Larkspur Community Primary School

Mobile Phone Policy

Date: October 2026
Review: October 2027

Purpose and principles

Larkspur Community Primary School is a mobile phone-free school for pupils throughout the school day. Mobile phones and other smart technology with similar communication or recording functionality must not be used by pupils during lessons, transitions, breaktimes or lunchtimes.

This policy promotes safe and responsible use of technology, safeguards pupils and staff, supports calm and purposeful learning, and should be read alongside the Behaviour Policy, Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, Online Safety arrangements, Data Protection procedures and PSHE/RSHE Policy.

This policy reflects the Department for Education statutory guidance Mobile phones in schools, updated 29 June 2026 and applying from 1 September 2026, alongside current guidance on behaviour and searching, screening and confiscation.

Scope and definition

For this policy, references to mobile phones also include smart watches and other personal smart or communication devices capable of sending or receiving messages or notifications, accessing online content, taking photographs, or making audio or video recordings.
The expectations apply to pupils, staff, parents/carers, visitors, volunteers, governors, contractors and placement students where relevant.

Pupils

Pupils must not use mobile phones or other covered personal smart devices at any point during the school day.

- Only pupils in Years 5 and 6 who walk to and/or from school independently may routinely bring a mobile phone to school.
- Permission to bring a phone to school does not give permission to use it during the school day.
- On arrival, the phone must be switched off and handed to the class teacher for secure storage in the agreed classroom location. It will be returned immediately before the pupil leaves the school premises at the end of the day.
- Pupils must not use smart watches or other covered devices for communication, notifications, photography, recording or online access during the school day. Where brought to school, the school may require the device to be stored in the same way as a phone.
- Parents/carers who need to contact their child during the school day must contact the school office rather than the child directly.
- Pupils bring permitted devices onto the school site at their own risk. The school will take reasonable steps to store handed-in devices securely but cannot accept liability for loss, theft or damage except where legally required.
- Pupils may not take phones on any educational or residential visits.

Individual exceptions

The Headteacher may agree an individual exception where access to a device is necessary to meet a pupil's particular needs or circumstances. Any exception will be proportionate, documented and communicated to relevant staff. An exception does not permit unrestricted personal use.

Education and online safety

The school will teach pupils how to use technology safely and responsibly through the curriculum and Kid Safe programme. This will include appropriate learning about harmful content, unsafe contact, online conduct, bullying, privacy, scams and how to report concerns.

Staff

- Staff must model safe, professional and proportionate use of personal devices.
- Personal phones must remain out of sight while staff are teaching, working with or supervising pupils, including during playground/yard duties, except where an authorised school purpose or emergency applies.
- Personal use should be restricted to authorised breaks in designated staff-only areas. Main reception and teaching areas are not designated personal-use areas when pupils are present.
- Mobile phones may be used to contact school when appropriate on an educational visit, in accordance with visit arrangements.
- Staff may use a personal device briefly where required for an authorised authentication process, such as the CPOMS Authenticator App. The device must be put away immediately afterwards.
- Where an urgent personal circumstance requires a staff member to keep a phone accessible, this should be agreed in advance with the Headteacher, Deputy Headteacher or an appropriate senior leader wherever practicable.

Photography, video and audio recording

Staff must not use personal mobile phones or personal devices to photograph, video or audio-record pupils unless given specific permission by the headtecaher and on these occasion images should be immediately deleted. Photographs and recordings of pupils for legitimate school purposes must only be made using school-authorised equipment or systems and in accordance with safeguarding, data protection and image-consent procedures.

No member of staff, volunteer or visitor should use a personal device to make an unauthorised photograph, video or audio recording on the school site or during a school activity.

Parents/carers, visitors and volunteers

- Visitors, volunteers, governors, contractors and placement students must follow the school's expectations for personal device use and must not use phones while working with pupils unless specifically authorised.
- The school will determine whether photography or recording is permitted at each assembly, performance, sporting event or other school event. Where permitted, parents/carers must follow the instructions given by the school, respect other families' privacy and must not post images or recordings of other pupils on social media.
- Parents/carers must not record meetings with staff unless this has been expressly agreed in advance by the school.
- Parents/carers and volunteers supporting trips must not photograph or record pupils on personal devices or use personal phones to contact other parents on behalf of the school unless specifically authorised.
- Parents/carers must use the school office as the first point of contact if they need to communicate with their child during the school day.

Breaches, confiscation and secure storage

Breaches by pupils will be dealt with consistently and proportionately in line with the school's Behaviour Policy and safeguarding procedures.

- A device may be confiscated where appropriate. Any confiscated device will be stored securely.

- The pupil will be told why the device has been confiscated. Arrangements for return, including collection by a parent/carer where appropriate, will be proportionate to the circumstances and consistent with the Behaviour Policy.
- Repeated or serious breaches may lead to further action under the Behaviour Policy and parents/carers will be informed where appropriate.

Searching devices and safeguarding concerns

The school will not rely on a broad standalone authority for DSLs to search pupils' devices. Any search of an electronic device will be considered and undertaken only in accordance with the school's Searching, Screening and Confiscation arrangements, current Department for Education guidance and the school's legal duties.

Where use of a device raises a safeguarding concern, including concerns about harmful or inappropriate content, child-on-child abuse, bullying, harassment, exploitation or the sharing of images, staff must report the concern immediately in accordance with the school's safeguarding procedures. The DSL will consider any required referral to children's social care, the police or other agencies in line with current guidance.

Concerns about adults

Concerns about a member of staff's use of a mobile phone or personal device must be reported and managed in accordance with the school's safeguarding and staff conduct procedures. Concerns involving the Headteacher must be reported through the appropriate procedure for concerns about the Headteacher. Staff must not undertake informal searches of another adult's personal device.

Communication, implementation and review

The school will communicate this policy to pupils, parents/carers, staff, volunteers and visitors. Expectations will be reinforced regularly and applied consistently across the school. Leaders will review implementation and any emerging safeguarding, behaviour or technology issues and amend the policy when guidance or circumstances change.

Related policies and guidance

- Behaviour Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Online Safety / Acceptable Use arrangements
- Data Protection and privacy procedures
- PSHE/RSHE Policy
- Searching, Screening and Confiscation arrangements
- Educational Visits procedures
- Staff Code of Conduct

The policy below outlines acceptable and unacceptable uses of mobile phones by visitors, staff and pupils within school. This is to safeguard both the children and staff at Larkspur Primary School. We recognise that mobile phones, including smart phones, are an important part of everyday life for our pupils, parents and staff, as well as the wider school community.

Our policy aims to:

- Promote, and set an example for, safe and responsible phone use
- Set clear guidelines for the use of mobile phones for pupils, staff, parents, visitors and volunteers
- Support the school's other policies, such as the safeguarding policy, behaviour policy, the PSHE and RSE policy.

Staff

- With permission staff may use mobile phone to photograph children during lessons; photographs should then be uploaded to the school's FACEBOOK account. Photographs must then be deleted from mobile phone. Otherwise, mobile phones must not be used during lessons; staff should keep their phones in their bags or coats.
- Mobile phones are to be kept on silent or off mode during lessons/sessions; staff are to keep their phones in their bags or coats.
- Mobile phones may be used during break times and lunch times in the following places: Staff room, main reception area and outside of the school building. If a mobile phone is used in a teaching area, NO children should be present.
- In the event of an emergency contact, staff can keep their phones with them in normal mode and access if needed. The Head Teacher, Deputy Head Teacher or SMT member must be informed prior to this taking place and permission must be gained.
- Visitors are not to use their phone on site. This must be shared by the office when signing in. It is the responsibility of all staff to remind other adults (e.g. visitors, parents and placement students) not to use mobile phones.
- Staff may use a mobile phone only to contact school when on an educational visit.

- Staff are allowed to use a mobile phone in school time when accessing the Cpoms Authenticator App (Child Protection on-line monitoring system). The phone must be stored away as soon as this is completed.
- If staff are seen to be using their mobile phones without consulting with the Management, whilst they are in lessons/sessions or in the presence of children, disciplinary procedures may be taken.

Staff unacceptable uses

- Mobile phones must not be used to take photographs, video or record audio on the school site or on a school learning activity unless photograph is uploaded to school Facebook account then deleted from mobile phone.
- Mobile phones should also not be used to: send SMS / MMS messages, access the internet, access social network sites or use any other application during school hours and other educational activities, such as assemblies and meetings.
- Mobile phones should not be used by any member of staff during yard duties.
- Users bringing personal devices into school must ensure there is no inappropriate or illegal content on the device.
- If a member of the SLT is the focus of a concern regarding using a mobile phone inappropriately, the Head Teacher must be informed immediately. If there is a concern about the image content of a member of staff's mobile phone, the Head Teacher reserves the right to check the image content or contact the police. Should inappropriate material be found then the police and Gateshead Children's Safeguarding will be contacted immediately. We will follow the guidance from the Local Authority as to the appropriate measures for the staff member's disciplinary proceedings.
- If the Head Teacher is the focus of concern, the Local Authority Children's Services Department should be informed immediately (number available on safeguarding Posters around school).

Pupils

We understand that smart phones are fast becoming an important part of a primary school pupil's life. We also however believe that owning and using a mobile phone respectfully and safely requires a level of maturity and training. Our approach to online safety is based on addressing the following categories of risk:

- **Content** – being exposed to illegal, inappropriate or harmful content, such as pornography, fake news, racism, misogyny, self-harm, suicide, anti-Semitism, radicalisation and extremism
- **Contact** – being subjected to harmful online interaction with other users, such as peer-to-peer pressure, commercial advertising and adults posing as children or young adults with the intention to groom or exploit them for sexual, criminal, financial or other purposes
- **Conduct** – personal online behaviour that increases the likelihood of, or causes, harm, such as making, sending and receiving explicit images (e.g. consensual and non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi-nudes and/or pornography), sharing other explicit images and online bullying; and
- **Commerce** – risks such as online gambling, inappropriate advertising, phishing and/or financial scams.

To address the risks above we will educate pupils about online safety as part of our curriculum and our Kid Safe programme. We will look at:

- The safe use of social media, the internet and technology
- Keeping personal information private
- How to recognise unacceptable behaviour online
- How to report any incidents of cyber-bullying, ensuring pupils are encouraged to do so, including where they are a witness rather than a victim.
- Ensure only pupils in Years 5 and 6 (who walk to and from school alone) are allowed to bring a mobile phone onto school premises, all other year groups are not permitted to do so. Y5 and Y6 pupils must leave their mobile phones in the class teachers' drawer when they arrive, for safekeeping. Pupils will be given their mobile device at the end of the day just before leaving the school premises. 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 pupils are travelling to and from school.

Sanctions

- If a pupil breaches the school rules, we will confiscate phones. Schools are permitted to confiscate phones from pupils under **sections 91 and 94 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006.**
- Confiscated phones can be collected by a parent/ carer as agreed by the head teacher. In addition to confiscating a phone we will endeavour to resolve all matters using the School's Behaviour Policy without Police involvement, but parents of victims do have the right to seek Police intervention. This will be closely linked to the school's behaviour policy, Anti-Bullying Policy and Larkspur Primary School's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy which can be read separately or in conjunction with this policy.
- The inappropriate use of the mobile phone will be investigated in line with safeguarding procedures. The DSLs have the authority to search pupils' phones, as set out in the **DfE's guidance on searching, screening and confiscation**. The DfE guidance allows schools to search a pupil's phone if there is a reason to believe the phone contains pornographic images, or if it is being/has been used to commit an offence or cause personal injury.
- We know that from time-to-time pupils' use of mobile phones at home can be a cause for concern and involve others people from the school community either directly or indirectly. We will treat any such incidences with the same severity and the same sanctions as listed above, will still apply. If a parent, pupil or staff member finds inappropriate content on a phone or if they suspect inappropriate behaviour they must report it to the Head teacher of Deputy Head teacher immediately.

Criminal Conduct:

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 or sharing of nudes/ semi-nudes
- 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

Use of mobile phones by parents, volunteers and visitors

Parents, 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:

- Parents/carers can use mobile phones to record school assemblies and other events but are asked to respect the wishes of other parents and limit their recording to their own child(ren). if parents do not wish for photographs to be taken, they can opt out. Parents can also specify if they consent to photographs being used in school, on published material or both. **It is the class teacher's responsibility to maintain records of parental consent and ensure that photographs are used in accordance with parents/carers wishes.**
- Using any photographs or recordings for personal use only and not posting on social media.
- **Parents must not use their phones to record meetings with staff.**

- Not using phones in lessons, or when working with pupils
- Parents, visitors and volunteers will be informed of the rules for mobile phone use when they attend a public event at school.
- Parents or volunteers supervising school trips or residential visits must not:
  - Use their phone to make contact with other parents
  - Take photos or recordings of pupils, their work, or anything else which could identify a pupil
  - Parents or volunteers supervising trips are also responsible for enforcing the school's policy for pupils using their phones, as set out above.
    - Parents 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 his/her personal mobile during the school day.
      - Permission will not be given for photographs to be placed on any Social Networking Sites under any circumstances.