



# Mobile Phone Policy

## 2024 - 2026

Embrace Multi Academy Trust strives to maintain and improve good provision and outcomes at each of its member schools. Based upon our shared ethos and our values of wisdom, collaboration, respect, integrity, inclusivity, and compassion, we aim to support the learning and development of every person within the trust and our policies are written from this perspective.

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V1	Trust Leader	Approved	27/08/2024	2 Years
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### 1. Introduction and aims

At Rawlins 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
- 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 Principal and Vice Principal (Care, Guidance and Welfare) are responsible for monitoring the policy and holding staff and students accountable for its implementation. The policy will be reviewed every two years.

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 during times they are in contact with students. 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
- 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.

### 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).

More detailed guidance on data protection can be found in the trust data protection policy and acceptable use of IT policy.

### 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 student. If it is necessary to take photos or recordings as part of a lesson/school trip/activity, this must be done using school equipment.

If your school uses classroom apps or programmes that require the use of a member of staff's mobile phone these should be avoided, however if there is no other option you should explain the appropriate use of mobile phones in these circumstances.

#### **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
- Supervising residential visits (if possible, it is better to provide a school mobile instead, or a SIM card with a separate number)

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 student
- 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 students**

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

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

- Student mobile devices and accessories are not allowed to be seen or used. They should be switched off and in bags or zipped pockets. Phones and accessories seen or believed to have been used will be confiscated.
- The member of staff confiscating the phone will take it to the Care, Guidance and Welfare Hub 'hatch' where it will be stored securely
- On the first incident of confiscation the student can collect their phone at the end of the school day (or when leaving the site early for legitimate reasons, for example medical appointments)
- On subsequent confiscation a phone call will be made to the student's parent/carer to inform them that the phone will remain in school until they, or a designated person, collects the phone

## 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 are not a banned item at Rawlins
- However, as financially valuable items due consideration should be given by those who wear them
- Smartwatches are a banned item for public examinations and other examinations (for example mock exams) in schools

## 5.2 Exceptions for special circumstances and for sixth-form students

- We understand that many young people travel to and from school independently, and often on public transport when they join a secondary school. For these reasons we understand that some students may have their mobile phone on them, but they must remain hidden. Reasons for bringing a mobile phone to and from school include:
  - Students travelling to school by themselves
  - Young carers who need to be contactable
  - Students with diabetes who use their phones to monitor their blood sugar
  - Sixth-form students

The school may permit students to use a mobile phone in school, due to exceptional circumstances. This will be considered on a case-by-case basis. To request such permission, students or parents/carers should contact their child's Head of Year.

Any students who are given permission must then adhere to the school's code of conduct for mobile phone use (see [appendix 1](#)).

Sixth-form students are allowed access to their mobile phones during the school day, to reflect their increased independence and responsibility, but must not compromise our policy on the use of mobile phones for other students.

Therefore, they are only permitted to use their mobile phones out of sight of younger students and within sixth-form only areas of the school. Misuse of mobile phones by students in the sixth form will lead to sanctions according to our behaviour policy.

## 5.3 Sanctions

If a phone is visible or used by a student:

- Student mobile devices and accessories are not allowed to be seen or used. They should be switched off and in bags or zipped pockets. Phones and accessories seen or believed to have been used will be confiscated. (Schools are permitted to confiscate phones from students under [sections 91](#) and [94](#) of the Education and Inspections Act 2006)
- On the first incident of confiscation the student can collect their phone at the end of the school day (or when leaving the site early for legitimate reasons, for example medical appointments)

- On subsequent confiscation a phone call will be made to the student's parent/carer to inform them that the phone will remain in school until they, or a designated person, collects the phone
- Students who refuse to follow an instruction to hand over their phone when it has been confiscated in line with this policy, may receive further sanction in line with the school's behaviour policy
  - There may be an occasion where the Principal uses DfE guidance to search a student's phone in specific circumstances (for example if there is reason to believe that the phone is being/had been used to commit an offence or cause harm to another person), as set out in the [DfE's guidance on searching, screening and confiscation](#).

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

- There are any relevant special circumstances (eg age, religious requirements, special educational needs, disability)
- The student'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 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 is 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 students

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
- Take photos or recordings of students, their work, or anything else which could identify a student

Parents/carers or volunteers supervising trips are also responsible for enforcing the school's policy for students 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**

Students who need to bring mobile phones to school must ensure that the phones are appropriately labelled and are stored securely and not used on site, unless under exceptional circumstances as described below.

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.

- There is signage around the school reminding staff, visitors and students that this is a mobile free school

Confiscated phones will be stored in the Care, Guidance and Welfare Hub in a secure location.

Lost phones should be returned to the Care, Guidance and Welfare Hub. 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 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
- 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 Stuart Morton (Principal) or Nick Schober (Vice Principal) in a timely manner.

## 9. Appendix 1: Code of Conduct for students allowed to bring their mobile phones to school due to exceptional circumstances

### Code of Conduct

You must obey the following rules if you bring your mobile phone to school:

1. You may not use your mobile phone during lessons, unless the teacher specifically allows you to.
2. Phones must be switched off (not just put on 'silent').
3. You may not use your mobile phone in the toilets or changing rooms. This is to protect the privacy and welfare of other students.
4. You cannot take photos or recordings (either video or audio) of school staff or other students without their consent.
5. Avoid sharing your contact details with people you don't know, and do not share other people's contact details without their consent.
6. Do not share your phone's password(s) or access code(s) with anyone else.
7. Do not use your mobile phone to bully, intimidate or harass anyone. This includes bullying, harassing or intimidating students or staff by:
  - a. Email
  - b. Text/messaging app
  - c. Social media
8. Do not use your phone to send or receive anything that may be criminal. For instance, by 'sexting'.
9. Rules on bullying, harassment and intimidation apply to how you use your mobile phone even when you are not in school.
10. Do not use vulgar, obscene or derogatory language while on the phone or when using social media. This language is not permitted under the school's behaviour policy.
11. Do not use your phone to view or share pornography or other harmful content.
12. You must comply with a request by a member of staff to switch off, or hand over, a phone. Refusal to comply is a breach of the school's behaviour policy and will be dealt with accordingly.
13. Mobile phones are not permitted in any internal or external exam or test environment. If you have a mobile phone, you will be asked to store it appropriately, or turn it over to an exam invigilator before entering the test room. Bringing a phone into the test room can result in your exam being declared invalid.

## 10. Appendix 2: Permission form allowing a student to bring their phone to school

STUDENT DETAILS	
<b>Student name:</b>	
<b>Year group/class:</b>	
<b>Parent/carer(s) name(s):</b>	

The school has agreed to allow the above student 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 phones will be allowed
- Attend a before or after-school activity where a mobile phone is required for the activity, or to contact parents/carers
- Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

Students who bring a mobile phone to school must abide by the school's policy on the use of mobile phones, and its code of conduct for mobile phones.

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

Parent/carer signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Student signature (where appropriate): \_\_\_\_\_

FOR SCHOOL USE ONLY	
<b>Authorised by:</b>	
<b>Date:</b>	

## **a11. Appendix 3: 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 students are present. If you must use your phone, you may go to the staff room
- Do not take photos or recordings of students (unless it is your own child), or staff
- Do not use your phone in lessons, or when working with students
- 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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## **Appendix 4: Additions Required for Compliance with Updated DfE Mobile Phone Guidance (2026)**

This appendix outlines the policy elements that will be included in the next full policy review to ensure full alignment with the Department for Education's updated Mobile Phones in Schools guidance (2026) **to be adopted from April 2026**.

### **1. Phone-Free Environment (Mandatory Policy Requirement)**

The school will operate as a mobile phone-free environment by default, prohibiting the use of mobile phones throughout the entire school day, including lessons, transitions, breaktimes and lunchtimes. Anything other than a phone-free environment must be an *exception only*.

- "Our school is a mobile phone-free environment by default. Mobile phones and similar smart devices must not be used, seen or heard at any point during the school day."

### **2. Inclusion of All Smart Technology with Similar Functionality**

The DfE guidance defines mobile phones to include all devices capable of sending/receiving messages or notifications, or recording audio/video (e.g., smartwatches, wearable tech).

- "This policy applies to *all* smart devices with communication/recording functionality (e.g., smartwatches, wearable devices), unless explicitly excepted for SEND or medical needs."

### **3. Consistency of Implementation Across the School**

Ofsted will evaluate how consistently staff and pupils understand and follow the phone-free policy across the day.

- Clear expectations ensuring 100% consistency across all staff and contexts.
- Staff must model adherence by not using personal mobile phones in front of pupils except where necessary.
- Leaders must regularly monitor consistency through walkthroughs, pupil voice, and staff feedback.

### **4. Communication Requirements**

We recognise the importance of clear communication to pupils, parents and staff.

- The mobile phone policy will be communicated through:
  - Website visibility (policies page).
  - Parent newsletters and start-of-year briefings.
  - Pupil assemblies and form-time reminders.
  - Classroom signage and site posters.
- Parents will be informed that the school operates a default phone-free environment and that consistent reinforcement and support of this at home is expected.

### **5. Reasonable Adjustments and Equalities Act Duties**

The DfE stresses the need to make reasonable adjustments for pupils with disabilities, medical needs (e.g., diabetes monitoring), SEND or caring responsibilities.

- Reasonable adjustments may be made in accordance with the Equality Act 2010, with examples such as:
  - Diabetes monitoring via connected apps
  - Emergency access for young carers
  - SEND-related communication needs

## 6. Behaviour Policy Alignment and Clear Sanctions

Mobile phone rules will be integrated within the school's behaviour policy, including proportionate sanctions, confiscation rules, and search powers.

- Explicit link to behaviour policy.
- Clear confiscation procedures (duration, storage, collection).
- Clarification of when searching a device may be permitted, referencing DfE *Searching, Screening and Confiscation*.
- Sanctions must be reasonable, proportionate and consistently applied.

## 7. Rules for Trips, Residential and Sixth Form

DfE guidance allows schools to decide rules for use outside the school day (e.g., residential) while maintaining a strict school-day ban, there will be:

- Clear expectations for:
  - School trips
  - Residential visits
  - Sixth form privileges
- Any permitted use must not undermine the phone-free environment for younger pupils.

## 8. Monitoring and Evaluation

- Leaders must evaluate policy implementation, including:
  - Staff/pupil understanding
  - Patterns of breaches
  - Impact on behaviour, wellbeing and learning
- Evidence will be stored on CPOMs with regards to adherence to the policy and used to inform Trust-level reporting.

## 9. BYOD Clarification (New Requirement)

The DfE states that BYOD schemes must not include mobile phones.

*For schools that use this:*

- "Our Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) arrangements apply only to tablets/laptops. Mobile phones cannot be used as part of any BYOD or digital learning scheme."

## 10. Safeguarding Rationale

Updated guidance emphasises the link between a phone-free environment and reduced disruption, bullying, online harm, and wellbeing risks.

- *“Our no-mobile-phones policy is a core safeguarding measure designed to promote pupils’ safety, wellbeing, and positive behaviour. By maintaining a mobile-phone-free environment throughout the school day, we reduce distractions and support pupils’ ability to engage fully with learning in a calm, focused atmosphere. This approach also helps prevent online harm and image-based abuse, as highlighted in national guidance emphasising the risks associated with smart devices in schools, including messaging, recording and social media misuse.”*
- *“Removing mobile phones from the school day further minimises peer-on-peer issues, such as bullying, intimidation, and inappropriate sharing of content, which the updated guidance notes can be exacerbated by mobile and smart technology. Through this policy, we create a safer, more predictable environment where children are protected from avoidable pressures and digital risks, and where safeguarding remains at the centre of our practice.”*