



## MOBILE PHONE POLICY

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**Person responsible:** Deputy Head: Pastoral

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### 1. Introduction and aims

At Southmoor Academy 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:

- Promote safe and responsible phone use.
- Set 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.

This policy also aims to address some of the challenges posed by mobile phones in school, such as:

- Risks to child protection.
- Data protection issues.
- Potential for lesson disruption.
- Risk of theft, loss, or damage.
- Appropriate use of technology in the classroom.

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

### 2. Relevant guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the Department for Education's non-statutory [mobile phone guidance](#) and [behaviour guidance](#). Further guidance that should be considered alongside this policy is [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#).

### **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 Deputy Headteacher (Pastoral) is responsible for monitoring the policy, regularly 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 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). Staff should not use their own personal mobile phone on the school yard or in the school restaurant when there are pupils present.

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.
- Members of SLT and Pastoral Team are permitted to use mobile phones to communicate when absolutely necessary.
- Members of SLT and Pastoral Team are permitted to use mobile phones to access Class Charts.

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 0191 5949991 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).

More detailed guidance on data protection can be found on the school's data protection policy.

#### **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.

Staff must not use their personal mobile phones to take photographs or recordings of pupils, their work, or anything else which 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.

#### **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 aren't limited to:

- To issue homework, rewards or sanctions.
- To take registers via Class Charts.
- To use multi-factor authentication.
- Emergency evacuations.
- Supervising off-site trips.
- Supervising residential visits.

In these circumstances, staff will:

- Use their mobile phones in an appropriate and professional manner, in line with our staff code of conduct.
- Not use their phones to take photographs or recordings of pupils, their work, or anything else which could identify a pupil.
- Refrain from using their phones to contact parents/carers. If necessary, contact must be made via the school office.
- There may be some rare instances where staff may need to contact parents or carers via their personal mobile, for instance in the case of an emergency on a school visit. In such cases, the member of staff should conceal their own phone number (either in their own phone settings or by dialing 141 before dialing the contact number).

#### **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, sending/receiving emails or other communications, 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 face disciplinary action.

See the school's staff disciplinary policy for more information.

### **5. Use of mobile phones by pupils**

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

- Pupils who bring their mobile phones with them, do so on the condition they are never used, seen or heard.
- Pupils are expected to switch off mobile phones while on school site.
- Pupils are not permitted to use their mobile phone on the school yard at any time.
- Pupils are not permitted to use their mobile phone at any time during the school day including lessons.

- If a pupil wishes to use their mobile phone to access Class Charts or contact carer or parent they must seek permission from a member of staff. If permission is granted, the pupil must use their mobile phone under the supervision of that staff member. Once the mobile phone has been used the pupil must switch it off and put it away on their person.

### **5.1 Use of smartwatches by pupils**

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 smart watches have wellness and health-related features.

Pupils are permitted to wear a smartwatch, however, they should not use them to communicate via text, make phone calls, access social media or the internet.

Pupils must not use smart watches to take photographs or indeed access any of the functions other than telling the time.

### **5.2 Exceptions for sixth-form pupils**

Sixth-form pupils are allowed access to their mobile phones during the school day, to reflect their increased independence and responsibility, but must not compromise our policy on the use of mobile phones for other pupils.

Therefore, they are only permitted to use their mobile phones out of sight of younger pupils, please see below for when and where allowed.

Sixth formers must not use their mobile phones when in lower school areas of the school.

Misuse of mobile phones by pupils in the sixth form will lead to sanctions according to our behaviour policy.

- Sixth form pupils are permitted to use their mobile phone in the sixth form café at any time.
- Sixth form pupils are permitted to use their mobile phones at breaktime and lunchtime in the study and communal areas of sixth form.
- Sixth form pupils are not permitted to use their mobile phones in lessons.

The school may permit pupils to use a mobile phone in school, under exceptional circumstances. This will be considered on a case-by-case basis. To request such permission, pupils or parents/carers should contact the Headteacher to seek permission

### **5.3 Sanctions**

- If seen or heard, mobile phones will be confiscated in accordance with sections 91 and 94 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006
- Confiscated phones will be held at pupil reception or the main school office. The member of staff handing in the phone for storage must sign the phone into custody with date, and name of owner.
- If a pupil has broken the code of conduct and their phone is seen or heard they will be asked to surrender it. They must do so immediately and without argument. The pupil may collect their phone at the end of the school day from pupil reception or the main school office
- If a pupil protests about handing over their mobile phone a member of Senior Leadership Team or Pastoral Staff will confiscate it. As an extra consequence for non-compliance, the parent/carers must collect the mobile phone at the end of the school day, NOT the pupil. Parent /carers should collect it from the school office between 3.35-4.30pm on the day of confiscation, or as soon as possible thereafter.
- Southmoor Academy do not accept any responsibility for any loss or damage to mobile phones when in custody. If a pupil decides to bring any electronic device into school they do so at entirely their own risk.

School staff have the power to search pupils' phones in specific circumstances, as set out in the DfE's guidance on searching, screening and confiscation. The DfE guidance allows school staff 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).

If inappropriate content is found on a phone, or if staff suspect inappropriate behaviour, the police will be contacted.

A 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.

## **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 which 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 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.

Confiscated phones will be stored in the school office in a secure location.

Lost phones should be handed 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 of 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