



Thistly Meadow Primary School

MOBILE PHONE POLICY

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1. Introduction and aims

At Thistly Meadow Primary School, our policy aims to:

- Ensure our environment is mobile phone-free by default
- Ensure the safe, responsible and lawful use of mobile phones, where applicable
- Provide clear guidelines for the use of mobile phones for pupils, 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
- Risk of theft, loss or damage
- Appropriate use of technology for learning purposes

Note: throughout this policy, 'mobile phones' refers to mobile phones and similar devices.

2. Relevant guidance

This policy meets the requirements of section 36 of the [Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act 2026](#), and the Department for Education (DfE)'s [mobile phone guidance](#) and [behaviour guidance](#). Further guidance that should be considered alongside this policy includes [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#), which sets out the expectation that all schools should be **mobile phone-free environments by default**.

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 Staff

All staff (including teachers, support staff and supply staff) are required to actively enforce this policy and challenge any breach of mobile phone restrictions immediately and consistently.

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 Head teacher is responsible for monitoring the policy and its review, and holding staff and pupils 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 pupils

The DfE's mobile phone guidance says that the use of mobile phones should be prohibited throughout the school day. This is the default position.

Pupils should not bring their mobile phones to school unless a request for an exemption has been agreed by the Head teacher. If this is the case, pupils must not use their mobile phones during the school day and their phone must be handed to their class teacher to be kept secure until home time.

Pupils will be taught the risks that are associated with the use of mobile phones, both in school and more broadly, to make sure they understand the decision to prohibit the use of mobile phones throughout the school day. These risks can include a loss of focus in lessons, classroom disruption and an increase in bullying. Pupils will be encouraged to see a mobile-phone free environment as desirable and valuable.

4.1 Use of smartwatches by pupils

The DfE's statutory [mobile phones guidance](#) includes in the term 'mobile phones' all devices with communications and smart technology that the school chooses to include in its 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 smartwatches have wellness and health-related features. Smartwatches are not permitted to be used by pupils in our school.

4.2 Exceptions for special circumstances

The school may permit pupils to use a mobile phone in school, due to exceptional circumstances. A parent/carers will need to apply for an exemption for their child, for instance:

- Pupils travelling to school by themselves or using public transport
- Young carers who need to be contactable
- Pupils with diabetes who use their phones to monitor their blood glucose levels

Any pupils who are given permission must then adhere to the school's acceptable use agreement for mobile phone use (see appendix 1).

5. Breach of policy

If a pupil is in breach of this policy, the mobile phone will be confiscated and parents/carers will be asked to collect it from the school office.

Schools are permitted to confiscate phones from pupils under [sections 91](#) and [94](#) of the Education and Inspections Act 2006)

Staff have the power to search pupils' phones in specific circumstances, as set out in the [DfE's guidance on searching, screening and confiscation](#). The DfE guidance allows staff to search a pupil'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).

Action may be taken under the school's behaviour policy. The school will also consider whether:

- There are any relevant special circumstances (for example, age, religious requirements, special educational needs (SEN), disability)
- The pupil'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 [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#). This will include speaking with the DSL or deputy, who will consider whether pastoral support, an early intervention, or a referral to children's social care is appropriate

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:

- Making of or sharing nudes and semi-nudes including images that are digitally altered or wholly generated using AI (such as 'deepfakes' or 'deep nudes')
- 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 staff

The DfE's mobile phone guidance says that staff should not use their own mobile phone for personal reasons in front of pupils throughout the school day. All schools should be mobile phone-free environments by default: anything other than this should be by exception only.

Use of personal mobile phones must be restricted to non-contact time, and to areas of the school where pupils 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 Head teacher 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 as a point of emergency contact.

6.1 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 Gemini).

6.2 Safeguarding

Staff must not give their personal contact details to parents/carers or pupils, including by 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 pupils.

Staff must not use their personal mobile phones to take photographs or recordings of pupils, their work, or anything else that could identify a pupil. If it's necessary to take photos or recordings as part of a lesson / activity, this must be done using school equipment. Exceptionally, the head teacher may authorise staff to use their personal devices when on residential trips and once the images are uploaded to the school's social media page they are to be deleted.

6.3 Using personal mobiles for work purposes

In some circumstances, it may be appropriate for staff to use personal mobile phones or a similar device during the school day in front of pupils for work. Such circumstances may include, but are not limited to:

- Use of multi-factor authentication
- Emergency evacuations
- Supervising off-site trips
- Supervising residential visits
- Social media content (authorised staff only)

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 pupils, their work, or anything else that could identify a pupil, unless authorised for social media content
- Refrain from using their phones to contact parents/carers. If necessary, contact must be made via the school office
- Staff must secure their personal phones, as well as any work phone provided to them. Failure by staff to do so could result in data breaches.

6.4 Sanctions

Staff that fail to adhere to this policy may face disciplinary action. See the school's staff disciplinary policy for more information.

7. 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 using their mobile phone whilst on school premises.
- Not taking pictures or recordings of pupils, unless it's at a public event (such as a school fair), or of their own child
- Not using phones in lessons, when working with pupils or while children are present

Parents/carers, visitors and volunteers will be reminded of the rules for mobile phone use when they sign in at reception or attend a public event at school.

Parents and carers are encouraged to reinforce and discuss this policy at home as appropriate, including the risks associated with mobile phone use and the benefits of a mobile phone-free environment. More information and support for parents/carers is available from [Smartphone Free Childhood](#) - a movement of families standing together to delay smartphone and social media use.

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.

8. Loss, theft or damage

Pupils authorised to bring their mobile phone to school must make sure that their phone is appropriately labelled, ready to be stored away securely with their class teacher when not in use during the school day.

Pupils must secure their mobile phones as much as possible, including using passwords or pin codes to protect access to the phone's functions.

The school accepts no responsibility for mobile phones that are lost, damaged or stolen on school premises or while pupils are travelling to or from school.

8. Monitoring and review

The school is committed to making sure that this policy has a positive impact on pupils' education, behaviour and welfare. When reviewing the policy, the school will take into account:

- Feedback from parents/carers and pupils
- Feedback from staff
- Records of behaviour and safeguarding incidents
- Relevant advice from the DfE, the local authority and any other relevant organisations

Appendix 1: Exemption request for pupils allowed to bring their phones to school due to exceptional circumstances

PUPIL DETAILS	
Pupil name:	
Year group/class:	
Parent/carer(s) name(s):	

I am requesting my child be allowed to bring their mobile phone to school because they
(*please tick*):

- ☐ Travel to and from school alone
- ☐ Are a young carer
- ☐ Need the phone to support their medical needs
- ☐ Attend a before- or after-school activity where a mobile phone is required to contact parents/carers
- ☐ Other, please state.....

Pupils who bring a mobile phone to school must abide by the school's policy on the use of mobile phones, and its acceptable use agreement.

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

Parent/carer signature: _____ Date_____

FOR SCHOOL USE ONLY	
Authorised by:	
Date:	

Appendix 2: Acceptable use agreement for pupils allowed to bring their phones to school due to exceptional circumstances

Pupil acceptable use agreement

You must follow these rules if you are allowed to bring your mobile phone to school:

1. You must give your phone to your class teacher when you arrive at school and it will be returned at home time.
2. Your phone must be switched off (not just put on 'silent').
3. You must not use your mobile phone anywhere on the school grounds, in the toilets or changing rooms or any other area on the school site. This is to protect the privacy and welfare of other pupils.
4. You cannot take photos or recordings (either video or audio) of school staff or other pupils.
5. Don't share your contact details with people you don't know, and don't share other people's contact details without their consent.
6. Don't share your phone's password with anyone else.
7. Don't use your mobile phone to bully, intimidate or harass anyone or otherwise to act in breach of the school's behaviour policy. This includes bullying, harassing or intimidating pupils or staff by:
 - a. Email
 - b. Text/messaging app
 - c. Social media
8. Rules on bullying, harassment and intimidation apply to how you use your mobile phone even when you aren't in school.
9. Don't use your phone to send or receive anything that may be a criminal offence. For instance, by making or sharing nudes or semi-nudes (including AI-generated images or 'deepfakes')
10. Don't 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. Don't 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.

Pupil signature: _____

Date _____

Parent/carer signature: _____

Date _____

Appendix 3: Mobile phone information slip for visitors

Use of mobile phones and similar devices in our school

Our school is a mobile phone-free environment.

- Please keep your mobile phone on silent/vibrate while on the school grounds
- Please do not use phones where pupils are present. If you must use your phone, you may go to the staffroom
- Do not take photos or recordings of pupils (unless it is your own child, with consent from the class teacher), or staff
- Do not use your phone in lessons, when working with pupils or while children are present

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.

Version	Date	Comment
V1	Date created: 1/9/2026 Review date: September 2029	DfE