Bushfield Road Infant School

Mobile Phone and Personal Communication Devices Policy

Approval body: Governing body
Date approved: November 2026
Review date: November 2028

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1. Purpose and principles

Bushfield Road Infant School is a small infant school for pupils aged 3–7, with attractive grounds and a community in which around 35% of pupils are eligible for pupil premium. Our values are **Kindness, Teamwork and Curiosity**.

We want pupils to feel safe, included and ready to learn. Personal mobile phones and similar devices can distract from learning, play and relationships, and may create safeguarding or privacy risks. The school therefore aims to provide a **mobile phone-free environment for pupils during the school day**, while making appropriate arrangements for individual medical, accessibility or other exceptional needs.

The policy is intended to:

- protect pupils' safety, privacy and well-being;
- support uninterrupted learning, play and face-to-face interaction;
- set clear expectations for pupils, families, staff, visitors and contractors;
- make sure that any exception is planned, proportionate and inclusive;
- support a consistent approach to safeguarding and behaviour;
- help families feel reassured that they can contact the school in an emergency.

The policy applies in a manner appropriate to the age and development of our pupils. No pupil is expected to own or bring a mobile phone to school.

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2. Scope and definitions

This policy applies to:

- all pupils, including children in the early years;
- all employees, governors, volunteers, students on placement and agency staff;
- parents, carers, visitors, contractors and other adults on the school site;
- school-led trips, visits, events and other activities, unless the school has set out a different arrangement in advance.

A **mobile phone or personal communication device** includes a smartphone, basic mobile phone, tablet, smartwatch or other personal device that can make calls, send messages, access the internet, take photographs or recordings, or communicate with another person. The school will consider devices with similar functions in the same way.

School-owned devices and equipment used by staff for an authorised educational, operational or safeguarding purpose are not personal devices under this policy. Medical equipment and assistive technology are addressed through an individual plan.

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3. Policy statement for pupils

Pupils must not use or access a personal mobile phone or personal communication device during the school day.

Pupils should not bring a phone or device to school unless the headteacher, or a staff member authorised by the headteacher, has agreed an exception in advance. Where an exception is agreed, the device must be switched off and handed in on arrival, unless the written individual plan specifies a different safe arrangement.

The school will not require a pupil to bring a phone. Families should contact the school office if they need to discuss safe arrangements for a pupil's journey to or from school.

Agreed exceptions

An exception may be considered where a device is necessary, for example:

- to support a medical need, including where a phone is an essential part of monitoring or managing a condition;
- as a reasonable adjustment for a disabled pupil;
- for another exceptional and documented safeguarding or welfare reason.

The school will consider each request individually. It will discuss the arrangement with the pupil's parent or carer and, where appropriate, relevant professionals. The school will consider whether a school-owned device or another arrangement would meet the need as effectively.

An agreed exception will be recorded in an individual plan. The plan will state:

- why the device is needed;
- who may use or manage it and when;
- where it will be kept;
- how access will be supervised or restricted, where appropriate;
- what to do if the arrangement is not working;
- when the plan will be reviewed.

An exception does not give permission for general phone use, photography, recording, messaging or internet access during the school day.

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4. Arrival, storage and collection

Where a pupil has written permission to bring a device:

1. The parent or carer must make sure the pupil knows the agreed arrangement.
2. The device must be switched off before the pupil enters the school building or grounds, unless the individual plan states otherwise for a medical purpose.
3. The pupil must hand the device to the class teacher as soon as they arrive.
4. Staff will record receipt and store it securely.
5. The device will be returned to [the pupil/parent or carer] at [agreed time and location].

The school will not accept responsibility for a device brought without permission, but will take reasonable steps to keep any device handed to staff secure. The school will establish and communicate the process for any device that is found, handed in or brought in without permission.

Parents and carers should normally retain their own phones rather than ask the school to store them.

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5. Breaches and response

Staff will respond calmly and proportionately, taking account of pupils' young age, understanding, individual needs and the circumstances of the incident.

If a pupil is found with a phone or device without permission, or uses one contrary to an agreed plan, staff will normally:

- direct the pupil to stop using it;
- take the device to the agreed secure location, if appropriate and safe to do so;
- inform the headteacher or designated member of staff;
- contact the parent or carer and explain what happened;
- record the incident where required by the school's procedures.

The school may ask a parent or carer to collect the device. Any response will be consistent with the school's behaviour policy and the current Department for Education guidance on behaviour and confiscation. Staff must not search a pupil or inspect the contents of a device unless this is authorised under the applicable law and guidance and the school's procedures.

If a device appears to contain material relevant to a safeguarding concern, staff must not investigate it themselves or circulate, copy or delete the material. They must refer the matter promptly to the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) and follow the school's safeguarding procedures.

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6. Emergencies and contact with pupils

Parents and carers should contact the school office if they need to get an urgent message to a pupil. The school will pass on messages as appropriate and will contact parents or carers if there is an emergency involving their child.

Pupils must not use a personal phone to make or receive calls or messages during the school day unless this is part of a pre-agreed medical or accessibility plan, or a staff member has directed them to do so in an emergency.

During an emergency, staff will follow the school's emergency and safeguarding procedures. A personal phone must not be used in a way that puts a pupil or another person at risk, interferes with instructions or compromises the privacy or safety of others.

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7. Staff, governors, volunteers and other adults

Adults are expected to model safe, considerate and professional use of mobile phones.

During teaching, supervision, meetings with pupils and other duties where attention is needed, staff must keep personal phones and devices silent and put away. They must not use a personal device to photograph, film, record or communicate with a pupil, or to access or store pupil information.

Staff may use a personal phone during an authorised break in a designated area, provided this does not compromise supervision, confidentiality or professional conduct. Personal use must not take place while responsible for pupils.

Where a staff member needs a device for a medical reason, disability-related adjustment or other agreed need, the arrangement must be discussed with the headteacher and recorded appropriately. In an urgent situation, staff may use a personal phone if necessary to protect someone's safety, then report the use to the headteacher as soon as practicable.

Governors, volunteers, students, contractors and visitors must not use personal devices to photograph, film or record pupils. The school may ask adults to put devices away or to leave an area if their use is inconsistent with this policy or creates a safeguarding or privacy concern.

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8. Photography, recording and personal data

Only school-authorised devices may be used to photograph or record pupils for an approved school purpose. Staff must follow the school's data protection, privacy, safeguarding and photography procedures, including requirements for secure storage, access, retention and deletion.

Parental consent to a school photograph does not permit staff, visitors or other parents to take photographs or recordings using personal devices at school. At events where families may take photographs, the school will communicate clear arrangements and take account of the privacy and safeguarding needs of pupils and families.

Any accidental recording, loss of a device containing school data, or suspected unauthorised sharing of an image must be reported promptly to the headteacher and the school's data protection lead, in line with the relevant procedures.

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9. Medical needs, disability and inclusion

The school will consider requests for a phone or other device as part of its duties to make reasonable adjustments and to support pupils' medical needs. A decision will be made on the

basis of the pupil's individual circumstances, not on a blanket assumption that an exception is or is not appropriate.

Where a device is needed for health monitoring or treatment, the school will work with the family and, where appropriate, health professionals to agree a safe plan. The plan should make clear whether the device can be managed by an adult, must remain with the pupil or can be replaced by a suitable school device.

The school will consider whether an alternative arrangement would meet the pupil's need without unnecessary restriction. It will review the plan when the pupil's needs or circumstances change.

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10. Parents and carers

Parents and carers are asked to:

- support the school's phone-free expectations;
- avoid asking a pupil to use a phone to contact them during the school day;
- contact the school office in an emergency;
- seek written agreement before a pupil brings a device to school;
- make sure any agreed device is switched off and handed in as set out in the pupil's plan;
- raise any medical, accessibility, safety or travel concerns directly with the school.

The school will explain the policy and the reasons for it before implementation, and will provide reminders as needed. Communication will be made through appropriate channels, such as the school website, letters, newsletters and parent meetings.

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11. Visitors and the wider school community

The school will display or provide clear information about its expectations for personal devices. Visitors, volunteers and contractors must follow staff instructions about putting devices away and must not photograph, film or record pupils without express school authorisation.

At school events, the school may set specific arrangements, including restricting photography or directing adults to designated areas. These arrangements will be communicated in advance where possible.

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12. Implementation and communication

When introducing or amending the policy, the school will:

- consult parents and pupils in an age-appropriate way;
- inform staff, pupils and families well in advance;
- explain the reasons for the policy and the expected benefits;
- give families clear information about exceptions and emergency contact arrangements;
- consider trial days or a transition period where helpful;
- communicate through more than one channel;
- provide staff with guidance on applying the policy consistently.

The headteacher will ensure staff understand the policy and know how to respond to breaches, requests for exceptions and safeguarding concerns. New staff, volunteers and regular contractors will be made aware of the relevant expectations.

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13. Roles and responsibilities

Governing body

The governing body will:

- approve and review the policy;
- ensure that leaders have appropriate arrangements to implement it;
- consider whether the policy is being applied consistently and inclusively.

Headteacher

The headteacher will:

- implement the policy and ensure it is published;
- decide who may authorise exceptions;
- ensure staff know their responsibilities;
- oversee incident handling and policy review;
- ensure safeguarding and data protection concerns are referred appropriately.

Designated safeguarding lead

The DSL will:

- advise on phone-related safeguarding concerns;
- ensure concerns are managed and recorded under the school's safeguarding procedures;

- consider whether information should be shared or referred to another agency.

Staff

Staff will:

- follow the policy and model appropriate device use;
- supervise pupils and act consistently when concerns arise;
- avoid using personal devices to capture or share pupil information;
- report relevant incidents promptly.

Pupils

Pupils will be supported to understand that they should not bring or use a personal phone or device at school unless an individual arrangement has been agreed.

Parents and carers

Parents and carers will support the policy, agree any exception with the school in advance and use the school office for urgent contact.

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14. Monitoring, records and review

The school will monitor how well the policy works, including:

- whether pupils and adults understand and follow it;
- the number and nature of incidents;
- whether exceptions are appropriate and working as intended;
- feedback from staff, pupils and families;
- any links with safeguarding, inclusion, behaviour or attendance concerns.

Records will be proportionate and kept in line with the school's safeguarding, data protection and record-retention procedures. Safeguarding records must include the relevant concern, decisions made, actions taken, outcomes and rationale, in accordance with the school's safeguarding procedures.

The headteacher will review the policy at least annually and sooner if there is a relevant change in law, statutory guidance, school practice or risk. The governing body will approve substantive changes.

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15. Legal and guidance framework

The school will apply this policy consistently with the law and government guidance in force at the time. Relevant provisions include:

- the **Department for Education's statutory guidance on Mobile phones in schools** and its guidance on communicating phone policies to parents, published in June 2026;
- current Department for Education guidance on behaviour, safeguarding, searching and confiscation;
- the **Education Act 2002**, including the school's safeguarding duties;
- the **Equality Act 2010**, including the duty to make reasonable adjustments;
- the **Children and Families Act 2014**, where relevant to pupils with special educational needs and disabilities;
- the **Data Protection Act 2018** and UK GDPR, where personal information is handled;
- the current **Keeping Children Safe in Education** statutory guidance and the school's safeguarding and child protection procedures.

Where guidance or law changes, the school will review this policy and update its procedures as necessary.

This policy supports the school's work in safeguarding, inclusion, behaviour and well-being, and leadership and governance. Inspection judgements are not a substitute for the school's legal duties or for its own evaluation of the policy's effectiveness.