Caister Primary Federation

Mobile device policy

Approved by:	Governing Board	**Date:**	4th March 2026

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Contents

1. Introduction and aims 2
2. Relevant guidance 2
3. Roles and responsibilities 3
4. Use of mobile devices by staff 3
5. Use of mobile devices by pupils 4
7. Loss, theft or damage 7
8. Monitoring and review 7
9. Appendix 1: Permission form allowing a pupil to bring their phone to school 8
11. Appendix 3: Template mobile phone information slip for visitors 9

1. Introduction and aims

At Caister Primary Federation we recognise that mobile devices and similar devices with a cellular connection and/or internet connection including smartphones, are an important part of everyday life for our pupils, parents/carers and staff, as well as the wider school community.

Our policy aims to:

- Promote safe and responsible phone use
- Set clear guidelines for the use of mobile devices for pupils, parents/carers, visitors and volunteers
- Support the school's other policies, especially those related to child protection and behaviour

This policy also aims to address some of the challenges posed by mobile devices in school, such as:

- Risks to child protection
- Data protection issues
- Potential for lesson disruption
- Risk of theft, loss, or damage
- Appropriate use of technology in the classroom

Note: throughout this policy, 'mobile phones' refers to mobile devices and similar devices.

2. Relevant guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the Department for Education's non-statutory mobile phone guidance and behaviour guidance. Further guidance that should be considered alongside this policy is Keeping Children Safe in Education.

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3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 Staff

All staff (including teachers, support staff and supply staff) are responsible for consistently enforcing this policy.

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 Lead DSL is responsible for monitoring the policy every two years, 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.

4. Use of mobile devices by staff

The DfE's non-statutory mobile phone guidance says that staff should not use their own mobile phone for personal reasons in front of pupils throughout the school day. Further details can be found within the Acceptable Use Policy.

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, while children are present. Use of personal mobile devices must be restricted to non-contact time, and to areas of the school where pupils are not present (such as the staffroom).

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 (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 telephone number as a point of emergency contact.

4.2 Data protection

Staff must not use their personal mobile devices to process school-related 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 Bard). More detailed guidance can be found in our data protection and acceptable use policies.

4.3 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 devices 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.

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4.4 Using personal mobiles for work purposes

In some circumstances, it may be appropriate for staff to use personal mobile devices for work. Such circumstances may include, but are not limited to:

- Issuing homework, rewards or sanctions
- Use of multi-factor authentication
- Emergency evacuations
- Supervising off-site trips
- Supervising residential visits
- Working within an SRB environment

In these circumstances, staff will:

- Use their mobile devices in an appropriate and professional manner, in line with our staff code of conduct
- Not use their phones to take photographs or recordings of pupils, their work, or anything else that could identify a pupil
- Refrain from using their phones to contact parents/carers. If necessary, contact must be made via the school office

4.5 Work phones

Some members of staff are 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 from the EHT. .

Staff must:

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

4.6 Sanctions

Staff that fail to adhere to this policy may face disciplinary action.

See the school's staff disciplinary policy for more information.

5. Use of mobile devices by pupils

The DfE's non-statutory mobile phone guidance says that pupils should not use mobile devices throughout the school day. Pupils should not use their mobile devices during the school day, including during lessons, in the time between lessons, at breaktimes and at lunchtimes.

In line with Department for Education guidance, the school operates as a mobile phone-free environment by default and actively discourages pupils from bringing mobile devices into school. Mobile phones in schools - GOV.UK

In unavoidable circumstances where a mobile phone is brought to school, it must be handed in to the school office at the start of the school day and will be returned to the pupil at the end of the day.

If a pupil is found to be in possession of a mobile phone during the school day, the device will be confiscated, and a parent or carer will be contacted to collect the phone on the pupil's behalf.

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5.1 Use of smartwatches by pupils

The DfE's non-statutory mobile phone guidance includes in the term 'mobile phones' all devices with communications and smart technology that the school chooses to include in their 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 smart watches have wellness and health-related features.

The wearing and use of smartwatches is strictly prohibited. If a pupil is found to be in possession of a smartwatch during the school day, the device will be confiscated, and a parent or carer will be contacted to collect the phone on the pupil's behalf.

5.2 Sanctions

The school operates as a mobile phone-free environment for pupils. Any breach of this policy will be managed in line with the school's Behaviour Policy and the expectations set out by the Department for Education.

Confiscation

- If a pupil is found to be in possession of a mobile phone during the school day, the device will be confiscated by a member of staff.
- The school is permitted to confiscate mobile devices under sections 91 and 94 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006.
- Confiscated phones will be stored securely in the school office.

Collection of Confiscated Devices

- Confiscated mobile devices may only be collected by a **parent or carer**, unless otherwise agreed by the Head of School.
- The device will normally be returned at the end of the school day, although the Head of School reserves the right to retain the phone for a longer period where this is considered proportionate and appropriate.
- Parents/carers will be contacted to arrange collection.

Escalation and Repeat Breaches

- Repeated breaches of this policy may result in:
    - Extended confiscation periods
    - Additional sanctions in line with the Behaviour Policy
    - A requirement for a meeting with parents/carers to agree future arrangements

Searching and Safeguarding Concerns

- Staff have the legal power to search a pupil's mobile phone without consent where there is reasonable cause to believe that the device:
    - Contains inappropriate or prohibited content
    - Has been used to cause harm, commit an offence, or breach school rules
- Any search will be conducted in accordance with the DfE guidance on searching, screening and confiscation, and with due regard to safeguarding and dignity.

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- Where inappropriate content is found, the school will follow safeguarding procedures, which may include:
    - Seizing the device
    - Notifying parents/carers
    - Referring concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Lead
    - Contacting external agencies where required

Link to the Behaviour Policy

- Any misuse of a mobile phone is treated as a breach of the Behaviour Policy.
- Sanctions will be applied consistently and proportionately, taking account of the nature of the breach, the pupil's age, and any relevant safeguarding considerations.

In each case, the sanction given must be reasonable and proportionate. The school will also consider whether:

- There are any relevant special circumstances (for example, age, religious requirements, special educational needs, disability)
- The pupil's behaviour may indicate they may be suffering, or at risk of, harm. If this is suspected, staff will follow the appropriate procedure set out in Part 1 of Keeping Children Safe in Education

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.

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 devices by parents/carers, volunteers and visitors

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, or when working with pupils

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

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- 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

Pupils bringing mobile devices to school must ensure that the phones are appropriately labelled and are stored securely when not in use.

Pupils must secure their mobile devices 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.

The school accepts no responsibility for mobile devices that are lost, damaged or stolen on school premises or transport, during school visits or trips, or while pupils are travelling to and from school.

Confiscated phones will be stored in the school office.

Lost phones should be returned to Head of School. 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

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9. Appendix 1: Permission form allowing a pupil to bring their phone to school

This form should be used where pupils are not usually permitted to bring mobile devices into school, but an exception has been agreed. The form must be completed and signed by a parent or carer prior to the pupil bringing a mobile phone to school.

PUPIL DETAILS	
Pupil name:	
Year group/class:	
Parent/carer(s) name(s):	

The school has agreed to allow [pupil name] to bring [their] mobile phone to school because they:

- Travel to and from school alone
- Are a young carer
- Need the phone to support their medical needs
- Are attending a school trip or residential where use of mobile devices will be allowed
- Attend a before- or after-school activity where a mobile phone is required for the activity, or to contact parents/carers

Pupils who bring a mobile phone to school must abide by the school's policy on the use of mobile phone.

The school reserves the right to revoke permission if a pupil does not abide by the policy.

Parent/carer signature: _____

Pupil signature (where appropriate): _____

FOR SCHOOL USE ONLY	
Authorised by:	
Date:	

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11. Appendix 3: Template mobile phone information slip for visitors

Use of mobile devices and similar devices in our school

- 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 school staffroom.
- Do not take photos or recordings of pupils (unless it is your own child), or staff
- 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.

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