Ashton Community Science College

Mobile Phone & Digital Devices Policy

Review Schedule

Named Owner:	Mr W Clarke (Deputy Headteacher)
Date Of Creation:	February 2020
Last Review:	October 2026
Next Scheduled Review:	October 2027
Overview of Amendments to this Version:	Section 3: Student storage of mobile phones when in school. Sanctions for misuse. Returning confiscated items. Section 1 & 8: Reference to guidance released from the DfE.

Draft Policy to be ratified at Committee in Oct 2026

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1. Introduction and Aims

1.1 Aims

At Ashton Community Science College, we recognise that mobile phones, including smart phones, are an important part of everyday life for our students, parents and staff, as well as the wider school community.

Our policy aims to:

- Promote, and set an example for, safe and responsible phone use
- Set clear guidelines for the use of mobile phones for students, staff, parents and volunteers
- Support the school's other policies, Safeguarding, Behaviour for Learning and Anti bullying

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

1.2 Rationale

In line with the Department for Education's statutory guidance (2026), this school is a mobile phone-free environment by default. Students must not use or have access to mobile phones or smart devices at any point during the school day unless an authorised exemption has been granted.

This also applies to smart watch devices that;

- receive messages;
- make or receive calls;
- access the internet;
- record audio or video;

These devices are treated in exactly the same way as mobile phones in school.

Aside from the safeguarding issue, the rationale for this is that it has been shown that the effect of banning mobile phones from school premises adds up to the equivalent of an extra week's schooling over a student's academic year. This is according to research by Louis-Philippe Beland and Richard Murphy, published by the Centre for Economic Performance at the London School of Economics.

"Ill Communication: The Impact of Mobile Phones on Student Performance" found that after schools banned mobile phones, the test scores of students aged 16 improved by 6.4%. The economists reckon that this is the "equivalent of adding five days to the school year". According to Beland and Murphy, a phone ban produced improvements in test scores among students, with the lowest-achieving students gaining twice as much as average students. The ban had a greater positive impact on students with special education needs and those eligible for free school meals, while having no discernible effect on high achievers. "We found that not only did student achievement improve, but also that low-achieving and low-income students gained the most. We found the impact of banning phones for these students was equivalent to an additional hour a week in school, or to increasing the school year by five days."

2. Roles and responsibilities

2.1 Staff

All staff (including teachers, support staff, and supply staff) are responsible for 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 Senior Leadership Team are responsible for monitoring and reviewing the policy and holding staff and students accountable for its implementation.

3. Use of mobile phones and smart watch technology by students

3.1 Student Use

The school recognises that parents/carers in the community feel the need for their children to have access to a mobile phone for communication with home. This helps with safeguarding and child protection especially in the long dark winter months. Ashton CSC supports this approach wholeheartedly. To that end the school has adopted the following mobile phone best use policy:

• Students are allowed to bring mobile phones to and from school to ensure their personal safety when travelling to and from school.

• Students must not use a mobile device, smart watch or electronic device including personal headphones anywhere in school during the school day. For the purposes of this policy, the school day begins the moment the student enters the school grounds and finishes when they leave the school grounds.

• If a student brings their mobile phone to school, then on arrival it should be switched off and placed in their school bag. It should not be seen or heard (including vibrate) throughout the school day. This also includes being visible in pockets.

• The phone can be switched back on upon leaving the school site. Not before and not during any period of social time (break or lunch or after school club).

3.2 Contacting Students and Parents/Carers

In non-urgent situations parents wishing to contact their child during the school day should ring the school and request Student Reception. We have a well-established and efficient system for getting messages to students and pastoral support if it is needed.

Students who need to contact parents during the course of the school day should speak to Student Reception or their Head of Year, who will make a phone available.

Students must not use their mobile phones to contact parents during the school day. If a student chooses to call, text, or message a parent from their personal device, a sanction will be issued, as this breaches the school's communication procedures.

Parents are asked not to respond directly to messages from their child during school hours. If a parent contacts the school because their child has used their mobile phone to reach them, the student will also receive a sanction, as this indicates they have bypassed the correct pastoral channels.

All communication home must go through school staff so that issues can be managed safely, calmly, and appropriately.

3.3 Sanctions

• Any student found using or known to have used their phone during the school day will have the phone confiscated and parents will be informed via School Synergy.

• If the student is a repeat offender, the school will request a parent/carer to come in and collect the phone from the school, this will be at a time convenient to SLT staff.

• Any refusal to hand a phone over to members of staff will result in an immediate suspension under the school's Behaviour Policy. This would constitute the refusal of a reasonable request by a member of staff. Where a student initially refuses to hand over their device, staff will provide clear instructions, explain the reason for the request, and allow the student a reasonable period of time to regulate their emotions and make an informed decision to comply.

Phone – "Seen or Heard" on school site	**Sanctions**
First Time	Confiscation and 45 minute after school detention. Student to collect device on successful completion of detention.
Second Time	Confiscation and 1 day in ARC – parent to collect device
Third Time	Confiscation and suspension from school – parent to collect device
Refusal to hand over device	Suspension from school

If a phone is seen by a member of staff, it will be confiscated by them. Schools are permitted to confiscate phones from students under sections 91 and 94 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006.

On the first incident a confiscated device will be placed in student reception where the student will be allowed to collect it at 3:45 pm after successfully completing their 45-minute detention. If a student does not attend or fails to complete their detention successfully, we will request that a parent or carer collects the device at a time convenient to SLT staff, which could be the following day.

If a student has their mobile phone confiscated more than once, we will request a parent or carer collects it at a time convenient to SLT staff, this could be the following day.

The DfE guidance is clear that the law protects staff from liability in any proceedings brought against them for any loss or damage to items they have confiscated as a sanction. Mobile phones in schools - GOV.UK

If we have reason to believe the phone contains indecent images, or if it is being/has been used to commit an offence or cause personal injury, staff have the power to search students' phones, as set out in the DfE's guidance on searching, screening and confiscation.

Certain types of conduct, for example 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
- 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

3.4 Offsite trips and visits

Students who bring a mobile phone on a school trip or visit must abide by the school's policy on the use of mobile phones.

Due to the wide variety of trips, staff may grant permission for students to be able to use their mobile phone, to make calls, send messages, surf the internet, take photos or use any other application during the trip to aid the learning and keep students safe.

If permission is granted students must abide by all expectations within the Mobile phone acceptable use agreement for students (Appendix 1) regarding phone etiquette.

4. Use of mobile phones by staff

4.1 Personal mobile phones

Staff (including volunteers, contractors and anyone else otherwise involved /employed by the school) are not permitted to make or receive calls, or send texts, while students are present. 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 empty classrooms, offices and the staff room).

There may be circumstances in which it's appropriate for a member of staff to have use of their phone during contact time. For instance:

- 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 Safeguarding

Staff must refrain from giving their personal contact details to parents 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 or students.

Similar details and guidance can be found in the E-Safety and Internet Email Use Policy alongside the ICT Acceptable Use policy.

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

4.3 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:

- 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 students, their work, or anything else which could identify a student.

4.4 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 parents, volunteers and visitors

Parents, 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 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, 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 or volunteers supervising trips are also responsible for enforcing the school's policy for students using their phones, as set out in section 4 above.

Parents must use the student reception 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 his/her personal mobile during the school day.

6. Loss, theft or damage

Students bringing phones to school must ensure that phones they are stored securely and out of sight when not in use.

Students must secure their 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 GDPR breaches.

Where a mobile phone is brought into school, it is entirely at the student's and parents' own risk. The school accepts no responsibility for the loss, theft or damage of any phone or electronic device brought into school. (Ref: Section 94, Education and Inspections Act 2006 states that "where a teacher disciplines a student by confiscating an item, neither the teacher nor the school will be liable for any loss or damage to that item. Equally, there is no statutory liability on schools for items that go missing in other ways.")

Confiscated phones will be stored in student reception in a secure location.

Lost phones should be returned to student reception. The school will then attempt to contact the owner.

7. Monitoring and review

The school is committed to ensuring that this policy has a positive impact of students' education, behaviour and welfare. When reviewing the policy, the school will take into account, relevant advice from the Department for Education, the local authority or other relevant organisations.

Most recent guidance from the DfE includes **Mobile Phones in Schools** -updated 29th June 2026.

8 Appendix 1: Mobile phone acceptable use agreement for students

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

1. You may not use your mobile phone/smart watch during your time on school site, unless directed by a teacher.
2. Phones / smart watch devices must be switched off (not just put on 'silent') and placed in bags.
3. You may not use your mobile phone/ smart watch devices in the toilets or changing rooms. This is to protect the privacy and welfare of other students.
4. You cannot take photos or recordings (either video or audio) of school staff or other students.
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 passwords or access codes with anyone else.
7. Don't use your mobile phone to bully, intimidate or harass anyone. This includes bullying, harassing or intimidating any member of the school community:

a. Email
b. Text/messaging app
c. Social media

8. Don't use your phone / smart watch device 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. You must comply with a request by a member of staff to switch off, or turn over, a phone. Refusal to comply is a breach of the school's behaviour policy and will be dealt with accordingly.
12. Mobile phones / smart watch devices are not permitted in any internal or external exam or test environment. If you have a mobile phone, you will be asked to store these appropriately, or turn them over to an exam invigilator, before entering the test room. Bringing a phone into the test room can result in your exam being declared invalid.
13. When on a school trip during school hours the same rules apply. If the trip is over night or outside of the school day, you may use a mobile phone under the lead teacher's direction, to communicate with others. All expectations above regarding phone etiquette will apply.