

September 2024

Mobile Phone Policy



**SOUTHCHURCH
HIGH SCHOOL**

Review Framework

	Date
This policy was created in:	February 2021
Reviewed and updated:	September 2024
It will be reviewed in:	September 2026

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1. Introduction

At Southchurch High School we recognise that mobile phones and similar devices, including smartphones, are an important part of everyday life for our students, 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 phones for students, staff, parents/carers, visitors and volunteers; and
- 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 phones in school, such as:

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

Note: throughout this policy, 'mobile phones' refers to mobile phones 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](#).

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 Designated Safeguarding Lead is responsible for monitoring the policy every year, reviewing it, and holding staff and students 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 phones 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 students throughout the school day.

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 phones must be restricted to non-contact time, and to areas of the school where students 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; or
- In the case of acutely ill dependents or family members.

The Headteacher will decide on a case-by-case basis whether to allow for special arrangements.

If special arrangements are not deemed necessary, school staff can use the school office number 01702 900777 as a point of emergency contact.

4.2 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 (eg ChatGPT and Google Bard).

4.3 Safeguarding

Staff must not give their personal contact details to parents/carers or students, 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 students.

Staff must not use their personal mobile phones to take photographs or recordings of students, their work, or anything else which 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.

4.4 Using personal mobiles for work purposes

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

- To issue homework, rewards or sanctions;
- To use multi-factor authentication;
- Emergency evacuations;
- Supervising off-site trips; and
- Supervising residential visits.

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 students, their work, or anything else which could identify a pupil; and

- 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.

Staff must:

- Only use phone functions for work purposes, including making/receiving calls, sending/receiving emails or other communications, or using the internet; and
- 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 phones by students

Although mobile devices will not be banned from school, they must **not** be used **at any time** during school hours.

Unauthorised or misuse of mobile phones at any time during the school day, including at break and lunchtime, will result in the confiscation of the phone by a member of staff. The phone will be retained until the end of the next school day, and will need to be collected by the student.

If a child fails to hand over their phone to be confiscated, they will be placed into inclusion.

In order to ensure that no student can access the internet inappropriately, nor disturb the learning of others during school hours, our policy will be enforced without exception.

We understand that a student may have a mobile phone in order to make contact for safety purposes and there will not be a need to confiscate a phone unless the school rules are ignored.

5.1 Use of smartwatches by students

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.

Smartwatches cannot be used in school. Unauthorised or misuse of smart watches at any time during the school day, including at break and lunchtime, will result in the confiscation of the watch by a member of staff. The watch will be retained until the end of the next school day, and will need to be collected by the student.

If a child fails to hand over their smart watch to be confiscated, they will be placed into inclusion.

In order to ensure that no student can access the internet inappropriately, nor disturb the learning of others during school hours, our policy will be enforced without exception.

6. Use of mobile phones 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 students, 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; and
- Not using phones in lessons, or when working with students.

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

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

Students 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.

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

Confiscated phones will be stored in in the SLT area in a locked box. Students can collect them at the end of the school day. If their phone is repeatedly confiscated, parents will be called to collect the phone.

8. Monitoring and review

The school is committed to ensuring that this policy has a positive impact of students' education, behaviour and welfare. When reviewing the policy, the school will take into account:

- Feedback from parents/carers and students;
- Feedback from staff;
- Records of behaviour and safeguarding incidents; and
- Relevant advice from the Department for Education, the local authority and any other relevant organisations.