

MOBILE PHONES AND CAMERAS POLICY



A community inspiring lifelong learning.

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Signed:	A Bone
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SPINFIELD SCHOOL

POLICY ON THE USE OF MOBILE PHONES AND CAMERAS

This policy applies to all pupils and adults in the school, including in the EYFS.

For pupils, Spinfield School is a phone-free environment for the entire school day. That includes lessons, time between lessons, breaktimes and lunchtime. It means, for example, it is not appropriate for phones to be used as calculators, or for research during lessons.

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

1. Introduction and aims

At Spinfield School 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 headteacher is responsible for monitoring the policy every three 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.

3.2 Governors

The full Governing Board will monitor the policy every three years, reviewing it, and holding staff and pupils accountable for its implementation.

4. Use of mobile phones by staff

Mobile phones provide many benefits to school life, notably in improving health and safety through better communication with staff in more remote parts of the school grounds and on off-site visits. However, mobile phones, particularly those capable of taking pictures, also present a challenge to the school community to ensure that pupils are safeguarded in relation to the potential for improper use and also that their education is not impeded by the use of mobile phones at inappropriate times.

Staff must be vigilant to ensure that the use of mobile phones, including their use by volunteers and visitors, is always appropriate and that the safeguarding needs of the pupils are met. Any concerns should be discussed with the Headteacher or Designated safeguarding lead. Concerns will be taken seriously, logged and investigated appropriately.

Where a member of staff, visitor or volunteer has a mobile phone with the facility to take pictures, its use is subject to the policy on the use of cameras and the manipulation and storage of images. EYFS staff phones are kept secure in their area.

4.1 Personal mobile phones

On arrival at school, staff should switch their phones off to silent during the course of the school day. Staff may use their phone at break times and lunch time provided that (i) pupils are not present, (ii) they are not on duty and (iii) this does not prevent them from responding to a request for assistance from another member of staff or other aspects of their professional duties.

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 and during contact time. **Mobile phones must not be used in classrooms by staff during the school day** as there is always the possibility that other members of the school community could be aware of confidential conversations. Staff are expected to keep their phones in their classroom cupboard during lesson time. Phones are generally not to be used in the classrooms or areas where the children may be working. As part of our school policy on emergency procedures, each classroom has a red card that can be used in an emergency to summon help.

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).

The school Site Manager and Headteacher are exempt from the restrictions on the use of mobile phones whilst on duty so that they can be contacted at all times by the school office in case of emergency. There is a school mobile phone available for staff to take on educational visits or outside in the school grounds.

By arrangement with the Headteacher, a member of staff's personal mobile phone may be designated as the means of communication for specific activities, for example when at Forest School or when on school trips. The use of mobile phones by staff whilst on school duties must respect national legislation and common courtesies. For example, they must not be used whilst driving and should be switched to silent at events and venues where this is expected.

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 01628 473551 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).

Please see the following policies for further guidance:

Data protection policy

ICT acceptable use 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. Only in exceptional circumstances, authorised by the Head Teacher can staff give personal contact details to a parent (e.g. for a residential trip) but this is NEVER permitted for a pupil.

Staff must avoid publicising their contact details on any social media platform or website, to avoid unwanted contact by parents/carers or pupils. The school strongly recommends that any personal social media accounts are set to "private".

Staff and volunteers 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.

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:

Issuing homework, rewards or sanctions

Use of multi-factor authentication

Emergency evacuations

Supervising off-site trips

Supervising residential visits

The school does provide a school mobile which can also be used.

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 that could identify a pupil

Refrain from using their phones to contact parents/carers. If necessary, contact must be made via the school office

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

The DfE's non-statutory mobile phone guidance says that pupils should not use mobile phones throughout the school day. Spinfield School is a phone-free environment for the entire school day. That includes lessons, time between lessons, breaktimes and lunchtime. It means, for example, it is not appropriate for phones to be used as calculators, or for research during lessons. Pupils are encouraged not to have mobile phones in school. However, some year 6 children may bring them in and hand them in to the class teacher who will keep them secure in a box in a cupboard. Pupils should not use their mobile phones during the school day, including during lessons, in the time between lessons, at breaktimes and at lunchtimes.

5.1 Use of smartwatches by pupils

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

Digital or analogue watches can be worn. Smartwatches which are able to make or receive phone calls or messages, that have a camera or a games functionality will need to be handed in at the start of the day and collected at the end of the day, in the same way as a mobile phone is.

5.2 Exceptions for special circumstances and for sixth-form pupils

The school may permit pupils to use a mobile phone in school, due to exceptional circumstances. This will be considered on a case-by-case basis. To request such permission, pupils or parents/carers should contact the headteacher at office@spinfieldschool.co.uk

Circumstances include but are not limited to:

- Pupils travelling to school by themselves
- Young carers who need to be contactable
- Pupils with diabetes who use their phones to monitor their blood sugar

Any pupils who are given permission must then adhere to the school's code of conduct / acceptable use agreement for mobile phone use.

5.3 Sanctions

If a pupil is in breach of this policy their mobile phones will be confiscated? (Schools are permitted to confiscate phones from pupils under [sections 91](#) and [94](#) of the Education and Inspections Act 2006)

If they are confiscated, the pupil's parent will need to come to the school office to collect the phone, preferably at the end of the school day that the incident happened.

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 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 staff, pupils and parents/carers find inappropriate content on a phone, or if they suspect inappropriate behaviour this should be reported immediately to one of the following:

The school's Designated Safeguarding Lead and or Headteacher

The police

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

6. Use of mobile phones by parents/carers, volunteers and visitors

Staff should use phones in staff-only areas of the school, i.e. the staffroom. In exceptional circumstances and when children are not in a classroom, they may use their phone. If their phone has to be used during lesson time, the member of staff must ask to be covered during the lesson and use their phone in the staffroom or meeting room.

Parents/carers, volunteers and visitors may not use their phones when they are working with children. If they need to use their phones, they must ask to have access to a room which does not have children in it.

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 attend safeguarding training, 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.

Use of Cameras and the manipulation and storage of images

In this policy terms such as 'photography', 'pictures', 'images', 'camera', 'device' and 'digital technology' include both still and video media. The term 'camera' includes mobile phones, ipads and other equipment which has the capacity to take photographs.

At Spinfield School we recognise that the appropriate use of photography enhances many aspects of school life and the pupils' education. Mobile phone technology has become more sophisticated over recent years and will continue to evolve. Wireless connections in particular, extend the capabilities of mobile phones further; which allow access to new content and services, such as the internet, social networking sites and instant messaging. The majority of mobile phones offer camera, video and audio recording as standard. Mobile phones, alongside other technologies, aim to change the way we communicate. This speed of communication often provides security and reassurance; however, as with any other form of technology, there are associated risks.

This policy is intended to ensure an environment in which children, parents and staff are safe from images being recorded and inappropriately used by providing a clear framework to ensure that the use of cameras and the storage of images:

- reflect good practice
- the safeguarding needs of the pupils are met
- staff are not distracted from their work with children.

The policy also recognises that learning to use digital technology is an important part of the computing curriculum. Teaching needs to ensure that pupils are able to learn how to use digital cameras and to edit and store photographs with an understanding of safeguarding requirements, for themselves and others, which is appropriate for their age and taking due account of the cyber-bullying aspects of the school's anti-bullying policy.

Photography is used at the school for a variety of purposes, including:

- Recording pupils' achievements, learning and progress, providing evidence to support EYFS assessments
- Recording school events and providing material for displays
- Communication with parents, for example to help reassure new parents or carers of young children that they have settled well into school life and provide prompt information on their children's activities on residential trips
- For publicity purposes (brochures, prospectus, media articles, social media, website etc.)
- To support work undertaken by members of staff or students on placements for training and gaining further qualifications.

On their child's admission to the school and annually thereafter, parents are asked to sign a consent form in relation to their child being photographed at school or during school events. Responses to the photography consent form are collated and all staff are made aware of the results. It is important that staff familiarise themselves with this information. If parents withhold consent for certain aspects of photography in relation to their child, this must be respected. Images should be checked to determine whether photographs have been taken which inadvertently include pupils for whom consent has not been given. If this is the case, images should be destroyed, cropped or otherwise edited to ensure that parental consent is respected. If an image is edited for this reason, the original must be destroyed.

Periodically, professional photographers visit the school by arrangement to take portrait photographs and formal pictures of sports teams etc. Care should be taken that parental consent is respected and also that parents have not unintentionally withheld consent regarding such photographs. Any areas of doubt should be discussed with the Headteacher, who will arrange for parents to be contacted as appropriate. It is not compulsory for pupils to be included in portrait and team photography, nor is there any obligation on parents to purchase the resulting photographs.

From time to time a teacher, student or trainee teacher on placement may undertake a case study of a child, for example, as part of a training course to gain a qualification. In such situations, parental consent with regard to photography must be respected. Case studies will only be undertaken following prior written consent from the parent or carer and, except by prior arrangement between the Headteacher and the parent/carers, the child's name will be changed in the case study to protect his or her identity.

Occasionally a photograph may be taken which inadvertently catches a pupil in an unfortunate, embarrassing or compromising position. If this is the case, the image and any copies of it must be destroyed immediately.

Photography by parents

It is very difficult to police the use of cameras by parents, for example in assemblies or at sports fixtures. However, if members of staff have concerns about the suitability of photography by parents, they should consult the Headteacher, who will consider the situation with reference to this policy and the school's safeguarding procedures and take appropriate action. Concerns will be taken seriously, logged and investigated appropriately.

Any parent who works at the school, for example as a volunteer, must abide by this policy. The teacher responsible (for example the Trip Leader for an educational visit which uses parent volunteers) must ensure that the parents involved are aware of this policy and abide by it.

If parents wish to make a video recording of a school event (nativity, concert, drama production etc), prior permission must be obtained from the Headteacher, who will consider the situation with respect to this policy and the levels of consent given by parents of other children involved. Since it is difficult to ensure that parental consent is respected in these situations, and not appropriate to share the details of consent given for particular children with other parents, the Headteacher may refuse permission for a video recording of the event to be made. As an alternative, the school may make an official video recording/DVD, the editing of which, before it is made available to parents, will ensure that parental consent is respected.

Use of equipment

Except with permission from the Headteacher, staff may not use their own cameras, phones or other equipment (such as smart watches) to take pictures in school or at school events. School cameras, iPads and a mobile phone are available for this purpose. Only a selection of photos are kept at the end of the school year and transferred to the google drive all others are deleted. At the end of y6 all digital copies on the google drive are deleted.

Users bringing personal devices into the school must ensure there is no inappropriate or illegal content on the device. Staff must ensure that this policy is observed when using other equipment which can be used in connection with photographs (photocopier, scanner, printer, ipads etc.)

Editing and storage of photographs

All images taken by members of staff or volunteers at school or on school activities remain the property of the school. The school may require images to be deleted or edited as appropriate and may also select images taken by members of staff or volunteers for other purposes, with due attention paid to the requirements of this policy.

When editing images, staff must take due professional care and ensure that edited images do not mislead or misrepresent. Care must also be taken to ensure that images do not result in their subject being vulnerable to embarrassment, teasing, bullying or abuse.

Close attention must be paid to the storage of images, they should not be on portable media such as flash cards and memory sticks. Staff are responsible for the security of such media and the images they contain and must take all reasonable measures to ensure that they are kept safe and do not come into the possession of unauthorised people.

Unless specific prior consent has been obtained, members of staff and volunteers must not post school images on personal pages of social networking sites or other websites. The use of images on the school's official website and other approved sites is carefully monitored to ensure that it is in line with this policy and parental consent. The age limit for having a Facebook account is 13 and other social networks have similar restrictions. However, parents may not always

enforce these restrictions. Staff must be vigilant in respect of any inappropriate use by pupils of school images or their own photographs of school events on social networks and must report any concerns to the designated person for child protection.

This policy is available on the school's website and all parents are made aware of how to find it. Final responsibility for the appropriate use of photography at school and in connection with school events rests with the Headteacher and the Child Protection Officer. They monitor school images and may require an image to be deleted, edited or removed from a particular document, website etc in accordance with the requirements of this policy.

The school assesses the risk of access to archived images by inappropriate individuals to be very low. The school uses an online staff and volunteers must ensure that their use and storage of images maintains a similarly acceptable level of risk.

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. Ideally, their name should be on the phone or its case. If this is not possible, a clearly identifiable phone case should be used.

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.

As per this policy, which is available on our school website (and a paper copy can be obtained from the school office), 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 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

If there are any concerns regarding this policy, these should be brought to the attention of the Chair of Governors in a timely manner.