



Blackpool Gateway Academy

Mobile Phone Use Policy

2026/27

National Context & Statutory Duty

In January 2026, the Secretary of State for Education, Bridget Phillipson, issued a directive establishing a 'national reset' on mobile phones in schools. The Department for Education has explicitly stated that to improve behaviour, learning and wellbeing, schools should be phone-free environments for the entire school day.

Ofsted will explicitly assess the implementation of this policy starting from the Summer Term 2026. Inspectors will evaluate not just the existence of the policy, but the rigour of its application to ensure a safe, distraction-free culture.

Introduction

At Blackpool Gateway Academy, our priority is to create a safe and focused environment for children. We recognise that mobile phones and smart technology are part of modern life, but they have no place in the primary school day. They can cause distraction, disrupt learning and present safeguarding risks.

General Rule: Phone-Free Site

Pupils in Reception to Year 5

Pupils in these year groups are not permitted to bring mobile phones to school. If a child is found with a phone, it will be taken to the school office for safe keeping and must be collected by a parent.

The Walking Home Exception (Year 6 only)

We understand that some Year 6 children walk to and from school independently and may need a phone for personal safety during their journey.

The Protocol:

1. **Permission:** parents must confirm in writing (or via the school app) that their child has permission to bring a phone for safety reasons.
2. **Hand-in routine:** upon entering the school grounds, the phone must be switched off and handed immediately to the class TA who will take all phones to the office once registers have closed.
3. **Secure storage:** phones will be stored in a secure, lockable safe in the school office for the duration of the school day.
4. **Collection:** phones will be returned to the class teacher by the office staff at 3:05pm ready for distribution at 3:15pm. They must only be switched *after* the children have left the school gates. If children are at an extra-curricular club, the office staff drop the phones off with the club leads who will distribute them at the end of the club.

Note: Phones must not be kept in pupil's coat pockets or school bags, as this poses a risk of loss, damage or temptation to use them in toilets/cloakrooms. If staff suspect a pupil is hiding a phone on their person or in their coat or bag, these will be searched to verify if there is a mobile phone (as per the DFE's Mobile Phones in Schools guidance doc June 2026).

Smart Watches and Wearables

Smart watches (e.g. Apple Watch, VTech, Fitbit with messaging) that allow a child to send messages, take photos or play games are prohibited.

- If a child needs a watch to tell the time, we recommend a simple analogue or digital watch with no 'smart' features.
- If a smart watch is brought to school, it must be handed in alongside mobile phones.

Sanctions and Procedures

Our approach is one of Safeguarding and Partnership. We do not use mobile phone confiscation as a punishment, but as a necessary measure to maintain a safe environment.

If a pupil is found with a phone/device that has not been handed in:

1. **Safe Keeping:** the device will be taken by a member of staff and logged in the school office safe.
2. **Parental Contact:** the school office will contact the parent/carer to inform them.
3. **Collection:** the phone will **not** be returned to the child. The parent/carer must collect the device from the school office at the end of the day.
4. **Review:** if a child repeatedly breaks this rule, the Headteacher may revoke the permission for them to bring a phone to school, even if they walk home alone.

Liability:

The Academy accepts **no liability** for loss or damage to mobile phones or devices brought onto the premises, including those stored in school.

Staff and Visitors (Role Modelling)

To support our children, we ask all adults to model phone-free behaviour.

- **Parents/Carers:** please do not use your mobile phone in the playground when dropping off or collecting children or when in school for school events. We want to maximise the time for "hello" and "goodbye" smiles with your child.
- **Events/Assemblies:** we ask that phones are kept away during school performances unless specific permission is given for photos (which must not be shared on social media if other children are visible).
- **Staff:** staff are prohibited from using personal phones for personal reasons in areas used by pupils-only school purchased phones can be used and this will be for taking photos and videos of the pupils and their work. The following school phones have stickers on the back with the school logo on: SLT phones, SEND Manager phone, attendance phone, trips phone, Business Manager Phone, Family Engagement Worker phone and breakfast and after school club phone.

Policy written: January 2026

Reviewed and amended: March 2026

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Review date: March 2027