



MOBILE PHONE POLICY

MIDDLEWICH HIGH SCHOOL

Date approved: 23 June 2026
Approved by: Local Governing Body
Next Review Date: Summer Term 2027



Document Control Sheet

Document Type	Policy
Document name	Mobile Phone Policy
Originator	Karen Holt
Approved by	Local Governing Body
Date approved	23 June 2026
Review interval	Annual
Date of last approval	New Policy
Date of next review	Summer Term 2027
Links with other policies	Behaviour, Safeguarding, Searching and Screening, Anti-Bullying, Acceptable Use, Staff Code of Conduct, Data Protection, Educational Visits
Equality Act 2010 issues fully considered	Yes – considered to have a neutral impact

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MOBILE PHONE POLICY

1 Introduction and Aims

- 1.1 Middlewich High School is a member of The Sir John Brunner Foundation, a multi-academy trust created under the provisions of the Academies Act 2010. The Foundation is a company limited by guarantee incorporated in England and Wales with company number 11227336. It is an exempt charity and its Directors are also charity trustees.
- 1.2 The shared ambition of The Sir John Brunner Foundation is that every child's life is enhanced and advanced through the highest standards in education and that every child fulfils their academic potential through a broad and diverse education.
- 1.3 At Middlewich High School we recognise that mobile phones and similar devices, including smartphones, are an important part of everyday life for our students, parents/carers and staff, as well as the wider school community.
- 1.4 Our policy aims to:
 - Promote safe and responsible phone use
 - Set clear guidelines for the use of mobile phones for students, 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:

The policy applies to all students in our 11-16 Academies.

Throughout this policy, 'mobile phones' refers to mobile phones and similar devices including smart watches.

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/Deputy Headteacher is responsible for monitoring the policy every year, reviewing it, and holding staff and students 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

Governors will review the policy annually, in line with current practice.

4 Use of mobile phones by staff

The DfE's non-statutory mobile phone guidance says that staff should not use their own mobile phone for personal reasons in front of students throughout the school day.

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 for personal reasons, while children are present or during contact time. Use of personal mobile phones must be restricted to non-contact time, and to areas of the school where students are not present (such as the staffroom).

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 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).

Staff should refer to the school's Data Protection Policy and ICT Acceptable Use Policy.

4.3 Safeguarding

Staff must not give their personal contact details to parents/carers or students, 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 students. Staff should refer to the ICT Acceptable Use Policy and Staff Code of Conduct.

Staff must not use their personal mobile phones to take photographs or recordings of students, their work, or anything else that could identify a student. 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.

Staff should refer to the policy on Educational Visits. A school mobile phone will be taken on school trips and visits and the number shared with students and parents if it is a residential visit (where appropriate).

In these circumstances, staff will:

- Use their mobile phones in an appropriate and professional manner, in line with our staff code of conduct.
- Refrain from using their phones to contact parents/carers. If necessary, contact must be made via the school office or school mobile phone.

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.

5 Use of mobile phones by students

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

The school recognises that parents/carers in the community feel the need for their children to have access to a mobile phone for communication home. This helps with safeguarding and child protection especially in the long dark winter months. Middlewich High School supports this approach wholeheartedly. To that end, the school has adopted the following Mobile Phone Use Policy:

- Children are allowed to bring mobile phones to and from school to ensure their personal safety at all times.

- Children must not use a mobile device, smart watch or electronic device including headphones anywhere in school during the school day, except under the specific direction of a teacher for example due to medical needs.
- For the purposes of this policy, the school day begins the moment the children enter the school site and ends once the children have been dismissed from their final lesson and have left site.
- Mobile phones will not be permitted to be used at any after school extra-curricular clubs.

Students will be issued with a mobile phone pouch, which is school property and must be kept in good condition and be returned to school when the student leaves the school.

- If a child brings their phone to the school, then on arrival it should be switched off/on silent and secured in the phone pouch provided. It should not be seen or heard (including vibrate) throughout the school day.
- The phone can be removed from the locked pouch and switched back on as students leave site at the end of the day, not before and not during any period of social time (break or lunch).

5.1 Use of smartwatches by students

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.

This policy includes smart watches as well as mobile phones, which should also be stored in the phone pouch provided, if cellular they must be muted or not brought in.

5.2 School Trips & Visits

Students must keep their phones secured in their phone pouch whilst on a school visit (one day) which takes place in school hours or after school. These can be unlocked on their return to school.

For large trips such as the reward trips, the trip lead can authorise that pouches are not used, after consultation with the Headteacher. This is to allow students to contact staff in an emergency. Students must follow the guidelines

for responsible use set by the trip lead at all times. Failure to follow this will result in the same sanctions being applied, including confiscation.

Students may take their phones on residential trips (overnight) and must follow the guidelines for responsible use set by the trip lead at all times. Failure to follow this will result in the same sanctions being applied, including confiscation.

5.3 Exceptions for special circumstances

The school may permit students to use a mobile phone in school, due to exceptional circumstances such as monitoring blood sugar levels. This will be considered on a case-by-case basis. To request such permission, parents/carers should contact the Headteacher.

Any students who are given permission must then adhere to the school's acceptable use agreement for mobile phone use (see appendix 1). They will be issued with an adapted phone pouch to use during the school day.

5.4 Sanctions

If a student is in breach of this policy, for example by:

- Bringing/using/being in possession of a phone
- Dummy phone in pouch
- Damage to pouch
- Trying to open the pouch during the day

Or any other breaches of the policy;

The following sanctions could be applied:

- Confiscation of the phone until the end of the next day which should be collected by parent/carer between 3:30pm-4pm
- Escalation for repeat offenders could include step-out, suspension and confiscation for an extended period of time, with parent/carer to collect at the end of the school day between 3:30pm-4pm

Staff are permitted to confiscate phones from students under sections 91 and 94 of the [Education & Inspections Act 2006](#).

Staff have the power to search students' phones in specific circumstances, as set out in the [DfE's guidance on searching, screening and confiscation](#). The DfE guidance allows you to search a student'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).

The school will also consider whether:

- There are any relevant special circumstances (for example, age, religious requirements, special educational needs, disability)
- The student'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 students, 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 students

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. Information will be on display where visitors sign in. It will also be publicised on the school website.

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 students, their work, or anything else that could identify a student

Parents/carers or volunteers supervising trips are also responsible for enforcing the school's policy for students 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

Students bringing mobile phones to school must ensure that the phones are appropriately labelled and are stored securely in the phone pouch provided during the school day.

Students 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 students are travelling to and from school.

Confiscated phones will be stored in a secure location. They will be released to the parent/carer at the agreed date/time.

Lost phones should be returned to Reception. 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 students' education, behaviour and welfare. When reviewing the policy, the school will take into account:

- Feedback from parents/carers and students
- 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 Headteacher in a timely manner.

Appendix 1:

Acceptable use agreement for students allowed to bring their phones to school

Acceptable use agreement

You must obey the following rules if you bring your mobile phone to school:

1. You may not use your mobile phone during the school day.
2. Phones must be switched off/put on flight mode and stored in the locked phone pouch provided (not just put on 'silent').
3. In special circumstances, some students will use an adapted phone pouch to secure their phone but retain access for medical reasons.
4. You cannot take photos or recordings (either video or audio) of school staff or other students without their consent at any time.
5. Avoid sharing your contact details with people you don't know, and don't share other people's contact details without their consent.
6. Don't share your phone's password(s) or access code(s) with anyone else.
7. Don't use your mobile phone to bully, intimidate or harass anyone. This includes bullying, harassing or intimidating students or staff via:
 - a. Email
 - b. Text/messaging app
 - c. Social media
8. Don't use your phone to send or receive anything that may be criminal. For instance, by 'sexting'.
9. Rules on bullying, harassment and intimidation apply to how you use your mobile phone even when you aren't in school.
10. Don't use vulgar, obscene or derogatory language while on the phone or when using social media. This language is not permitted under the school's behaviour policy.
11. Don't use your phone to view or share pornography or other harmful content.
12. You must comply with a request by a member of staff to switch off, or hand over, a phone. Refusal to comply is a breach of the school's behaviour policy and will be dealt with accordingly.
13. Mobile phones and other smart devices are not permitted in any internal or external exam or test environment. If you have a mobile phone, you will be

reminded that it should be secured in your phone pouch, before entering the test room. Bringing a phone into the test room can result in your exam being declared invalid.

Appendix 2:

Permission form allowing a student to bring their phone to school and use an adapted phone pouch

STUDENT DETAILS	
Student name:	
Year group/class:	
Parent/carer(s) name(s):	

The school has agreed to allow _____ to bring their mobile phone to school because they:

- Need the phone to support their medical needs

Students who bring a mobile phone to school must abide by the school's policy on the use of mobile phones, and its Acceptable Use Agreement.

The school reserves the right to revoke permission if a student does not abide by the policy.

Parent/carer signature: _____

Student signature (where appropriate): _____

FOR SCHOOL USE ONLY	
Authorised by:	
Date:	

Appendix 3:

Template mobile phone information slip for visitors

Use of mobile phones and similar devices in our school

- Please keep your mobile phone on silent/vibrate while on the school grounds
- Please do not use phones where students are present. If you must use your phone, you may go to the staffroom or an office
- Do not take photos or recordings of students (unless it is your own child), or staff
- Do not use your phone in lessons, or when working with students

The school accepts no responsibility for phones that are lost, damaged or stolen while you are on the school grounds.

A full copy of our Mobile Phone Policy is available from the school office.