

Mobile Phone Policy

Academic Year 2026-2028



Version	Action/Notes	Date Approved	Date to be Reviewed
1.0	Approved by the Trust Board	07.09.2026	1 Year – July 2028

Contents

1. Introduction and aims
 2. Scope and relevant guidance
 3. Definitions
 4. Roles and responsibilities
 5. Use of mobile phones by staff
 6. Use of mobile phones by pupils
 7. Exceptions and reasonable adjustments
 8. Parents/carers, visitors, volunteers and contractors
 9. Loss, theft, damage and confiscated devices
 10. Safeguarding, data protection and inappropriate content
 11. Monitoring, complaints and review
- Appendix 1: School-specific implementation statement
- Appendix 2: Pupil mobile phone permission form

1. Introduction and Aims

Connect Education Trust (the Trust) is committed to providing safe, calm and purposeful learning environments in which pupils can achieve their potential and develop the skills and confidence to lead Remarkable Futures. Mobile phones and similar smart devices can support communication and access to information, but their use in school can also create safeguarding, privacy, behaviour, distraction and data protection risks.

The Trust therefore expects all its schools to be mobile phone-free environments by default during the school day. Any departure from this position must be for a clearly identified and authorised reason.

The aims of this policy are to:

- protect pupils and staff from safeguarding, privacy and online harms associated with inappropriate mobile phone use;
- support positive behaviour, concentration, attendance and learning by minimising unnecessary distraction;
- provide clear and consistent expectations for pupils, staff, parents/carers, visitors, volunteers and contractors;
- ensure mobile phones and similar devices are used safely, responsibly, lawfully and professionally where their use is authorised;
- protect confidential information and personal data;
- provide appropriate flexibility for pupils and staff where there is a genuine medical, safeguarding or other exceptional need.

Throughout this policy, “mobile phone” includes smartphones and similar communication or smart devices. This may include smartwatches and other wearable technology where they provide messaging, calling, recording, internet or comparable functions.

2. Scope and Relevant Guidance

This policy applies across all schools and settings within Connect Education Trust. Each school may publish local arrangements to explain how this Trust-wide policy is implemented, but local arrangements must not weaken the core expectations in this policy.

This policy has reference to section 36 of the Children’s Wellbeing and Schools Act 2026, Department for Education mobile phone and behaviour guidance, and Keeping Children Safe in Education. It should be read alongside the Trust and school policies on safeguarding, behaviour, staff code of conduct, data protection, online safety/acceptable use, educational visits and complaints.

Where statutory requirements or DfE guidance change, the Trust will review this policy and update it as necessary.

3. Definitions

- “School day” means the period during which pupils are under the care or supervision of the school, including lessons, transitions, breaktimes and lunchtimes, unless a school’s local arrangements state otherwise.



- “Similar smart device” includes smartwatches or other devices capable of communication, recording, internet access or comparable functions.
- “Authorised use” means use that has been specifically permitted by the school for a stated educational, safeguarding, medical, operational or other legitimate purpose.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

4.1 Trust Board

- approve and oversee the Trust-wide policy;
- receive assurance through the Trust’s governance arrangements that the policy is implemented effectively;
- ensure the policy is reviewed in line with the Trust’s policy cycle and statutory requirements.

4.2 Chief Officer/s

- provide Trust-level leadership and oversight of implementation;
- ensure the policy is aligned with Trust priorities, safeguarding expectations and relevant statutory guidance;
- support consistency across schools and address significant or recurring implementation issues.

4.3 Headteachers

- implement this policy within their school and ensure all staff understand their responsibilities;
- set clear local arrangements for storage, confiscation, exceptional permissions and communication with families;
- ensure breaches are addressed consistently, fairly and proportionately;
- monitor the impact of the policy on behaviour, safeguarding and pupil wellbeing;
- ensure staff, pupils and parents/carers know how to raise questions or concerns.

4.4 Staff, Volunteers and Contractors

- follow and actively support this policy;
- challenge breaches promptly and professionally;
- never use personal mobile phones to take images or recordings of pupils;
- refer safeguarding concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) in accordance with safeguarding procedures.

4.5 Pupils

- follow the school’s mobile phone rules at all times;
- switch off and store devices as directed;
- comply with reasonable requests from staff concerning mobile phones and similar devices;
- use devices responsibly outside school in a way that does not breach the school’s behaviour or safeguarding expectations.

5. Use of Mobile Phones by Staff

Staff are expected to model professional and responsible use of technology. Personal mobile phones must not be used for personal reasons in front of pupils during the school day. Any use during contact time must be by exception and must be capable of being justified as appropriate.

5.1 Personal Mobile Phones

- Personal phones should be switched off or placed on silent and stored out of sight when staff are working with pupils.



- Personal phones should only be used during non-contact time and, wherever practicable, in staff-only areas.
- Staff should use the school's office or approved communication systems for routine contact with parents/carers.
- Where a member of staff has an exceptional personal or family circumstance requiring them to remain contactable, they should agree appropriate arrangements with the Headteacher or line manager.

5.2 Data Protection and Confidentiality

- Staff must not use personal mobile phones to process, store, photograph, record or transmit personal data or confidential Trust/school information.
- Personal phones must not be used to enter pupil, parent, staff or other confidential information into generative AI tools, chatbots or other external services.
- Staff must follow the Trust's data protection and acceptable-use requirements at all times.

5.3 Safeguarding and Professional Boundaries

- Staff must not give personal mobile numbers or personal messaging/social media contact details to pupils or parents/carers for school-related contact.
- Staff must not use personal phones to photograph or record pupils, pupil work or anything that could identify a pupil.
- Where photographs or recordings are required for an authorised school purpose, school-owned equipment or an approved school system must be used.
- Staff must not use mobile phones in a manner that could undermine professional boundaries or the Trust's safeguarding expectations.

5.4 Authorised Work Use

There may be limited circumstances where a staff member is required to use a mobile device for work, including an emergency evacuation, supervision of an educational visit or residential, multi-factor authentication, or an approved operational activity.

- Use the device only for the authorised purpose.
- Maintain professional conduct at all times.
- Do not photograph or record pupils using a personal device.
- Do not use the device to contact parents/carers through a personal number or account unless specifically authorised under an approved Trust arrangement.

5.5 Trust/School Work Phones

Where a school or the Trust provides a mobile phone or mobile device, it is work equipment and must only be used by authorised staff for legitimate work purposes. Users are responsible for maintaining appropriate security and professional conduct. Access must not be shared with unauthorised persons.

5.6 Breaches

Failure by staff to comply with this policy may result in management action and, where appropriate, disciplinary action in accordance with the Trust's relevant procedures.



6. Use of Mobile Phones by Pupils

Pupils must not use mobile phones or similar smart devices during the school day, including lessons, transitions, breaktimes and lunchtimes, unless explicitly authorised by a member of staff for a specific and legitimate reason.

The Trust's default expectation is that pupils who are permitted to bring a phone to school must switch it off and store it in the school's designated secure location on arrival. The exact collection, storage and return arrangements will be set out by each school.

Schools may determine an alternative secure storage arrangement where it is practical, safe and consistently enforceable. The local arrangement must not permit routine use of mobile phones during the school day.

6.1 Smartwatches and Similar Devices

Smartwatches and similar devices are subject to the same restrictions as mobile phones where they can send or receive messages, make calls, access the internet, record audio/video or otherwise communicate. A pupil may be required to remove, switch off or store such a device if it cannot be used in a way that complies with this policy.

6.2 Educational Use

A pupil may only use a mobile phone or similar device for learning when a member of staff has specifically authorised its use for an identified educational purpose. The device must then be returned to the required storage arrangement immediately after the activity.

6.3 Sanctions and Confiscation

A breach of this policy will be dealt with in accordance with the school's behaviour policy and guidelines. Staff may confiscate a mobile phone or similar device where this is a proportionate response to a breach. The Headteacher may determine how long a device is retained, taking account of the circumstances and the DfE's guidance.

Confiscated devices will be stored securely and returned in accordance with the school's published local arrangements. Repeated breaches may result in further sanctions under the behaviour guidelines.

Sanctions will be reasonable and proportionate and will take account of relevant circumstances, including age, SEND, disability, medical needs and any safeguarding concerns.

7. Exceptions and Reasonable Adjustments

The Trust recognises that there may be exceptional circumstances where a pupil needs access to a mobile phone or similar device. These may include a documented medical need, safeguarding necessity, a young carer's circumstances, independent travel arrangements or another exceptional reason agreed by the Headteacher.



Where an exception is approved:

- permission must be documented and authorised by the school;
- the permission will specify when, where and for what purpose the device may be accessed;
- the pupil must comply with any school acceptable-use agreement;
- permission may be withdrawn if the arrangement is misused or circumstances change.

Schools will make reasonable adjustments where required to meet a pupil's medical, disability, SEND or other legally protected needs. Medical technology and monitoring devices must be managed in a way that protects the pupil's safety while maintaining the policy's safeguarding and privacy principles.

8. Parents/Carers, Visitors, Volunteers and Contractors

Parents/carers, visitors, volunteers and contractors are expected to support the Trust's mobile phone-free environment and model appropriate behaviour while on school premises.

- Phones should be kept on silent/vibrate and out of sight when pupils are present, unless use is necessary for an authorised purpose.
- Phones must not be used to photograph or record pupils or staff without appropriate authorisation and consent.
- Visitors and volunteers must not use phones while working directly with pupils, in lessons or in other circumstances when doing so could compromise safeguarding or privacy.
- Parents/carers should contact the school office rather than their child's personal mobile during the school day.
- Adults supervising school visits must follow the instructions of the school's designated visit leader and must not use personal phones to photograph or record pupils.

The school will communicate local expectations to visitors and parents/carers through reception arrangements, information slips, letters, handbooks or other appropriate channels.

9. Loss, Theft, Damage and Confiscated Devices

Where a school permits pupils to bring mobile phones to school, pupils remain responsible for ensuring that their devices are labelled and secured as required by the school's local arrangements.

The Trust and its schools will take reasonable steps to store confiscated devices securely. However, the school will not accept responsibility for personal mobile phones that are lost, damaged or stolen when brought onto school premises, on school transport or during school visits, except where responsibility arises under applicable law.

Where a device is confiscated, the school assumes responsibility for it while it is in its possession and will take reasonable steps to keep it secure. Local arrangements will specify the storage location and return process.

Lost devices should be reported promptly to the school office or designated member of staff. The school will take reasonable steps to identify the owner.



10. Safeguarding, Data Protection and Inappropriate Content

Mobile phones can be used to create, access or share harmful content. Any concern about a pupil's use of a device that may indicate safeguarding risk must be reported to the DSL or deputy DSL in line with the school's safeguarding procedures.

Where there is a good reason to believe that a device contains inappropriate material, has been used to cause harm, or may contain evidence of an offence, staff will follow the Trust/school procedures and relevant DfE guidance on searching, screening and confiscation. Searches must be lawful, proportionate and undertaken by authorised staff.

Potentially criminal conduct will be taken seriously and may be referred to the police or other appropriate agencies. Examples can include sharing nudes or semi-nudes, including AI-generated or digitally altered sexual images, upskirting, threats of violence or assault, and abusive communications targeted at an individual.

Staff must not independently investigate safeguarding concerns beyond their authority. The DSL will determine the appropriate safeguarding response, including pastoral support, early help or referral to children's social care or other agencies where required.

Where personal data or confidential information may have been compromised, the Trust's data protection and information-security procedures must be followed immediately.

11. Monitoring, Complaints and Review

The Trust and its schools will monitor the effectiveness of this policy through behaviour records, safeguarding incidents, feedback from pupils, parents/carers and staff, and relevant changes in legislation or DfE guidance.

Headteachers will provide appropriate assurance through the school's governance arrangements and Trust reporting processes. Significant or recurring concerns will be escalated through the Trust's leadership and governance arrangements.

Questions or concerns about implementation should normally be raised with the Headteacher in the first instance. Formal complaints will be managed under the Trust's complaints policy.

This policy will be reviewed every two years, or sooner where there is a significant change in legislation, statutory guidance or Trust practice.



Appendix 1: School-Specific Implementation Statement

This appendix is completed and published by each Connect Education Trust school. It must be consistent with the Trust Mobile Phone Policy.

Area	School arrangement
School name	
School day covered by the policy	
Where pupils who bring phones must store them	
Who is responsible for collection/storage	
When and how devices are returned	
Procedure for repeated breaches	
Process for exceptional/medical permissions	
Designated contact for questions	
How parents/carers are informed	
How visitors are informed	

Appendix 2: Pupil Mobile Phone Permission Form

This form is used where a Headteacher agrees that a pupil may bring a mobile phone or similar device to school because of an exceptional circumstance.

Pupil name	
Year group/class	
Parent/carer name	
Reason for permission	
Device permitted	
When the device may be accessed	
Storage arrangements	
Date permission begins	
Review date	

Agreement

- I understand that permission is exceptional and applies only for the purpose and circumstances identified above.
- I will follow the school's Mobile Phone Policy and any acceptable-use conditions.
- I understand that permission may be withdrawn if the device is misused or circumstances change.

Parent/carer signature: _____

Date: _____

Pupil signature (where appropriate): _____

Date: _____

Headteacher/designated senior leader: _____

Date: _____

