The Rutland Learning Trust

Providing outstanding education for all pupils – today and tomorrow!

First -class education and care that allows every child to achieve their potential, regardless of location, prior attainment or background.

By Working Together
Sustaining Excellence
Transforming Lives

Mobile Devices Policy

Including mobile phones, smart watches and any similar mobile media device

Why is this required?

Safeguarding and good practice

What changes have been made?

Updated to reflect February 2024 DFE Guidance and also new technology.

What is the intended impact of this policy?

Date: October 2025

Review date: October 2026 (term 2)

Data will be processed to be in line with our requirements and protections set out in the UK General Data Protection Regulation, Data Protection Act as amended by the Data (Use and Access) Act 2025.

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1. Introduction and aims

Within The Rutland Learning Trust we recognise that mobile devices, including mobile phones and smart watches are an important part of everyday life for our pupils, parents/carers and staff, as well as the wider school community.

New non-statutory guidance was published by the Department for Education, in February 2024, on mobile phones in schools.

This guidance states that as part of their behaviour policy all schools:

> 'should develop a mobile phone policy that prohibits the use of mobile phones and other smart technology with similar functionality to mobile phones (for example the ability to send and/or receive notifications or messages via mobile phone networks or the ability to record audio and/or video) throughout the school day, including during lessons, the time between lessons, breaktimes and lunchtime.'

Our policy aims to:

- Promote, and set an example for, safe and responsible use of such devices
- Set clear guidelines for the use of mobile devices for pupils, staff, parents/carers 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 devices 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

2. Roles and responsibilities

2.1 Staff

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 Headteacher is responsible for monitoring the policy and holding staff and pupils accountable for its implementation.

3. Use of mobile devices including phones, smart watches and smart glasses by staff

3.1 Personal mobile devices

Staff (including volunteers, contractors and anyone else otherwise engaged by the school) are not permitted to make or receive calls, or send texts, while children are present. Use of personal mobile devices 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 is appropriate for a member of staff to have use of their phone during contact time. For instance:

- 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.

If special arrangements are not deemed necessary, school staff can use the school office number as a point of emergency contact.

3.2 Data protection

Staff must not use their personal mobile devices 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 Bard).

3.3 Safeguarding

Staff must refrain from giving their personal contact details to parents/carers or pupils, 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 pupils.

Staff must not use their mobile phones to take photographs or recordings of pupils, their work, or anything else which could identify a pupil. If it is necessary to take photos or recordings as part of a lesson/school trip/activity, this must be done using school equipment.

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 aren't limited to:

- 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 pupils, their work, or anything else which could identify a pupil
- Refrain from using their phones to contact parents/carers. If necessary, contact must be made via the school office

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.

See the school's staff disciplinary policy for more information.

4. Use of mobile phones or smart media devices by pupils

The Rutland Learning Trust discourages the use of mobile phones by children. Although mobile phones have become part of our everyday lives they can be a distraction in school. Used incorrectly, they can be a tool for bullying and those devices capable of recording images are potentially invasive of others' privacy.

Therefore, mobile phones must not be brought into school unless special circumstances have been agreed in advance with the school. The wearing of smart watches is also discouraged within Rutland Learning Trust schools. Smart watches can be used only to tell the time. All other functions must be disabled when pupils are at school, on the school premises or on educational visits.

Smart glasses are not to be worn on, or brought onto, school premises in any circumstances.

Our schools acknowledge however a parent's right to allow their child to bring a mobile phone or smart watch to school if they walk to and from school without adult supervision. We do not permit pupils bringing phones in year groups below Year 5, as we would not expect these children to be walking to and from school unaccompanied.

Should parents wish their child to bring a phone or smart device into school they must complete the form at Appendix 1, and have this approved, before their child starts bringing a mobile phone or other smart media device into school.

When a child needs to bring a mobile phone into school this must be left in the school office or handed in to their teacher at the start of the day and collected at the end of the day. Responsibility for collecting the phone at the end of the day rests with the child.

Devices should be clearly marked so that each pupil and office staff can identify them.

Parents are advised that schools accept no liability for the loss or damage to phones which are brought into school or on to the school grounds.

Where a pupil is found by a member of staff during the school day to be using a phone, the phone will be confiscated from the pupil, handed to a member of the Senior Leadership Team. (Schools are permitted to confiscate phones from pupils under sections 91 and 94 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006). The pupil may collect the phone at the end of the school day. Parents will be informed of inappropriate use and pupil's right to bring a phone to school will be withdrawn.

If a pupil is found to have taken photographs or video footage with a mobile device of either other pupils or teachers, this will be regarded as a serious offence and the pupil will receive a consequence in line with the school's Behaviour Policy.

If images of other pupils or teachers have been taken, the phone will not be returned to the pupil until the images have been removed by the pupil in the presence of a senior teacher, and the right to bring a phone into school will be withdrawn.

Please note that school staff have the power 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 the school 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.

Pupils are not entitled to log on to the school network using their phones or other personal electronic devices.

Should parents need to contact pupils or vice versa during the school day, this should be done via the usual school procedure of contacting the school office via phone or email.

5. Use of mobile devices 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 or accompanying children on an educational visit.

This means:

- Not taking pictures or recordings of pupils, unless it is 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 pupils
- Not using smart watches or glasses on school premises to record or video any school activities including trips, plays, concerts or sports events.

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 or other mobile devices to make contact with other parents/carers
- Take photos or recordings of pupils, their work, or anything else which could identify a pupil
- Post any photographs or recordings of any sort on social media.

Parents/carers or volunteers supervising trips are also responsible for enforcing the school's policy for pupils 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 his/her personal mobile during the school day.

6. Loss, theft or damage

Pupils bringing phones to school must ensure that phones are appropriately labelled.

Pupils 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 devices 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.

7. Monitoring and review

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

- Feedback from parents/carers and pupils
- Feedback from teachers
- Records of behaviour and safeguarding incidents
- Relevant advice from the Department for Education, the local authority or other relevant organisations

Appendix 1: Permission form allowing a pupil to bring their phone to school

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

The school has agreed to allow [pupil name] to bring their mobile phone to school because they:

- Travel to and from school alone
- Are a young carer
- Are attending a school trip or residential where use of mobile phones will be allowed
- Need the phone for an educational activity during class time
- Attend before or after-school where a mobile phone is required for the activity, or to contact parents/carers

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

The school reserves the right revoke permission if pupils do not abide by the policy.

Parent/carer signature: _____

Pupil signature: _____

FOR SCHOOL USE ONLY	
Authorised by:	
Date:	

Appendix 2: Template mobile phone information slip for visitors

Use of mobile phones in our school

- 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 staff room
- Do not take photos or recordings of pupils (unless it is your own child), or staff
- Do not use your phone in lessons, or when working with pupils
- The use of other smart devices, eg smart watches or glasses, on school premises to record or video any school activities including lessons, trips, plays, concerts or sports events is prohibited.

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.