

Gastrells Community Primary School

Mobile Phone Policy

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Contents

1. Introduction and aims.....	3
2. Relevant guidance.....	3
3. Roles and responsibilities.....	3
4. Use of mobile phones by staff.....	4
5. Use of mobile phones by children.....	5
6. Use of mobile phones by parents/carers, volunteers and visitors.....	6
7. Loss, theft or damage.....	7
8. Monitoring and review.....	7
9. Appendix 1: Use of devices in school slip for visitors.....	09

1. Introduction and aims

At Gastrells we recognise that mobile phones and similar devices, including smartphones, are an important part of everyday life for our children, 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 children, staff, 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 phones 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 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 Governing Body is responsible for monitoring the policy every 2 years, reviewing it, and holding staff and children 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 children throughout the school day.

4.1 Personal mobile phones

Mobile phone, for personal reasons while Staff (including volunteers, contractors and anyone else otherwise engaged by the school) are not permitted to use their personal children are present. Use of personal mobile phones must be restricted to non-contact time, and to areas of the school where children 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 office number 01453765959 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 (e.g. ChatGPT and Google Bard).

Further information: data protection policy or ICT acceptable use policy.

4.3 Safeguarding

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

Staff must not store images on their personal mobile phones, of children, their work, or anything else which could identify a child. If it's necessary to take photos or recordings as part of a lesson/school trip/activity, this must be used and then deleted.

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 aren't limited to:

- To issue homework, rewards or sanctions
- To use multi-factor authentication
- Emergency evacuations
- Supervising off-site trips
- 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
- When using their phones to take photographs or recordings of children, their work, or anything else which could identify a child these images will not be stored.
- Refrain from using their phones to contact parents/carers. If necessary, contact must be made via the school office

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 children

The DfE's non-statutory mobile phone guidance says that children should not use mobile phones throughout the school day.

Children should not use their mobile phones during the school day, including during lessons, in the time between lessons, at breaktimes and at lunchtimes.

- Mobile phones are handed in to the office at the beginning of the day.

5.1 Use of smartwatches by children

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 may be worn but must not be used apart from to tell the time.

5.3 Sanctions

Children who do not hand in mobile phones and are using them during the school day will have them confiscated, locked in the office to be collected by parents.

- Staff have the power to search children's phones in specific circumstances, as set out in the [DfE's guidance on searching, screening and confiscation](#). The DfE guidance allows you to search a child's phone if there is a good reason to do so (such as having reason to believe the phone contains pornographic images, or if it is being/has been used to commit an offence or cause harm to another person).
- In each case, the sanction given must be reasonable and proportionate. The school will also consider whether:
- The school will consider special circumstances individually (for example, age, religious requirements, special educational needs, disability)
- The child'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](#)

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 children, 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 children

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 during the trip unless discussed with the visit leader.
- Take photos or recordings of children, their work, or anything else which could identify a child

Parents/carers or volunteers supervising trips are also responsible for enforcing the school's policy for children 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. Monitoring and review

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

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

If there are any concerns regarding this policy, these should be brought to the attention of headteacher in a timely manner.

11. Appendix 1: Template mobile phone information slip for visitors

Use of mobile phones 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 children are present. If you must use your phone, you may go to the staff room
- Do not take photos or recordings of children (unless it is your own child), or staff
- Do not use your phone in lessons, or when working with children

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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