



Comberton Primary School

Mobile Devices Policy

Date policy last reviewed: New Policy

Signed by:

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Contents:

Statement of intent

1. [Legal framework](#)
2. [Roles and responsibilities](#)
3. [Ownership and responsibility](#)
4. [Acceptable use](#)
5. [Unacceptable use](#)
6. [Adaptations and reasonable adjustments](#)
7. [Cyberbullying](#)
8. [Searching pupils](#)
9. [Sanctions](#)
10. [Staff on School Premises](#)
11. [Staff Offsite](#)
12. [Parents and Visitors](#)
13. [Whole School Events](#)
14. [Contractors and Visiting Workers](#)
15. [Monitoring and review](#)

Statement of intent

Mobile phones, tablets and other personal electronic devices have become widely available and accessible to pupils. This policy is designed to prohibit the use of mobile phones and similar smart technology throughout the school day, including break and lunch times.

[Comberton Primary School](#) accepts that personal mobile phones and tablets are often given to pupils by their parents to ensure their safety and personal security; however, such devices pose inherent risks and may jeopardise the learning environment.

As a school, we must strike a balance between personal safety and a suitable educational setting. We understand that parents may wish for their child to carry a mobile phone for their personal safety, whilst pupils may wish to bring additional devices to school for other reasons. This policy establishes how personal electronic devices should be used by pupils and staff in school to ensure both personal safety and an appropriate learning environment.

Personal electronic devices include, but are not limited to the following items:

- Mobile phones
- Smart watches
- Personal digital assistants (PDAs)
- Handheld entertainment systems, e.g. video game consoles, iPods
- Portable internet devices, e.g. tablets, laptops
- Wireless handheld technologies or portable information technology systems, e.g. devices used for word processing, wireless internet access, image capture and/or recording, sound recording, and information transmitting, receiving and/or storing

1. Legal framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory and good practice guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- DfE 'Mobile phones in schools'
- DfE 'Communicating your policy for prohibiting the use of mobile phones in schools to parents'
- DfE 'Behaviour in Schools'
- DfE 'Keeping children safe in education 2025'
- DfE 'Searching, screening and confiscation at school'
- Data Protection Act 2018
- The UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR)
- Voyeurism (Offences) Act 2019
- Protection of Children Act 1978
- Sexual Offences Act 2003
- DfE 'Cyberbullying: Advice for headteachers and school staff'

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Anti-bullying Policy
- Online Safety Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Searching, Screening and Confiscation Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Complaints Procedures Policy
- Social Media Policy
- Child-on-child Abuse Policy
- Behaviour and Relationships Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Records Management Policy

2. Roles and responsibilities

The governing board will be responsible for:

- The implementation of the policy and procedures.
- Evaluating the effectiveness of the policy and procedures.
- Ensuring that the policy, as written, does not discriminate on any grounds.
- Reviewing the policy annually.

The headteacher will be responsible for:

- Handling complaints regarding this policy as outlined in the school's Complaints Procedures Policy.
- The day-to-day implementation and management of the policy.
- Communicating this policy to the relevant staff members and the wider school community.
- Communicating what devices can be brought to school and when they can and cannot be used.
- Deciding how best to achieve a mobile phone-free school environment.

Staff members will be responsible for:

- Negotiating incidents of cyberbullying in conjunction with the headteacher, in line with the Anti-bullying Policy and the Behaviour and Relationships Policy.
- Applying this policy consistently and proportionately, including confiscating devices where appropriate.
- Reporting any safeguarding concerns to the DSL, or deputy, where misuse indicates risk of harm.
- Setting a positive example to pupils in the use of mobile phones.
- Avoiding use of their mobile phones in front of pupils for any non-work related issues.
- Teaching pupils about the risks associated with mobile phones, other devices and social media, both in school and more broadly.

The DSL will be responsible for:

- Initiating and managing responses to incidents of upskirting with relevant staff members and in line with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.
- Managing all safeguarding concerns in relation to the use of mobile devices
- Liaising with and reporting the relevant information to children's social care and/or the police, when it is necessary to do so.

Pupils are responsible for adhering to the provisions outlined in this policy.

3. Ownership and responsibility

Pupils are responsible for their own belongings. The school accepts no responsibility for replacing property that is lost, stolen or damaged either on school premises or travelling to and from school, and at school events.

Staff will be protected against liability in any proceedings brought against them for any loss or damage to personal devices that have been confiscated as an appropriate sanction, provided that they have acted lawfully.

Pupils are responsible for replacing school property they lose, damage or steal, including electronic devices.

Pupils and staff should enable a personal PIN or passcode on all the devices they bring to school to protect their personal data, images and videos in the event that the device is lost, stolen or accessed by an unauthorised person.

4. Acceptable use

Where pupils are bringing personal electronic devices into school, they will be expected to make their parents aware of this.

Personal devices will not be used at any point during the school day, including during break and lunch times, unless an agreed exception applies. Where an agreed exception is in place, use of a personal device will be limited strictly to the specific purpose outlined within that exception and will be subject to any conditions set by the school.

5. Unacceptable use

Pupils will be encouraged to avoid bringing phones to school; however, if phones are brought to school they will be switched off and stored securely in the box provided by class teachers at the beginning of the school day, unless an agreed exception applies.

Unless express permission is granted by a member of SLT or adaptations and reasonable adjustments apply, mobile devices will not be seen, heard, or accessed at any time during the school day by pupils.

Pupils will be able to access their personal devices when travelling to and from school; however, they should not be used to arrange travel during the course of the school day. Any changes to travel arrangements should be organised through parents/carers with the school office, who will communicate this to pupils.

Staff members will be required to model expectations surrounding the use of personal devices when they are in front of pupils throughout the school day, and only use their personal devices where required for work or safeguarding purposes.

Staff and pupils will adhere to the Social Media Policy at all times.

Files will not be sent between mobile devices, and Bluetooth and Wi-Fi functions will be disabled while on school premises.

If pupils fall ill during school hours, they will not use their mobile device to contact parents; this will be communicated through the school office.

Under no circumstances will personal electronic devices be taken into assessments. Devices will be kept with members of staff. Under no circumstances will mobile devices be used in changing rooms or toilets.

Personal electronic devices will not be plugged into outlets on the school premises without the express permission of the headteacher, and they will have an up-to-date portable appliance test (PAT).

Staff will not give out their personal contact details to pupils. If correspondence is needed between staff members and pupils for homework or exams, staff should provide their school contact details.

Under the Voyeurism (Offences) Act 2019, the act known as “upskirting” is an offence. Any incidents will not be tolerated by the school. Despite the name, anyone (including both pupils and teachers) of any gender, can be a victim of upskirting.

A “specified purpose” is namely:

- Obtaining sexual gratification (either for themselves or for the person they are enabling to view the victim’s genitals, buttocks or underwear)
- To humiliate, distress or alarm the victim

Any incidents of upskirting will be reported to the DSL and handled in accordance with the school’s Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

6. Adaptations and reasonable adjustments

The school will comply with its legal duty to make reasonable adjustments with regard to this policy where necessary. Adaptations may be made in exceptional circumstances and in response to a pupil’s specific needs.

The school will not prevent pupils from using their mobile phones in order to manage their medical condition effectively, e.g. if a pupil is using a monitoring app on their phone to manage their diabetes.

Beyond these specific duties, the school recognises that a need for mobile phone access for some pupils may depend on their individual circumstances. The school will allow limited flexibility for these pupils where an agreed exception is required in the best interests of the pupil’s safety and welfare, for example where a pupil is a young carer.

Where a pupil has an agreed adaptation or reasonable adjustment that requires access to a mobile device, this will be permitted only for the specific purpose and within the limits set out in the agreed plan.

7. Cyberbullying

All personal electronic devices will be used in line with our Online Safety Policy.

Incidents of cyberbullying will be dealt with and reported in line with the Anti-bullying Policy and the Behaviour and Relationships Policy.

As part of the school’s ongoing commitment to the prevention of cyberbullying, regular teaching and discussion about online safety will take place as part of PSHRE and computing lessons.

8. Searching pupils

School pupils have a right for their private life to be respected under article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR). This right is not absolute, and the school can interfere with this right as long as it is justified, proportionate, and aligns with the powers to search in the Education Act 1996.

All searches will be conducted in line with the school's Searching, Screening and Confiscation Policy.

The headteacher, and other authorised staff members, will have the power to search a pupil or their possessions where they have reasonable grounds to suspect that a pupil is in possession of a prohibited item. Mobile phones and similar devices will be deemed as prohibited items that may be searched for in line with the Behaviour and Relationships Policy.

In all cases the authorised member of staff will always:

- Seek the co-operation of the pupil before conducting a search.
- Ensure the pupil understands the reason for the search and how it will be conducted.
- Give the pupil the opportunity to ask any questions so that their agreement is informed.
- Have due regard to the DfE's '[Searching, screening and confiscation](#)' guidance.

Staff may search a pupil's outer clothing, pockets, possessions, desks or lockers. Staff conducting a search must not require the pupil to remove any clothing other than outer clothing - outer clothing means any item of clothing that is not worn wholly next to the skin or immediately over a garment that is being worn as underwear and includes hats, shoes, boots or scarves. Possessions means any goods over which the pupil has or appears to have control - this includes desks, lockers and bags.

A staff member may ask a pupil to show them what they are doing on their mobile phone or tablet if they reasonably believe that the pupil is using the device to cause harm. If it is judged reasonable, the staff member may inspect the files or data on a pupil's electronic device and delete them if necessary.

Staff members will ensure they have a good reason to examine and delete data on a pupil's electronic device. When determining a good reason to examine data, staff members will ensure they reasonably suspect that the data has been, or could be, used to cause harm, undermine the safe environment of the school and disrupt teaching, or be used to commit an offence.

When determining a good reason to delete data, staff members will consider whether the material found may constitute evidence relating to a suspected offence and if so, choose not to delete the data. The data may be deleted if it is found likely to cause harm to any person, and the pupil and/or parent refuses to delete the data themselves.

If a search uncovers a device that is being used to cause harm, or which contains prohibited material such as pornography, a staff member can confiscate the device. If a staff member finds child pornography, it must be given to the police as soon as reasonably practicable. Where staff find stolen items like mobile devices, they must be given to the police as soon as reasonably practicable.

If possible, the staff member conducting the search will be the same sex as the pupil being searched. A witness to the search must be present.

Pupils are required to comply with any request to check their electronic device.

Pupils are required to comply with any request to disable the screen lock function of their electronic device and show any staff member what they are doing. Any pupil who refuses to comply with these requests will be disciplined in line with the Behaviour and Relationships Policy.

9. Sanctions

The school will apply sanctions for breaches of this policy in a consistent and proportionate manner, in line with the school's Behaviour and Relationships Policy.

Where this policy is clearly breached, for example where a device is used, seen, or heard ringing, staff will feel confident to confiscate mobile phones or similar devices as a disciplinary penalty. Confiscated devices may be retained for a proportionate length of time, as determined by the Headteacher and in consideration of the circumstances, including the pupil's age, SEND, and any agreed exceptions or reasonable adjustments.

Additional sanctions may include other disciplinary measures in accordance with the Behaviour and Relationships Policy.

Where a breach gives cause to suspect a pupil may be suffering, or may be at risk of, harm, staff will follow the school's safeguarding procedures and report concerns to the DSL.

Confiscated personal electronic devices will be locked away securely.

Bullying via personal electronic devices will be dealt with in line with the school's Anti-bullying Policy.

10. Staff on School Premises

Staff are required to place their mobile phones in a place that would reasonably be deemed as secure and inaccessible by pupils. Staff must not use their personal mobile phones to process personal data, or any other confidential school information. Smart watches can be worn by staff in school but must not be used for anything other than telling time. Staff are not permitted to use their mobile phone, or have it readily available for use, whilst in the vicinity of children, regardless of contact/non-contact times.

Staff are permitted to use their mobile 'phones and to access additional features of their smart watches e.g. for health reasons during breaks but only when completely away from children e.g. the staffroom, empty classroom. Legitimate recordings and photographs should be captured using school equipment such as cameras and iPads unless agreed with the Headteacher for specific purpose.

Staff should report any usage of mobile devices that causes them concern to the Headteacher, or in the case of the Headteacher causing concern, report this to the Chair of Governors.

When unavoidable, staff may arrange to receive urgent calls on the school's phone during the school day. Permission for this to happen should be sought from the Head Teacher or Deputy Head Teacher prior to arrangements being made with office staff, who as appropriate will notify the member of staff if a call is received. Alternatively, and by mutually agreed arrangements with the Headteacher, in such a case of emergency, it may be deemed appropriate for a staff member to be able to receive a call on their mobile. This would be taken outside of the classroom and only if there was adequate supervision remaining in the classroom for pupils.

When contact is needed with parents, staff should use the school phone as much as possible. When contacting parents in an emergency staff must ensure 141 is used before any call is made to protect the staff member's privacy.

The exemptions to all of the above clauses are the Head Teacher and Deputy Head Teacher who should, whenever possible, be in possession of their mobile phones so that they may act and make appropriate

contacts in case of an emergency, however, this should be done away from children and visitors. They can use their personal devices in situations where school devices are not available to hand and agree to remove pictures as soon as possible. Staff are informed of this policy upon Induction.

11. Staff offsite (visits, trips etc.)

All offsite activities require staff to be in possession of fully charged mobile phones to be used in the event of any of the circumstances outlined within the risk assessment occurring.

It is good practice for the visit leader to contact the Head Teacher or Deputy Headteacher when the party have safely arrived at their destination and again as they are departing.

Occasionally, such as in the event of traffic delaying return, it is necessary for the visit leader to contact the Head Teacher or Deputy Headteacher in other circumstances. In the event of an emergency, the visit leader may need to contact a parent. The office should do this whenever possible, if this is not possible e.g. after-hours trip, the visit leader would call using 141 to protect their personal number.

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

12. Parents and Visitors

Visitors are not permitted to use their mobile phones when in contact with the children in the school building, they should be kept out of sight of children at all times. Visitors are not permitted to use their phones as recording devices or cameras within the school.

Should they need to take or make a call, visitors are asked to be discreet and respectful, moving completely away from the children outside the building. Staff must not hesitate to ensure that this happens, even if a call has already begun.

Staff should report on any usage of mobile devices by parents or visitors that causes them concern to the DSL or Headteacher.

On the playground, staff will intervene if it was felt that a parent was using a phone to take photos or video footage of parents, staff or children on the school site.

13. Whole School Events (assemblies, productions etc.)

Prior to any event commencing and along with other information, parents and visitors are informed of the following:

- Parents and visitors are expected to ensure that phones are turned off or made silent during school events.
- Parents and visitors are requested not to post any photos taken during any school event on any social network site if those images capture any child but their own.
- They are informed that doing so could put other children at risk.

14. Contractors and Visiting Workers

On entry and signing in to the school, contractors and workmen should be requested to keep mobile phones in their pockets/bags and not use them whilst children are anywhere in the vicinity. If it is necessary for contractors/workmen to have their mobile phones to implement their role effectively and they are in the vicinity of children, then they are to be supervised.

It is the responsibility of all members of staff to be vigilant, challenging inappropriate behaviour if they feel it appropriate to do so, but always to report any concerns to a senior member of staff and/or follow safeguarding procedures as required.

15. Monitoring and review

This policy is reviewed every 2 years by the headteacher and DSL.

Any changes to this policy will be communicated to members of staff, parents and pupils by the headteacher.

The scheduled review date for this policy is April 2028.