



Pupil Mobile Phone Policy

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At St Edmund's we recognise that mobile phones and other personal electronic devices form part of everyday life. However, the school operates a restrictive approach to safeguard pupils, support wellbeing, and maintain high standards of behaviour and learning.

In line with Department for Education guidance, the school operates a mobile phone-free environment by default, with exceptions granted only in limited and clearly defined circumstances.

Our policy aims to:

- Promote safe and responsible phone use
- Protect pupils from safeguarding risks
- Prevent disruption to learning
- Reduce the risk of theft, loss or damage

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

Relevant guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the Department for Education's non-statutory mobile phone and behaviour guidance. It should be read alongside *Keeping Children Safe in Education* and the Behaviour Policy. This policy forms part of the school's safeguarding and behaviour framework.

Roles and responsibilities

Staff

All staff (including teachers and support staff) are responsible for consistently enforcing this policy. Staff must act immediately where there are concerns about misuse of a device, particularly where safeguarding may be at risk. Where children are on a school activity they should not have access to their mobile phone unless in exceptional circumstances. The Deputy Head is responsible for reviewing the policy every year.

Use of mobile phones by pupils

Pupils must not have access to a mobile phone during the school day. Seniors do not require mobile phones for village visits. Where a pupil needs to bring a mobile phone to school because they travel independently, have separate living arrangements, or travel on a school minibus, prior written permission must be obtained from the Deputy Head. Requests should be made by parents or carers via email to s.barnes@saintedmunds.co.uk. Any approved device must be handed in on arrival and may only be collected at the end of the school day.

Where permission is granted, devices must not be visible on the school site and must be switched off and handed in at the start of the day. Pupils may only collect their mobile device when they are leaving school at the end of the day (or earlier if leaving school during the day). Pupils must not use their mobile phones at any point during the school day except in exceptional circumstances.

Permission may be withdrawn if this policy is not followed.

Use of smartwatches by pupils

Any smartwatch with communication, recording or internet capability is not permitted in school and will be treated as a mobile phone under this policy.

Devices must not:

- be capable of sending or receiving messages or calls
- be able to connect to the internet (including Wi-Fi, Bluetooth or mobile data such as 3G, 4G or 5G)
- have the ability to take photographs or record audio or video

The school reserves the right to check any device where there is a reasonable safeguarding or behavioural concern.

Smartwatches are high-value items and are brought to school at the owner's risk. The school accepts no responsibility for loss, damage or theft.

Exceptions for special circumstances

In exceptional circumstances, including medical needs, the school may permit a pupil to use a mobile phone during the school day. Such requests will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Parents or carers wishing to request permission should contact the Deputy Head.

Use of mobile phones on school trips

This policy applies to school trips that take place during the normal school day. Mobile phones are not permitted unless explicitly authorised by a member of staff.

For residential visits or trips taking place outside the normal school day, specific guidance will be issued. This may include restrictions such as supervised use or the collection of devices at certain times (for example overnight).

Sanctions, Confiscation and Examination of Electronic Devices

Mobile phones and other prohibited electronic devices will be confiscated if they are brought onto the school site without permission or used in breach of this policy. A device will be confiscated if it is seen, heard, or reasonably suspected to be in a pupil's possession or in use during the school day.

Pupils must immediately hand over a device when instructed by a member of staff. Refusal to hand over a device is treated as a serious breach of school rules.

Confiscated devices will normally be returned to the pupil at the end of the school day.

In cases of repeated breaches or more serious incidents, the school may retain the device for a longer period. In such circumstances, the device will only be returned to a parent or carer. Any extended confiscation will always be reasonable, proportionate, and clearly explained to the pupil and their parent or carer.

Where, during a search, a device is found that is prohibited by school rules or reasonably suspected of being used to commit an offence or to cause harm or property damage, the person conducting the search may examine its data or files if there is a valid reason. They may also delete data or files where justified, unless the device is to be handed over to the police.

The misuse of mobile devices to capture, store or share personal data or images is a serious safeguarding and data protection concern.

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:

- Youth-produced sexual imagery
- Upskirting
- Threats of violence or assault
- Abusive calls, emails, social media posts or texts directed at someone on the basis of ethnicity, religious beliefs or sexual orientation

If a prohibited device is seized and there are reasonable grounds to believe it contains evidence of an offence, it must be given to the police as soon as reasonably practicable. Any material suspected to be evidence of an offence, or any pornographic image of a child or extreme pornographic image, must not be deleted before handing the device to the police.

If no material is found that is suspected to be evidence of an offence and the device is not handed to the police, the staff member may decide whether to delete any files or data or retain the device as evidence of a breach of school rules.

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 Part I of Keeping Children Safe in Education.

Loss, theft or damage

Pupils bringing mobile phones to school must ensure that the phones are clearly labelled with their name and secured appropriately.

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 pupils are travelling to and from school.

If a phone is confiscated, it will be stored in a secure location until collection. Lost phones should be returned to the school office. The school will then attempt to contact the owner.

Monitoring and review

The school will monitor the implementation of this policy to ensure its effectiveness in supporting safeguarding, behaviour and pupil wellbeing. This policy is reviewed annually.

Reviewed by SEB - July 2026