Mobile Phone Policy

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Statement of intent

Lingfield Education Trust is committed to providing calm, safe and disruption-free learning environments in which all pupils can thrive.

The Trust recognises that mobile phones and other personal smart devices can provide benefits for communication and safety when children are travelling to and from school. However, unrestricted access to such devices during the school day can contribute to distraction, reduced engagement with learning, cyberbullying, safeguarding concerns, child-on-child abuse, online harms and the inappropriate creation or sharing of images and content.

The Trust therefore adopts the principle that all schools should be mobile phone-free environments throughout the school day in line with Dfe Statutory Guidance June 2026. Pupils must not have access to personal mobile phones or similar smart devices during lessons, social times, movement around school or other activities unless an agreed exception applies.

Recognising the differing contexts, age ranges, buildings, staffing structures and operational arrangements across schools within the Trust, each school will develop and publish local procedures detailing how devices are stored and managed during the school day.

This policy establishes the Trust-wide expectations and minimum standards that all schools will follow.

1. Legal framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and guidance including, but not limited to:

- Education Act 1996
- Education Act 2002
- Equality Act 2010
- Children and Families Act 2014
- Data Protection Act 2018
- UK GDPR
- Data (Use and Access) Act 2025
- DfE (2026) *Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026*
- DfE (2026) *Mobile Phones in Schools*
- DfE (2024) *Behaviour in Schools*
- DfE *Searching, Screening and Confiscation*
- DfE *Teaching Online Safety in Schools*
- UKCIS guidance on sharing nudes and semi-nudes

This policy operates in conjunction with:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Online Safety Policy
- Child-on-child Abuse Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- SEND Policy
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy

2. Roles and responsibilities

The governors will be responsible for:

- Ensuring schools implement arrangements consistent with statutory guidance.
- Monitoring compliance through safeguarding and behaviour monitoring.
- Reviewing this policy annually.

Headteachers will be responsible for:

- Implementing this policy within their school.
- Determining local storage arrangements.
- Ensuring pupils, staff and parents understand expectations.
- Publishing local procedures.
- Monitoring compliance and responding to breaches.

DSLs will be responsible for:

- Ensuring safeguarding risks associated with mobile phones are addressed.
- Monitoring incidents linked to mobile phone misuse.
- Identifying safeguarding concerns which may require intervention.
- Supporting vulnerable pupils requiring individual arrangements.

Staff will be responsible for:

- Consistently enforcing school procedures.
- Modelling appropriate use of technology.
- Reporting concerns relating to mobile phone misuse.
- Following school procedures regarding confiscation and safeguarding.

Pupils will be responsible for:

- Following school expectations.
- Handing in or storing devices as required.
- Using devices appropriately when permitted.
- Reporting concerns relating to online behaviour or misuse.

3. Mobile phone-free school environment

For the purpose of this policy, "mobile phone" includes:

- Mobile phones
- Smartphones
- Smart watches capable of communication or internet access
- Devices capable of recording audio, images or video
- Devices capable of sending or receiving messages or notifications
- Similar smart technology identified by the school

Pupils must not use personal devices during:

- Lessons
- Lesson transitions
- Breaktime
- Lunchtime
- Tutor time
- Assemblies
- Internal examinations
- Detentions

unless a specific exemption has been approved.

4. School specific arrangements

Our school's arrangements require any pupil who brings a mobile phone onto the school site to hand it directly to their class teacher on arrival. The class teacher will then place the device in a locked cupboard within their classroom to ensure it is stored securely throughout the school day. Once the phone has been secured, the class teacher will notify both the Head of School (HoS) and Executive Headteacher (EHT) by email so that there is a clear record of the device being held on site.

At the end of the school day, the phone will be returned directly to the pupil by the class teacher. For late arrivals, pupils must hand their phone to the class teacher immediately upon entering school. If a pupil leaves school early, the phone will be returned by the class teacher or an authorised member of staff before departure. Any unclaimed devices or lost property will be reported to the school office and managed in line with the school's lost property procedures. For educational visits, mobile phones should not be brought unless expressly authorised by the Headteacher, in which case specific storage and collection arrangements will be communicated in advance.

5. Security and Storage of devices

Where pupils bring mobile phones to school:

- Devices must be switched off before entering the school site or at a point determined by the school.
- Devices must be placed into the school's approved storage system.
- Devices must remain inaccessible throughout the school day.

The Trust accepts no liability for loss, theft or damage to personal devices unless negligence can be demonstrated.

Parents and pupils bring devices onto site at their own risk.

Schools should take reasonable steps to provide secure storage arrangements.

6. Expectations for pupils

Pupils will:

- Follow local school procedures.
- Store devices appropriately.
- Use devices only when authorised.
- Respect school expectations regarding online safety.

Pupils will not:

- Access personal devices during the school day.
- Circumvent storage arrangements.
- Use secondary devices to bypass school procedures.
- Record staff or pupils without permission.
- Share images, videos or recordings without consent.
- Use devices to harass, bully, intimidate or exploit others.

Any misuse will be dealt with in line ith the school's Behaviour, Anti-bullying and/or Child Protection and Safeguarding Policies.

7. Expectations of Staff

Staff should:

- Consistently enforce this policy.
- Avoid personal mobile phone use in front of pupils except where professionally necessary in line with the AUP.
- Use school systems for communication wherever possible.
- Follow safeguarding and data protection requirements.

Staff will not use personal devices to:

- Communicate with pupils.
- Store pupil information.
- Capture images of pupils.

unless specifically authorised in line with Trust policies.

8. Expectations of Parents/Carers

Parents and carers play a vital role in supporting the school's approach.

Parents should:

- Familiarise themselves with local arrangements.
- Reinforce expectations at home.
- Contact the school office if urgent communication is required.

Pupils should not be contacted directly during the school day unless exceptional circumstances apply.

The school office will facilitate communication where appropriate.

9. Safeguarding Considerations (in line with Online Safety and Child Protection and Safeguarding Policies)

The Trust recognises that mobile phones can be associated with safeguarding risks including:

- Cyberbullying.
- Child-on-child abuse.
- Online grooming.
- Child sexual exploitation.
- Child criminal exploitation.
- Sharing of nude or semi-nude images.
- AI-generated sexual images.
- Recording or sharing harmful content.
- Exposure to inappropriate online content.

Where misuse raises safeguarding concerns, staff will follow the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and consult the DSL immediately.

Mobile phone incidents will be assessed on a case-by-case basis.

10. Searching, screening and confiscation

Headteachers and authorised staff have statutory powers to search pupils and confiscate items in accordance with legislation and DfE guidance.

Schools may identify mobile phones and smart devices as items that may be searched for where there are reasonable grounds.

Confiscation may be used where pupils breach school expectations.

Confiscation arrangements will be proportionate, reasonable and consistent with the school's behaviour policy.

11. Reasonable Adjustments and Exceptional circumstances

The Trust recognises its duties under the Equality Act 2010 and the Children and Families Act 2014.

Some pupils may require access to mobile phones for:

- Medical conditions.
- Disability-related support.
- Assistive technology.
- Young carer responsibilities.
- Specific safeguarding needs.

Requests will be considered individually.

Where an adaptation is approved, schools will establish:

- Specific purpose of use.
- Specific location.
- Appropriate supervision.
- Documented arrangements.

Flexible arrangements do not exempt pupils from all restrictions.

12. Educational and Residential Visits

Headteachers may vary arrangements during:

- Day visits
- Sporting fixtures
- Educational visits
- Residential visits

Schools will undertake a risk assessment and determine appropriate arrangements.

Consideration will be given to:

1. Safeguarding
2. Pupil wellbeing
3. Communication needs
4. Educational value
5. Residential expectations

13. Monitoring and review

Headteachers will monitor:

- Behaviour incidents involving mobile phones.
- Safeguarding incidents linked to device misuse.
- Compliance rates.
- Parent and pupil feedback.

Schools will review local procedures annually.

The Trust Board will review this policy annually and following any significant legislative or safeguarding changes