



Mobile Phone Policy

Approved By	School Performance Committee
Date Approved	April 2024
Next Review Date	April 2026

Please note that for the purpose of this policy, all internet and messaging enabled personal devices are include under the umbrella of 'mobile phones'.

1. Introduction and aims

At Ludlow CE School we recognise that mobile phones, including smart phones, are an important part of everyday life for our students, parents/carers and staff, as well as the wider school community. In line with DfE guidance and best practice nationally, Ludlow CE School operates a 'Gate-to-gate' mobile phone policy.

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 students, staff, parents/carers, volunteers and visitors
- support the school's other policies, especially those related to child protection and behaviour for learning
- reduce teenage addiction to mobile phones that poses a significant wellbeing risk and is linked to other forms of addiction in later life
- encourage positive off-line social interaction
- encourage strong verbal communication skills.

This policy also aims to address some of the challenges posed by mobile phones in school, such as:

- risks to child protection
- online bullying
- data protection issues
- potential for lesson disruption and lost learning time
- risk of theft, loss, or damage
- inappropriate use of technology inside and outside the classroom.

Links with other policies:

- safeguarding and child protection policy
- behaviour for learning (inc. anti-bullying) policy
- E-Safety policy.

2. Roles and responsibilities

All staff (including teachers, support staff, and supply staff) are responsible for 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 Assistant Headteacher (Pastoral) is responsible for monitoring the policy every year, reviewing it, and holding staff and students accountable for its implementation.

3. Use of mobile phones by staff

3.1. Personal mobile phones

Staff (including volunteers, contractors and anyone else otherwise engaged by the school) are not permitted to make or receive calls, or send messages, while children are present. Use of personal mobile phones must be restricted to non-contact time, and to areas of the school where students are not present e.g., staff room, unused classrooms, etc.

There may be circumstances in which it's appropriate for a member of staff to have use of their phone during contact time. This is normal for SLT and CLT. For other staff, the headteacher will decide on a case-by-case basis whether to allow for special arrangements.

3.2. Data Protection

Staff must not use their personal mobile phones to process personal data, or any other confidential school information.

3.3. Safeguarding

Staff must refrain from giving 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 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/trip/activity, this must be done using school equipment or after explicit permission has been given by the Headteacher.

3.4. 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:

- responding to ongoing behaviour or safeguarding issues
- 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
- not use their phones to take photographs or recordings of students, their work, or anything else which could identify a student without the explicit permission of the Headteacher
- refrain from using their phones to contact parents/carers. If possible, contact should be made via the school phone system. Where a staff member does need to use a personal mobile phone, it is important that they protect the privacy of their personal number by prefixing each call with '141'.

3.5. Work phones

Some members of staff are provided with a mobile phone by the school for work purposes. Only authorised staff are permitted to use school phones, and access to the phone must not be provided to anyone without authorisation.

Staff must:

- only use phone functions for work purposes, including making/receiving calls, sending/receiving emails or other communications, or using the internet
- ensure that communication or conduct linked to the device is appropriate and professional at all times, in line with our staff code of conduct.

3.6. Sanctions

Staff that fail to adhere to this policy may face disciplinary action.

4. Use of mobile phones by students

4.1. Rules for the acceptable use of a mobile phones by students

Students are allowed to bring mobile phones into school. If they choose to do so it is on the understanding that they agree with the following limitations on its use, namely:

- mobile phones must be **switched off** when coming on to the school site and remain off at all times during the school day, including breaks, lunchtimes, before and after school. This includes in classrooms, corridors, and social areas. It is not acceptable for phones merely to be put on silent mode
- the phone must be kept out of sight in a bag during the school day
- the security of a phone will remain the student's responsibility in all lessons including PE lessons
- if asked to do so, content on the phone (e.g., messages, emails, pictures, videos, sound files) will be shown to a teacher
- if a student urgently needs to contact a parent, they may do so using the phone in their CLT's office or via reception.

4.2. Unacceptable use

The school will consider any of the following to be unacceptable use of the mobile phone and a serious breach of the school's Behaviour for Learning Policy resulting in sanctions being taken:

- photographing or filming staff or other students without their knowledge or permission
- photographing or filming in classrooms, offices, toilets, changing rooms and similar areas
- refusing to switch a phone off or handing over the phone at the request of a member of staff
- using the mobile phone outside school hours to intimidate or upset staff and/or students will be considered a breach of these guidelines in the same way as unacceptable use which takes place in school time
- using a mobile phone outside school hours in such a way that it undermines the stability of the school and compromises its ability to fulfil the stated aim of providing 'a clear moral and ethical lead'.

4.3. Sanctions

Note: The school is permitted to confiscate phones from students under sections 91 and 94 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006) and staff have the power to search students' phones, as set out in the DfE's guidance on searching, screening and confiscation. The DfE guidance allows school staff to search a student's phone if you have reason to believe the phone contains pornographic images, or if it is being/has been used to commit an offence or cause personal injury.

Students and parents/carers are notified that appropriate action will be taken against those who are in breach of the acceptable use guidelines, following the school's Behaviour Policy:

- students should be aware that the police can and will be informed if there is a serious misuse of the mobile phone where criminal activity is suspected
- if a student commits an act which causes serious harassment, alarm or distress to another student or member of staff, the ultimate sanction may be permanent exclusion.
- School will consider the impact on the victim of the act in deciding the sanction.

Where a phone has been used for an unacceptable purpose:

- the headteacher or a designated staff member will have the right to view files stored in confiscated equipment. If necessary, the school will seek the cooperation of parents/carers in deleting any files which are in clear breach of these guidelines, unless they are being preserved as evidence of a criminal offence
- if required, evidence of the offence or suspected offence will be preserved, preferably by confiscation of the device and keeping it secure.
- school will consider whether an incident should be reported to the local authority for safeguarding consideration
- the designated staff member should monitor repeat offences to see if there is any pattern in the perpetrator or the victim which needs further investigation.

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:

- the sharing of nude/semi-nude images (also known as 'sexting')
- 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, sexual orientation or other characteristic protected by the Equalities Act 2010.

4.4. Confiscation procedure

If a mobile phone is confiscated, then:

- If a phone is confiscated, on the first occasion it will be returned to the student at the end of the school day from Assistant Headteacher (Pastoral). On the second occasion it will only be returned to a parent/carer at a meeting with a senior member of staff (CLT/SLT)
- the confiscation will be recorded in the school behaviour log for monitoring purposes
- the school will ensure that confiscated equipment is stored in such a way that it is returned to the correct person
- where a student persistently breaches the expectations, the headteacher may impose an outright ban from bringing a mobile phone to school. This may be for a fixed period or a permanent ban.

5. Use of mobile phones by parents/carers, volunteers and visitors

Parents/carers, visitors and volunteers (including trustees 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's a public event, 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 4 above.

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.

6. Loss, theft or damage

Students must secure their 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.

Confiscated phones will be stored securely.

Lost phones should be handed in to reception. The school will then attempt to reunite them with their owner.

7. 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 teachers
- records of behaviour and safeguarding incidents
- relevant advice from the Department for Education, the local authority, DHMAT or other relevant organisations.

8. Medical exceptions

The school is committed to ensuring that this policy does not disadvantage any student on the grounds of medical need. We are aware that some students use Apps on mobile phones to monitor and control medical conditions, e.g. blood glucose regulation for diabetics. If your child has a medical need that requires them to use their mobile phone, please contact their CLT who will consult with the Assistant Headteacher (Pastoral/Behaviour) who, when appropriate, will issue a medical exemption for mobile phone use. This exemption is for medical use only and should be available to show staff any time the phone is used. Any other unauthorized use of the mobile phone will be dealt with as a breach of this policy.