

Mobile phone policy



Approved by: Trust Board

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1. Introduction and aims

At Veritas Multi Academy Trust (MAT) we recognise that mobile phones and similar devices, including smartphones, are an important part of everyday life for our pupils, parents/carers and staff, as well as the wider school community.

Our policy aims to:

- ☐ Ensure our environment is mobile phone-free by default
- ☐ Ensure the safe, responsible and lawful use of mobile phones, where applicable
- ☐ Provide clear guidelines for the use of mobile phones for pupils, staff, parents/carers, visitors and volunteers
- ☐ Support the school's other policies, especially those related to child protection and behaviour

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

2. Relevant guidance

This policy meets the requirements of section 36 of the [Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act 2026](#), and the Department for Education (DfE)'s [mobile phone guidance](#) and [behaviour guidance](#). Further guidance that should be considered alongside this policy is [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#).

This policy will be updated in line with any changes to the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act 2026.

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 Staff

All staff (including teachers, support staff and supply staff) are responsible for consistently 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 Trust responsible for monitoring the policy every 2 years, reviewing it, and holding staff and pupils accountable for its implementation.

Staff will address any questions or concerns from parents/carers quickly, and clearly communicate the reasons for prohibiting the use of mobile phones.

4. Use of mobile phones by staff

4.1 Personal mobile phones

Staff (including volunteers, contractors and anyone else otherwise engaged by the school) are not permitted to use their personal mobile phone, while children are present / during contact time. Use of personal mobile phones 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's appropriate for a member of staff to have use of their phone during contact time for personal reasons. For instance (this list is non-exhaustive):

- 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.

4.2 Data protection

Staff must not use their personal mobile phones 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).

Staff must not use personal devices to access systems such as MyConcern, Confide, Pupil Asset, Class Dojo, Medical Tracker, at any time unless they have been given permission to do so, but only within school hours or on the school premises. The Trust Leadership Team are granted permission for access to these platforms owing to the nature of their roles, with the caveat that Multi Factor Authentication is activated on their personal devices.

Accessing the above platforms must be using a school or Trust led device. Further guidance here can be found within the Staff Code of Conduct, Data Protection Policy and Acceptable Use Agreement (which all staff are expected to sign). Access to the above platforms can be obtained.

4.3 Safeguarding

Staff must not give 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, or avoid connecting with parents/carers or pupils over messaging apps or social media, as outlined in the Staff Code of Conduct and Acceptable Use Agreement.

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

If staff are required to access school platforms, please refer to section 4.2 above for guidelines on acceptability and protecting the safeguarding and confidentiality of data.

4.4 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:

- Use of multi-factor authentication
- Emergency evacuations
- Supervising off-site trips – however, school mobiles are available for trips and should be used in the first instance.
- Supervising residential visits - however, school mobiles are available for trips and should be used in the first instance.

Or if they are accompanying trips / residential visits (please see Education Visits Policy). In these circumstances, staff will:

- Prioritise the use of school / trip specific mobile phones in the first instance
- Only use their mobile phones in an appropriate and professional manner, in line with our staff code of conduct and not in front of children.
- Not use their phones to take photographs or recordings of pupils, their work, or anything else that could identify a pupil
- Refrain from using their phones to contact parents/carers. If necessary, contact must be made via the school office or using the school trip/visits phone.

4.5 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, updating social media/class Dojo for updates from trips/residentials, sending/receiving emails or other communications, recording first aid incidents 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

4.6 Sanctions

Staff that fail to adhere to this policy, may also be in breach of the Staff Code of Conduct and may face disciplinary action as per the Trust's Discipline and Conduct policy.

5. Use of mobile phones by pupils

Pupils must not use their mobile phones during the school day, including during lessons, in the time between lessons, at breaktimes and at lunchtimes.

In medical circumstances, where a mobile phone is required for monitoring health conditions such as diabetes, a mobile phone is permitted to remain with the child/staff member at all times, but must only be accessed for medical reasons.

Pupils will be taught the risks that are associated with the use of mobile phones, both in school and more broadly, to ensure they understand the decision to prohibit the use of mobile phones throughout the school day. These risks can include a loss of focus in lessons, classroom disruption and an increase in bullying. Pupils will be encouraged to see a mobile-phone free environment as desirable and valuable.

On arrival at school, pupils must:

- Hand in their mobile phone to their class teacher (Pilgrims' Way) or the School Office (Mundella, Warden House). All mobile phones/smart devices should be switched off, password protected and named to ensure the correct device is returned to the correct pupil.

At the end of the school day, mobile phones can be returned to pupils by:

- Collection from the Class Teacher (Pilgrims' Way) or the School Office (Mundella and Warden House).

Schools will continue to review and amend process for collecting and returning personal school mobile phones and the above is subject to change.

For school trips and residential visits, the following applies:

Mobile phones are not permitted to be taken on school trips and residential visits. If children need their phone for the journey to school, this will be given to a member of the school team who will store it safely for them on school site.

5.1 Use of smartwatches by pupils

The DfE's [mobile phones guidance](#) includes in the term 'mobile phones' all devices with communications and smart technology that the school chooses to include in their policy.

Smartwatches are wristwatches with smart technology in them. They can be used to tell the time, send and receive text and voice messages, make calls and listen to music. Some smartwatches have wellness and health-related features.

Pupils are not permitted to wear smart watches during the school day and should be surrendered with mobile phones upon arrival at school.

5.2 Exceptions for special circumstances

If pupils / families wish for exceptions to be made, ie. For medical reasons or for young carers, this must be discussed with the Headteacher / Trust for the policy to be adapted accordingly.

Any pupils who are given permission must then adhere to the Trust's acceptable use agreement.

5.3 Sanctions

If pupils are found to have mobile phones on their person, they will be confiscated and kept in the leadership offices, where parents will be notified and parents will collect at the end of the school day. Behaviour will be handled in line with the School's Behaviour Policy.

In each case, the sanction given must be reasonable and proportionate. The school will also consider whether:

- There are any relevant special circumstances (for example, age, religious requirements, special educational needs, disability)
- 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 1 of [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)

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:

- Sexting (consensual and non-consensual sharing nude or semi-nude images or videos)
- ➤ Upskirting
- 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 or sexual orientation.

The DfE guidance permits school leaders to search a pupil's phone if there is a good reason to do so (such as having reason to believe the phone contains pornographic images, or if it is being/has been used to

commit an offence or cause harm to another person and school leaders should follow the steps as set out in the [DfE's guidance on searching, screening and confiscation](#) if they believe a pupil(s) to be at risk.

6. Use of mobile phones 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.

This means: > Not taking pictures or recordings of pupils, unless it's at 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

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 pupils, their work, or anything else that could identify a pupil

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 5 above, but must refer any sanctions to a member of staff, as they do not have the power to search or confiscate devices.

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.

7. Loss, theft or damage

Pupils bringing mobile phones to school must ensure that the phones are appropriately labelled and are stored securely when not in use.

Pupils must secure their mobile 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 pupils are travelling to and from school.

This is outlined within

> disclaimer in your home-school agreements

> School Behaviour and Relationship Policies.

Confiscated phones will be stored in the school office / leadership office / FLO office or other appropriate secure locations.

Lost phones should be returned to the School Office. The school will then attempt to contact the owner.

8. Monitoring and review

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

- Feedback from parents/carers and pupils
- Feedback from staff
- Records of behaviour and safeguarding incidents
- Relevant advice from the Department for Education, the local authority and any other relevant organisations.
- This policy will be reviewed after 1 year, following the introduction of statutory guidance from 29 June 2026 and will then be on a bi-annual review cycle of updated where necessary.