

Mobile Phone Policy

2026 2027



Approved by	Avril Stockley Headteacher	Date	9 September 2026
Next review due	September 2027	Review cycle	Annual or earlier if required

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This policy should be read alongside the school's Behaviour Policy, Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, Online Safety Policy, Data Protection Policy, Staff Code of Conduct, Acceptable Use Policy and Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy.

1 Introduction aims and scope

The William Hogarth School is a mobile phone-free environment for pupils by default. This policy explains how the school prevents pupil access to mobile phones and similar personal devices throughout the school day, while making proportionate exceptions where these are needed for medical, disability, safeguarding or other exceptional individual circumstances.

The policy aims to:

- protect pupils' education, safety, privacy and wellbeing;
- provide clear and consistent expectations for pupils, staff, parents and carers, volunteers, visitors and contractors;
- ensure that any authorised use of a mobile phone is safe, responsible, lawful and limited to its agreed purpose;
- reduce distraction, disruption, bullying and harmful online behaviour;
- protect personal information and reduce the risk of inappropriate photography, recording, loss, theft or damage; and
- support the school's Behaviour, Child Protection and Safeguarding, Online Safety and Data Protection policies.

Throughout this policy, "mobile phone" includes personal devices with communication or smart technology that can send or receive calls, notifications or messages, access the internet, or record audio, photographs or video. This includes smartwatches and similar wearable devices. It does not include devices supplied by or on behalf of the school for pupils to use.

For the purposes of this policy, the school day begins when a pupil enters the school premises and ends when they leave the premises at the end of the day. The policy also applies during school-led activities, educational visits and off-site provision unless alternative arrangements have been expressly authorised. Separate arrangements may be set by the school for wraparound care, clubs and residential visits, but the safeguarding and acceptable-use expectations in this policy continue to apply.

2 Legal and statutory framework

This policy has been developed with regard to the Department for Education's statutory guidance Mobile phones in schools, issued under section 550C of the Education Act 1996, as inserted by section 36 of the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act 2026. Schools are expected to follow this guidance from 1 September 2026.

The policy also takes account of:

- the Education and Inspections Act 2006, including sections 89, 91 and 94;
- the Equality Act 2010, including the duty to make reasonable adjustments;
- the Children and Families Act 2014 and statutory guidance on supporting pupils with medical conditions;
- the UK General Data Protection Regulation and Data Protection Act 2018;
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026;
- the Department for Education guidance Behaviour in schools and Searching, screening and confiscation in schools; and
- the statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, including requirements concerning mobile phones, cameras and other electronic devices with imaging and sharing capabilities.

3 Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for determining and implementing the school's approach to mobile phones, ensuring that the policy is aligned with the Behaviour Policy and the school's legal duties. The Headteacher will:

- ensure that the policy is communicated to pupils, staff and families;
- authorise any staff who may undertake a search under the school's searching procedures;
- consider requests for exceptional pupil access and reasonable adjustments;

- ensure that breaches are addressed consistently, lawfully and proportionately; and
- monitor implementation and review the policy annually or earlier where required.

3.2 Staff

All staff, including supply and agency staff, must model appropriate use and enforce the policy calmly, immediately and consistently. Staff must report safeguarding, data protection or repeated behaviour concerns through the appropriate school procedure.

3.3 Volunteers visitors and contractors

Volunteers, visitors and contractors must follow the expectations communicated when they enter the site and alert a member of staff if they witness or become aware of a breach.

3.4 Parents and carers

Parents and carers are expected to support the policy, ensure that any phone brought by their child is switched off and handed in—unless alternative access has been expressly authorised under section 5.3—and contact their child through the school office during the school day.

4 Use of mobile phones by staff

4.1 Personal use

Staff, volunteers and contractors must not use personal mobile phones for personal reasons while teaching, supervising or otherwise responsible for pupils. Personal devices must be kept out of sight, on silent and secure. Personal calls, messages, social media and other personal use must wait until a break or non-contact period and should normally take place away from pupils, such as in the staffroom.

In exceptional personal circumstances, such as the acute illness of a dependent or the need to receive an urgent call from a child's school, the Headteacher may agree a temporary arrangement on a case-by-case basis. Where no special arrangement has been agreed, the school office number, 020 8994 4782, should be used for emergency contact.

4.2 Operational communication

The school uses an operational WhatsApp group for urgent communication across the site, including emergencies, requests for immediate assistance, first aid and support with intimate care. Staff may therefore keep a phone accessible in a pocket, bag or desk drawer and check or respond to an operational message where this is necessary for school business. Use must be brief, purposeful and professional and must not distract from the active supervision of pupils.

The operational WhatsApp group is not a safeguarding, medical or record-keeping system. Staff must:

- not post photographs or recordings of pupils;
- not share safeguarding information or special-category personal data;
- avoid using a pupil's full name unless this is essential to an immediate safety response;
- transfer information requiring a formal record promptly to Arbor, CPOMS or another approved school system;
- use appropriate privacy and security settings, including disabling lock-screen message previews and using device access controls;
- not forward school messages outside the authorised group; and
- understand that there is no expectation to monitor or respond to the group outside working hours.

Staff will be removed from the operational group promptly when they leave the school or no longer require access.

4.3 Data protection and artificial intelligence

Staff must not use personal mobile phones to process or store personal data or confidential school information, except for the limited operational communication permitted in section 4.2 and the authorised photography and recording during educational visits, school trips and residential visits permitted under section 4.4. Personal or confidential information must not be entered into unapproved generative artificial

intelligence tools or personal accounts. Staff must follow the school's Data Protection Policy, Artificial Intelligence Policy, Acceptable Use Policy and Staff Code of Conduct.

4.4 Safeguarding photography and recording

Staff must not give personal contact details to pupils or parents and carers, communicate with them through personal messaging or social media accounts, or accept social-media connections from pupils. Staff should use privacy settings that reduce the risk of unwanted contact.

On the school premises, personal devices must not be used to photograph, film or make audio recordings of pupils, their work or anything else that could identify a pupil. Photographs and recordings must normally be made using school-owned equipment, such as the school iPads provided to class teachers, and processed through approved school systems.

During educational visits, school trips and residential visits, accompanying staff may use their personal mobile phones to photograph or video pupils for the express purpose of sharing information and updates with parents and carers through Reach More Parents. This is an established, school-authorised use of personal mobile phones during these activities.

Staff may choose to take a school iPad on an educational visit, school trip or residential visit. Where they choose to do so, they assume responsibility for keeping the device secure and for the cost of repairing or replacing it if it is lost or damaged while in their care, in accordance with the school's equipment loan arrangements. Any loss, theft or damage must be reported to the Headteacher immediately. Staff who do not wish to assume responsibility for taking a school iPad off-site may use their personal mobile phone to photograph or video pupils for the express purpose of sharing updates with parents and carers through Reach More Parents, subject to the safeguards below.

Photographs and videos taken under this provision must be used only for the intended Reach More Parents update. They must not be shared through WhatsApp, personal messaging, social media, personal email or any other personal account or application.

When using a personal mobile phone under this provision, staff must:

- check the visit information and the school's current records so that the wishes and consent arrangements for individual pupils are respected;
- take only appropriate images needed for the intended school update and avoid toilets, changing areas, intimate or medical care, and other situations in which a pupil could reasonably expect privacy;
- keep the personal device secured by a passcode or biometric access control and under their control at all times;
- where the technology permits, take the image directly within Reach More Parents so that it is not saved to the device's camera roll;
- ensure that automatic cloud backup, photo-streaming or syncing does not retain or transfer school images to a personal account;
- upload the update only to the appropriate Reach More Parents audience;
- once the successful upload has been confirmed, delete every school photograph and video from the device, including from recently deleted folders and any connected cloud storage; and
- report immediately to the Headteacher or Data Protection Lead any loss of the device, accidental sharing, unintended cloud upload, inability to delete an image, or other suspected personal-data breach.

Staff are expected to share updates promptly during or immediately after the activity and then delete every school photograph and video. No school image or recording may remain on a personal device after the Reach More Parents update has been successfully shared. The Headteacher may withdraw this permission from an individual member of staff where these safeguards are not followed.

4.5 Authorised work use

A member of staff may use a personal phone briefly for an essential work purpose where there is no reasonable school-device alternative, such as multi-factor authentication, emergency communication or navigation during an off-site visit. Apart from the established arrangements for educational visits, school trips and residential visits set out in section 4.4, personal devices must not be used for pupil photography or recording, or to store pupil information. Contact with parents and carers must normally be made through the school office or an approved school communication system.

During visits and residentials, routine updates to families will be provided through Reach More Parents. Staff must follow the visit risk assessment and emergency communication arrangements.

4.6 Breaches by staff

Concerns about staff use of mobile phones will be addressed by the Headteacher in accordance with the Staff Code of Conduct, safeguarding procedures and, where appropriate, the school's disciplinary procedure. Any safeguarding concern must be reported immediately to the DSL or deputy DSL. Concerns about the Headteacher must be reported to the Chair of Governors.

5 Use of mobile phones by pupils

Pupils must not access or use a mobile phone or similar personal device during the school day, including during lessons, movement around the school, breaktimes and lunchtimes. Devices must not be used in toilets or changing areas at any time.

Pupils will be taught about the risks associated with mobile phones and connected technology, including distraction, loss of learning, bullying, harmful content, inappropriate contact, image sharing and pressure from social media. They will also be helped to understand the benefits of a mobile phone-free environment.

5.1 Phones brought for journeys to and from school

The school recognises that some parents and carers choose to provide a phone for a child who travels to or from school independently. A pupil bringing a phone must:

- switch it off before handing it in;
- hand it to the school office immediately on arrival;
- ensure it is clearly labelled; and
- collect it immediately before leaving the premises at the end of the day.

A phone handed in for storage must not be accessed during the school day. Parents and carers should notify the school if their child will bring a device regularly. Permission to bring and store a phone does not amount to permission to use it.

5.2 Smartwatches and similar devices

Pupils must not wear or use smartwatches or other personal devices capable of communication, internet access or audio, photographic or video recording during the school day. A device brought to school must be switched off and handed to the school office in the same way as a mobile phone. An ordinary watch without communication or recording functions is not covered by this restriction.

5.3 Exceptional access and reasonable adjustments

The school may make an individual exception or reasonable adjustment where access to a mobile phone or similar device is necessary to:

- meet a pupil's medical needs;
- avoid substantial disadvantage arising from disability or SEND;
- respond to safeguarding considerations; or
- address other exceptional individual circumstances, including responsibilities as a young carer.

Parents and carers should make a request to the Headteacher. Each request will be assessed on its own merits and, where appropriate, with advice from relevant professionals. An agreed exception will be documented in an Individual Healthcare Plan, ISP, risk assessment or other written individual plan. The plan will specify the purpose, times, locations, supervision, storage and review arrangements for use.

A pupil with authorised access must follow the individual agreement in Appendix 1. The school will not require a medically necessary device to be switched off, stored away from the pupil or surrendered in a manner inconsistent with the pupil's Individual Healthcare Plan.

5.4 Educational visits clubs and residentials

Pupils must not bring or use mobile phones on educational visits, clubs or residential visits unless the Headteacher has expressly authorised this as part of the arrangements for the activity or as an individual exception. Any authorised access will be specified in the visit information or the pupil's individual plan.

Families will normally receive updates through Reach More Parents and should contact the school or the designated emergency contact rather than a pupil's personal phone.

5.5 Breaches and sanctions

A phone or similar device found or used in breach of this policy may be confiscated as a disciplinary penalty under sections 91 and 94 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006. Any response will be reasonable, proportionate and consistent with the Behaviour Policy.

The normal graduated response is:

- for a first or minor breach, the device will be stored securely and returned to a parent or carer at the end of the school day;
- for a repeated or deliberate breach, the school may require a meeting and retain the device for a longer period considered proportionate by the Headteacher;
- where a breach presents a safeguarding concern or may involve an offence, the device will be secured and the DSL or deputy DSL will determine the next steps, including whether police advice is required; and
- refusal to hand over a device when lawfully instructed will be addressed as a further breach of the Behaviour Policy.

When deciding on a sanction, the school will consider the intended disciplinary outcome, the seriousness and circumstances of the breach, the pupil's age, SEND, disability and other individual circumstances, and whether the behaviour indicates that the pupil may be suffering or at risk of harm. Where harm is suspected, staff will follow the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and consult the DSL or deputy DSL.

5.6 Searching for and examining devices

Mobile phones and similar devices are identified in the school's Behaviour Policy as items that may be searched for where they have been brought onto the premises or used in breach of school rules. The Headteacher, and members of staff specifically authorised by the Headteacher, may search a pupil or their possessions only where the legal conditions for a search are met. Staff must follow the Department for Education guidance Searching, screening and confiscation in schools and the school's safeguarding procedures.

Data or files on a device will only be examined where the device has been lawfully confiscated following a search and there is good reason to examine it. The authorised member of staff must consider the appropriate safeguarding response before examining any data.

Where staff suspect that a device may contain a nude or semi-nude image of a child, they must not intentionally view, copy, print, share, store or save the image. The device must be secured and the matter referred immediately to the DSL or deputy DSL, who will follow current safeguarding guidance. Where there are reasonable grounds to suspect that a device contains evidence relating to an offence, the school will seek police advice and will not delete relevant material.

6 Parents carers volunteers and visitors

Parents and carers are encouraged to discuss the policy at home and reinforce both the risks associated with mobile phones and the benefits of a mobile phone-free school day. If they need to contact their child during the day, they must contact the school office and must not attempt to communicate through the child's personal device.

Parents and carers, volunteers, visitors, governors and contractors must:

- keep personal phones on silent and avoid using them where pupils are present;
- move to the school office, staffroom or another agreed private area if an urgent call is necessary;
- never use a personal device to photograph or record pupils while working with, supervising or supporting them;
- not use a phone in lessons or while responsible for pupils; and
- follow any additional instructions given for school events and educational visits.

At a school event, parents and carers may only take photographs or recordings where the school has expressly confirmed that this is permitted. Images must be for personal use only and must not be posted or

shared online if they include identifiable children other than their own, unless appropriate consent has been obtained.

Parents, carers or volunteers accompanying a visit must not use personal phones to contact other families or photograph pupils. They should report a pupil breach to a member of staff and must not search a pupil or confiscate a device unless explicitly directed by a member of staff who has lawful control of the situation.

7 Loss theft damage and secure storage

Pupils and staff are responsible for securing personal devices, including using a password, PIN or biometric access control. Personal devices are brought onto school premises at the owner's risk.

The school will take reasonable care of devices handed in or lawfully confiscated but cannot accept responsibility for loss or damage unless this results from a failure by the school to take reasonable care. A device handed to the school office or confiscated will be recorded, labelled where necessary and stored in a locked cabinet or other secure location until it is returned or transferred to another agency.

A lost device should be handed to the school office. The school will take reasonable steps to identify and contact the owner without unnecessarily accessing the contents of the device.

8 Communication monitoring and review

The policy will be published on the school website and explained to pupils, staff and families. Pupils will be reminded of the expectations and consequences at the beginning of each academic year and at appropriate intervals. New staff, volunteers and contractors will be informed through induction or sign-in arrangements.

The Headteacher will review implementation at least annually, drawing on:

- the number and nature of breaches and confiscations;
- the duration and outcome of confiscations;
- repeated breaches and patterns across times, locations or pupil groups;
- authorised exceptions and reasonable adjustments;
- safeguarding, behaviour and data protection incidents involving devices;
- feedback, concerns or complaints from pupils, families and staff; and
- changes to legislation, statutory guidance and local procedures.

Significant themes, equality implications and assurance about consistent implementation will be reported to the governing body through the school's safeguarding and behaviour reporting arrangements. Individual pupils and staff will not be identifiable in routine governor reporting unless this is necessary for governors to fulfil a specific statutory or employment function.

This policy will be reviewed annually and may be reviewed earlier following a change in guidance, a serious incident, evidence of inconsistent implementation or a concern about its impact on a particular group.

Appendix 1 Pupil acceptable use agreement for authorised exceptional access

This agreement applies only where the Headteacher has authorised a pupil to access a mobile phone or similar device during the school day. The pupil must follow both this agreement and the arrangements recorded in their individual plan.

1. I will only use the device for the agreed purpose, at the agreed times and in the agreed places.
2. I will carry or store the device in the location specified in my Individual Healthcare Plan or other written agreement.
3. I will keep the device on silent unless my individual plan requires an alert or notification.
4. I will not use the device in toilets or changing areas.
5. I will not take photographs or make video or audio recordings of pupils or staff.
6. I will not share my own or another person's contact details, passwords or access codes.
7. I will not use the device to bully, harass, intimidate or upset anyone, or to access or share harmful, sexual, discriminatory, abusive or unlawful content.
8. I understand that creating, requesting, possessing or sharing a nude or semi-nude image of a child, including an AI-generated image or deepfake, may be a safeguarding matter and may be a criminal offence.
9. I will follow a reasonable instruction from a member of staff concerning my device. Where the device supports a medical need, staff will follow my Individual Healthcare Plan before asking me to switch it off or hand it over.
10. I understand that misuse outside school may be addressed by the school where it affects pupils, staff, the safe running of the school or the school's reputation, in accordance with the Behaviour Policy.

Appendix 2 Exceptional access agreement

This form records an agreed exception or reasonable adjustment that permits a pupil to access a mobile phone or similar device during the school day. It is not required where a pupil simply hands in a switched-off phone for secure storage.

Pupil name	
Year group and class	
Parent or carer	
Reason for access	
Agreed purpose and device	
Permitted times and locations	
Storage and supervision arrangements	
Linked plan and review date	

The pupil and parent or carer confirm that they have read the Mobile Phone Policy and the acceptable use agreement. Permission may be reviewed or withdrawn where the arrangements no longer meet the pupil's needs or the device is misused. A medically necessary reasonable adjustment will not be withdrawn without reviewing how the pupil's needs will continue to be met.

Parent or carer signature and date	
Pupil signature and date	
Authorised by and date	
Date for review	

Appendix 3 Mobile phone information notice for visitors

Use of mobile phones and similar devices in our school

Our school is a mobile phone-free environment for pupils. Please help us protect children's privacy, safety and learning.

- Keep your mobile phone on silent while on the school premises.
- Do not use your phone where pupils are present. If an urgent call is necessary, please ask to use the school office, staffroom or another agreed private area.
- Do not take photographs or make video or audio recordings of pupils or staff unless the school has expressly confirmed that photography is permitted at an event.
- If photography is permitted, do not post or share an image containing another identifiable child without appropriate consent.
- Do not use a personal phone while teaching, working with or supervising pupils.
- Follow any additional instructions given by school staff.

Personal devices are brought onto the premises at the owner's risk. A full copy of the Mobile Phone Policy is available from the school office and on the school website.