils, including by connecting through social media or messaging apps, and must avoid publicising their contact details anywhere they might attract unwanted contact from parents or pupils.

Staff must not use their personal mobile phone to take photographs or recordings of pupils, their work, or anything else that could identify a pupil. Where photos or recordings are needed for a lesson, trip or activity, these must be taken on school equipment; see our Staff Code of Conduct and Staff Handbook for more information.

Using personal mobiles for work purposes

In some circumstances it may be appropriate for staff to use a personal mobile phone for work — for example, during an emergency evacuation, or when supervising an off-site trip or residential visit. In these circumstances, staff will:

- use their phone in an appropriate and professional manner, in line with our Staff Code of Conduct;
- not use their phone to take photographs or recordings of pupils, their work, or anything else that could identify a pupil; and
- not use their phone to contact parents directly — where necessary, contact is made through the school office.

Work phones

Some staff are provided with a mobile phone by the school for work purposes. Only authorised staff may use school phones, and access must not be given to anyone without authorisation. Staff must only use phone functions for work purposes, and ensure that any communication or conduct linked to the device is professional and appropriate, in line with our Staff Code of Conduct.

Sanctions

Staff who fail to follow this policy may face disciplinary action; see our Staff Disciplinary Policy for more information.

4. Use of mobile phones by pupils

Pupils are not expected to bring a mobile phone to school. Where a parent or carer feels this is necessary — for example, because their child travels to or from school independently — permission must be agreed in advance with the school office, using the permission form at Appendix 2.

Where a phone is brought in with permission, it must be handed to the class teacher at the start of the day, switched off; the class teacher will lock it away securely for the day, and return it at the end of the day; it is not accessed at any point during the school day. Pupils attending an after-school club collect their phone from the class teacher at the end of the school day and hand it to the club leader, who returns it when the child is collected.

Sanctions

Schools are permitted to confiscate phones from pupils under the Education Act 1996 and the Education and Inspections Act 2006. Where a pupil is found by a member of staff to be in possession of, or using, a mobile phone in breach of this policy:

- the phone will be confiscated and returned to the pupil at the end of the school day; and
- where this happens more than three times, the phone will be confiscated and held securely by the class teacher until a parent or carer collects it.

Searching pupils' phones

Staff have the power to search a pupil's phone, as set out in the DfE's guidance on searching, screening and confiscation. This allows the school to search a phone where it believes the phone contains pornographic images, or has been used to commit an offence or cause personal injury.

Serious or criminal conduct

Certain conduct, bullying or harassment carried out using a mobile phone can amount to criminal conduct. The school takes this extremely seriously and will involve the police or other agencies as appropriate. Such conduct includes, but is not limited to:

- sexting;
- threats of violence or assault; and
- abusive calls, messages or social media posts directed at someone because of their ethnicity, religion or another protected characteristic.

Reasonable adjustments

We recognise that some pupils may need access to a mobile phone or similar device during the school day because of a disability, a medical condition, or a caring responsibility at home — for example, a pupil who manages their diabetes using a glucose monitor linked to a phone. In these circumstances, arrangements are agreed individually with parents and carers, in line with our SEND Policy, our Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy and our duties under the Equality Act 2010, and any use is limited to a specific purpose, time and place agreed in advance.

Teaching pupils about mobile phones

Pupils are taught about the risks of mobile phone use — including the impact on focus, learning and friendships — and the benefits of a phone-free school day, through our curriculum and online safety teaching.

5. Use of mobile phones by parents, volunteers and visitors

Parents, visitors and volunteers, including governors and contractors, are expected to follow this policy, in the same way as staff, whenever they are on the school site during the school day. This means:

- not taking photographs or recordings of pupils, unless 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 them on social media without consent; and
- not using a phone in lessons, or when working with pupils.

Parents, visitors and volunteers are informed of these rules when they sign in at reception, or when attending a public event at school (see Appendix 3).

Parents or volunteers supervising a school trip or residential visit must not use their phone to contact other parents, or to take photographs or recordings of pupils, their work, or anything else that could identify a pupil; they are also responsible for enforcing this policy's rules for pupils' own phone use, as set out in Section 4.

Parents must contact the school office as the first point of contact if they need to get in touch with their child during the school day, rather than contacting their child's personal mobile directly.

6. Loss, theft or damage

Pupils bringing a phone to school with permission must ensure it is clearly labelled and stored securely, including using a password or PIN to protect access to its functions. Staff must also secure their own personal phone and any work phone provided to them; failure to do so could result in a data breach.

The school accepts no responsibility for mobile phones that are lost, damaged or stolen on the school premises or transport, on a school trip or visit, or while a pupil is travelling to or from school. A lost phone should be handed in to the school office, who will attempt to contact the owner.

7. Mobile phones on school trips

The use of mobile phones on a school trip, including a residential visit, is decided by the trip leader in advance and communicated to parents and pupils; our default position is that mobile phones are not needed or used on day trips.

On a residential visit, we remain mindful of online safety and will ensure pupils are able to raise a concern about something that has happened online with a member of staff, even where phone use is otherwise restricted.

8. Monitoring and review

The school is committed to ensuring 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 and pupils;
- feedback from staff;
- records of behaviour and safeguarding incidents; and
- relevant guidance from the Department for Education, Hackney Education, or other relevant organisations.

9. Links to other policies

- Behaviour Policy;
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy;
- Prevent Duty Policy;
- SEND Policy and SEND Information Report;
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy; and
- Data Protection Policy.

Appendix 1: Code of conduct for pupils bringing a phone to school

Where a pupil has permission to bring a mobile phone to school, the following rules apply:

- the phone is handed to the class teacher at the start of the day, who locks it away securely, and collected from the class teacher at the end of the day; it is not used or accessed during the school day;
- the phone must be switched off, not just on silent, while it is in school;
- you cannot take photos or recordings, either video or audio, of school staff or other pupils without their consent;
- avoid sharing your contact details with people you don't know, and don't share other people's contact details without their consent;
- don't share your phone's passwords or access codes with anyone else;
- don't use your mobile phone to bully, intimidate or harass anyone, whether by email, text, messaging app or social media;
- don't use your phone to send or receive anything that may be criminal — for instance, by 'sexting';
- our rules on bullying, harassment and intimidation apply to how you use your mobile phone, even when you aren't in school;
- don't use vulgar, obscene or derogatory language on the phone or on social media — this is not permitted under our Behaviour Policy; and
- you must comply with a request from a member of staff to switch off, or hand over, a phone; refusal to comply is a breach of our Behaviour Policy and will be dealt with accordingly.

Appendix 2: Permission form allowing a pupil to bring their phone to school

This form is completed where a parent or carer requests permission for their child to bring a mobile phone to school, for example because the child travels to or from school independently, is a young carer, or needs the phone for an agreed reason. Where permission is granted, the phone is handed to the class teacher and locked away during the school day, in line with Section 4 of this policy.

Field	Detail
Pupil's name	
Year group / class	
Parent/carer name(s)	
Reason phone is needed (e.g. travels to/from school independently; young carer; before/after-school activity)	
Arrangements agreed (e.g. handed to the class teacher each morning, collected at the end of the day)	
Authorised by	
Date	

Parent/carer signature: .....

The school reserves the right to withdraw permission if a pupil does not follow this policy.

Appendix 3: Mobile phone information for visitors

Visitors are asked to note the following while on the school site:

- please keep your mobile phone on silent or vibrate while on the school grounds;
- please do not use your phone where pupils are present;
- do not take photographs or recordings of pupils, unless it is your own child, or staff; and
- do not use your phone in lessons, or when working with pupils.

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.