PACE Academy Trust

Mobile Phone and Smart Device Policy

Spring 2026

Article 3 – Best Interests of the Child
Every decision made in school must put the child's wellbeing, safety and learning first.

Article 16 – Right to Privacy
Children have the right to keep their personal information, images and communications private.

Article 19 – Protection from Harm
Children must be protected from all forms of physical or emotional harm, including online risks such as cyberbullying or exposure to inappropriate content

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PACE Academy Trust

Mobile Phone and Smart Device Policy

Introduction, Scope and Aims

Our schools within PACE Academy Trust recognise that mobile phones and smart devices are an important part of everyday life for many of our pupils. We also understand that pupils' use of mobile phones can bring both benefits and challenges within the school environment.

This policy is underpinned by key principles from the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, ensuring that:

- The best interests of the child (Article 3) guide all decisions about pupils' mobile phone use in school, supporting their wellbeing, safety and learning.
- Children's right to privacy (Article 16) is protected by establishing clear expectations that safeguard pupils' personal information, images and digital identity.
- Children's right to protection from harm (Article 19) informs our approach to preventing risks such as cyberbullying, online harassment and exposure to inappropriate content.

This policy sets out how our schools ensure a calm, safe and supportive environment for learning by operating as a mobile phone/smart device-free environment by default for the entire school day, including lessons, transitions, breaktimes and lunchtimes (DfE, "Mobile phones in schools", updated 19 January 2026).

Our policy aims to:

- Promote safe and responsible phone use among pupils
- Set clear guidelines for when and how pupils may bring or use mobile phones in school
- Support and align with the following policies:
    - Safeguarding and Child Protection
    - Social Media and Online Safety
    - Behaviour
    - Safeguarding and Wellbeing

Definitions

- Mobile phone: any handheld device capable of voice calls, messaging/notifications, or audio/video recording.
- Smart device: wearables (e. g .smartwatches, air tags, fit bits) or other devices with communication/notification/location or recording functions.
- School day: from arrival on site until departure, including breaks and transitions.

Relevant guidance

This policy aligns with the Department for Education's non-statutory guidance on mobile phone use and behaviour https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/mobile-phones-in-schools/mobile-phones-in-schools.
It should be read alongside Keeping Children Safe in Education, which provides the statutory safeguarding framework for all schools Keeping children safe in education - GOV.UK

It also aligns to Ofsted's most recent guidance to schools on how the mobile phone policy will be checked as part of an inspection. https://educationinspection.blog.gov.uk/2026/01/23/what-the-governments-updated-guidance-on-mobile-phones-means-for-school-inspections/
https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/searching-screening-and-confiscation

Use of mobile phones and smart devices by pupils

Pupils are prohibited from bringing to school or using mobile phones, smart devices, cameras or any other recording equipment at school unless there are exceptional circumstances.

For primary aged children, we believe these exceptional circumstances are limited to:

- Pupils travelling unaccompanied to school and from school by themselves who need a mobile phone to contact a parent/carer
- Pupils with diabetes who use a phone to monitor their blood sugar

These pupils may bring a mobile phone into school if:

1) written permission has been requested by the parent/carer **and**
2) this has been authorised by the school.

The phone **must** be switched off before entering the school premises. The child must hand the devise to a member of staff at the start of the school day where it will be stored in a safe place for the duration of the school day. The child is responsible for collecting it at the end of the school day.

The phone is not allowed to be switched on whilst on the school premises.

Use of smart devices 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. **For PACE Academy, this includes any smart device that may be used for the purposes of communication and/or tracking.**

- **Smartwatches -** Smartwatches are wristwatches with smart technology in them. They may 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.

  Children are not permitted to wear smartwatches or any other smart device at school.

- **Air Tags** - An Air tag is defined as a compact, battery-powered Bluetooth tracking device designed for locating personal belongings, which utilises the Apple "Find My" network to report location data.

  Air tags are not permitted at school or any school-related event, including trips.

Encouraging age-appropriate-, low-tech- alternatives

As part of our commitment to creating calm, safe and focused learning environments across PACE Academy Trust, we encourage parents and carers to carefully consider whether their child needs a smartphone at primary school age. While we recognise that some families value the reassurance of their child having a way to contact them when travelling to and from school, a smartphone is rarely necessary for this purpose.

For most children, a simple mobile phone that can only make and receive calls is a far more age-appropriate option. These basic handsets provide the essential function of enabling communication in an emergency or for pickup arrangements, without introducing the challenges associated with internet enabled devices such as access to social media, online gaming, messaging apps, or camera and recording features.

Choosing a low-tech phone can help protect children from online risks, minimise distractions, and promote healthy habits by delaying exposure to technology that children may not yet have the maturity to manage safely.

Sanctions

If a pupil does not follow the expectations set out in this policy, the school will apply proportionate and clearly defined sanctions.

Where a pupil uses a mobile phone or smart device in breach of this policy, staff may confiscate the device. Confiscation is permitted under sections 91 and 94 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006. The phone or smart device will be stored securely until it is returned.

The length of confiscation will be determined by the school and will always be reasonable and proportionate.

If confiscated, the device may only be collected by a parent or carer. The school will clearly communicate the collection process so that pupils and families understand what is required. Persistent misuse will lead to pupils being prevented from bringing a phone to school entirely.

In line with the DfE's guidance on searching, screening and confiscation, staff have the authority to search a pupil's phone if there is a good reason to do so. This includes situations where the phone is suspected to contain:

- Illegal or inappropriate images
- Evidence of bullying, harassment or harm

- Content relating to an offence
- Communications used to cause distress or pose a safeguarding risk

Where inappropriate or concerning content is found, the school will respond in line with safeguarding procedures, ensuring that pupils are supported and that information is passed to the appropriate staff, including the Designated Safeguarding Lead where necessary.

There will be a termly review of all cases where children bring their phone to school, with permission withdrawn if misused.

Loss, theft or damage

Pupils bringing mobile phones to school must ensure that the phones are turned off and that permission to bring the phone into school has been requested by the parent/carers and granted by the school.

The school accepts no responsibility for mobile phones that are lost, damaged or stolen on school premises, or while pupils are travelling to and from school.

Confiscated phones will be securely stored in a senior leader's office until collected by the parent/carer.

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.

Appendix 1: Mobile Phone Permission Form

PUPIL DETAILS	
Pupil name:	
Year group/class:	
Parent/carer(s) name(s):	

My child needs to bring their mobile phone to school because they (please tick/highlight):

- Travel to and from school alone
- Need the phone to support their medical needs
- Other exceptional circumstance (please provide details):

PHONE DETAILS	
Make/Model	
Colour	

- I have read and understood the school's Mobile Phone Policy, including the section on sanctions, including confiscation.
- I have explained the policy to my child and the expectations around the use of the phone.
- I understand that the school reserves the right to revoke permission if my child does not abide by the policy.

Parent/carer signature: _____

Pupil signature: _____

Date: _____

FOR SCHOOL USE ONLY	
Authorised by:	
Date:	