# ASPIRE ACADEMY MOBILE PHONES AND DEVICES POLICY

2026-2027

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## Introduction

Mobile phones and other personal devices now include advanced functions such as integrated cameras, instant messaging, mobile internet, social networking access, location sharing, artificial intelligence tools, and access to platforms such as Snapchat, WhatsApp, TikTok and other social media apps.

While these devices can be useful outside school, their use during the school day can disrupt learning, negatively affect behaviour and discipline, and create significant safeguarding risks. These risks include cyberbullying, Child-on-Child abuse, inappropriate image or video sharing, access to harmful or age-inappropriate content, online harassment, recording or sharing images without consent, and contact with unknown individuals online.

This policy supports the school's wider safeguarding, behaviour, anti-bullying, online safety, SEND and equality responsibilities. It should be read alongside the school's Behaviour Policy, Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, Online Safety Policy, Anti-Bullying Policy, SEND Policy and Exams Policy.

This policy is written in line with current statutory and government guidance, including:

- Section 36 of the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act 2026 (Statutory Duty)
- DfE Mobile Phones in Schools statutory guidance (June 2026 update)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education, current version
- DfE Searching, Screening and Confiscation guidance, current version
- DfE Behaviour in Schools guidance, current version
- DfE Suspension and Permanent Exclusion guidance, current version
- Education and Inspections Act 2006, Section 91
- Education Act 1996
- Equality Act 2010
- Children Act 1989 and Children Act 2004
- UK GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018
- JCQ Instructions for Conducting Examinations, current academic year

## Prohibited Items

Banned on Site During the School Day, including extracurricular activities:

- Mobile phones
- Smartwatches and wearable connectivity devices must be removed, switched off completely and stored inside students' school bags as part of the morning Out, Off and Away routine. They must not be worn, visible, accessed or used throughout the Academy day until students have passed through the designated student exit points and left the Academy site, unless an authorised exception or reasonable adjustment applies. Any unauthorised wearing or use will normally result in confiscation and the appropriate published consequence.
- Earphones / earbuds / wireless headphones (e.g., AirPods, Beats, etc.)
- Any device capable of receiving, recording, or transmitting audio, images, or video

These items are **not to be used, seen, or heard** during the school day, including extracurricular activities.

## Mobile Phones- Before School, Morning Line-Up and the Academy Day

**Before the Academy Day**
Students are permitted to use their mobile phones while waiting outside the Academy before the morning line-up begins. During this time, students are expected to behave responsibly and follow the Academy's behaviour and safeguarding expectations.

**Morning Line-Up – Out, Off and Away**
At the start of the Academy day, students must move promptly to their designated line-up areas, where staff will carry out the Academy's daily checks.

As part of these checks, every student who has brought a mobile phone must follow the **Out, Off and Away** routine under staff supervision:

- **OUT:** Take the mobile phone out of their pocket or bag and present it to the member of staff.
- **OFF:** Switch the phone off completely in front of the member of staff. Silent mode, airplane mode or simply locking the screen is not acceptable.
- **AWAY:** Place the switched-off phone inside their school bag, where it must remain out of sight for the entire Academy Day.

Students must follow staff instructions promptly and cooperate fully with the morning checks.

**During the Academy Day**
Once the Out, Off and Away routine has been completed, mobile phones must remain completely switched off and stored inside students' school bags throughout the Academy Day.

This includes Form time, lessons, transitions, breaktimes, lunchtimes, assemblies, interventions, detentions and all other supervised Academy activities.

Students must not switch on, access, use, display or remove their phones from their bags unless specifically authorised under the Academy's published exceptions and reasonable-adjustment arrangements.

**At the End of the Academy Day**
Mobile phones must remain switched off and stored away until students have passed through the designated student exit points and left the Academy site. Students must not switch on or use their phones while moving through corridors, leaving classrooms, queuing at exit points or walking across the Academy site at the end of the day. Once students have exited through the designated student exit points, they may switch on and use their phones.

**Failure to Comply**

Any failure to follow the Out, Off and Away routine, or any unauthorised use, activation or visibility of a mobile phone during the restricted period, will normally result in confiscation and the appropriate consequence under the Academy's published academic-year mobile-phone sanction ladder.

Any sanction will be applied reasonably and proportionately, taking account of individual circumstances, safeguarding considerations and reasonable adjustments where required.

## Device Compliance Checks

Where staff have reasonable grounds to believe that a mobile phone or personal smart device is switched on, being used or concealed in breach of Academy rules, they may instruct the pupil to surrender the device for a compliance check. An ordinary compliance check may establish whether the device appears to be powered on, whether it is making a sound or vibrating, its visible external condition and information displayed without unlocking the device.

A routine compliance check does not authorise staff to demand a passcode, open applications, read private communications, inspect stored photographs or files or access personal accounts.

Any examination of data or files must be separately justified and undertaken by an appropriately authorised member of staff in accordance with the statutory Searching, Screening and Confiscation guidance, data-protection requirements and the Academy's safeguarding procedures.

Where there is a concern involving suspected nude or semi-nude images of a child, staff must not intentionally view, copy, forward, download or print the material. The device must be secured and the matter referred immediately to the DSL or a deputy.

Where a breach is confirmed, the published academic-year sanction ladder will normally apply, subject to individual circumstances and reasonable adjustments. Refusal to surrender a device will be addressed through the Academy's refusal procedures.

## Classroom Exits and Bag- Left Rule

Students permitted to leave a classroom during lesson time must leave their mobile phones and personal devices switched off and securely stored inside their school bags.

Where a student is found carrying or deliberately concealing a device while outside a classroom, it will normally be confiscated and recorded as a mobile-device breach. Deliberate concealment or deception may constitute C4 – serious non-compliance, depending on the individual circumstances.

Concealment alone will not automatically constitute C5. C5 will apply only where the associated conduct meets the Academy's definition of serious, dangerous or safeguarding-related behaviour.

Reasonable adjustments and authorised exceptions will apply where a student requires a device for medical, disability-related, communication or safeguarding purposes.

## Authorised Exceptions and Reasonable Adjustments

The Academy recognises that a small number of pupils may require individual arrangements relating to mobile phones or other personal devices because of disability, SEND, medical conditions, communication needs, safeguarding concerns, young-carer responsibilities or significant exceptional circumstances.

Where reasonably possible, arrangements will be agreed in advance and recorded in the pupil's individual healthcare plan, reasonable-adjustment record, safeguarding plan or other appropriate support plan. The arrangement will specify the permitted device, purpose, times and locations of use, supervision arrangements where necessary, and the responsible member of staff.

The Academy will make reasonable adjustments for disabled pupils where required under the Equality Act 2010 and will consider the needs of pupils with SEN. Decisions will be made individually and proportionately. An authorised exception will not be recorded as a policy breach.

In an unforeseen medical emergency or urgent safeguarding situation, the pupil's immediate health, safety and welfare will take priority. Appropriate assistance and communication will be facilitated without unnecessary delay, whether or not a prior written arrangement exists.

Exceptions will be reviewed when circumstances change to ensure that they remain appropriate, effective and consistent with the Academy's safeguarding duties.

## Exams

During internal assessments, pre-public examinations and external examinations, mobile phones, smartwatches, wireless earbuds and other unauthorised electronic devices must not be taken into the examination room or be in a pupil's possession contrary to examination regulations.

Pupils must follow the Academy's published arrangements for handing in and collecting devices and comply with instructions issued by invigilators. External examinations will be conducted in accordance with the current JCQ Instructions for Conducting Examinations and any applicable awarding-body requirements.

Possession of an unauthorised device may result in a report to the awarding body and examination penalties, irrespective of whether the device was used. Any additional Academy behaviour consequence will be considered individually.

## Educational Visits, Fixtures and Residential Trips

The Academy's Out, Off and Away expectations will normally apply to educational visits, careers events, sporting fixtures, Academy-arranged transport and other supervised activities taking place during the Academy Day.

The visit leader may establish alternative arrangements where necessary for safeguarding, supervision, communication, medical requirements or the educational purpose of a visit. Any variation must be approved through the Academy's educational visits procedures and clearly communicated to pupils, parents and accompanying staff.

For residential visits, specific arrangements will be published in advance. These may include whether pupils may bring devices, the permitted times and locations for contacting home, overnight storage arrangements, restrictions on photography or recording, and measures to safeguard pupils from online harm.

Pupils will remain subject to the Academy's behaviour expectations and appropriate safeguarding procedures throughout Academy-organised activities. Individual medical, SEND, disability and safeguarding arrangements will continue to be considered.

## Sanctions and Confiscation Procedures

Sanctions will be applied in a fair, reasonable, proportionate and consistent manner, taking account of the individual circumstances of each incident. Where required, the Academy will consider and implement reasonable adjustments for pupils with SEND, disabilities or medical needs in accordance with its statutory duties. Confirmed breaches are recorded cumulatively across the academic year, with sanctions determined under the published Sanction Ladder below.

## Academic-Year Mobile Phone Sanction Ladder

| **Academic-Year Stage** | **Normal Academy Response** | **Device-Return Arrangements** | **Behaviour System & Points Integration** |
|---|---|---|---|
| **First confirmed breach in the academic year** | • **Out of lesson:** 20-minute supervised lunchtime detention.<br><br>• **In lesson (e.g., sounding, visible, or in use):** 45-minute same-day after-school detention (3.00pm–3.45pm). | Pupil collects at 3.00pm or immediately after completion of detention / authorised activity. | • **Out of lesson:** Recorded as routine device breach.<br><br>• **In lesson:** Recorded as **C3 (-3 behaviour points)** on ClassCharts. |
| **Second confirmed breach in the academic year** *(Applies to ANY combination of in-lesson or out-of-lesson breaches)* | **1-hour 30-minute after-school detention** (3.00pm–4.30pm) and Head of Year review. | **Parent, carer, or authorised adult only.** | Recorded as Stage 2 cumulative breach; contributes to weekly points total. |

| Academic-Year Stage | Normal Academy Response | Device-Return Arrangements | Behaviour System & Points Integration |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Third confirmed breach in the academic year** | Normally **one full school day in Impact** plus senior extended detention to **5.30pm**, with senior leader review and formal device ban. | **Parent, carer, or authorised adult only.** | Triggers formal device ban for the remainder of the academic year. |
| **Further breach while subject to a formal device ban** | SLT review, authorised Impact placement, and senior extended detention to **5.30pm**. | **Parent, carer, or authorised adult only.** | Direct escalation to SLT review and daily compulsory phone hand-in. |
| **Serious misuse at any point** *(e.g., unauthorised filming, cyberbullying, image manipulation)* | Individual **C4/C5 assessment** and immediate safeguarding referral where appropriate. | Determined by a senior leader. | Escalates immediately outside routine stages under C4/C5 framework. |

**Policy Rules & System Integration**

**1. Cumulative Stage Escalation Rule**

Device breaches are tracked cumulatively across the full academic year. **Stage escalation applies to ANY combination of breaches.**

- *Example:* If a pupil receives a first breach out of lesson (20-minute lunchtime detention) and a second breach in lesson, the second breach automatically escalates to **Stage 2: 1-hour 30-minute detention (3.00pm–4.30pm)** and Head of Year review. It cannot be argued as a "first in-lesson breach."

**2. In-Lesson Violation & Points Integration (-3 Points)**

An in-lesson device violation is classified as persistent non-compliance and carries an immediate **C3 penalty (-3 behaviour points)**.

- **Weekly -6 "Stay Above the Line" Threshold:** Because an in-lesson breach carries **-3 points**, accumulating two in-lesson breaches—or one in-lesson breach combined with other classroom/transition misbehaviours totaling **-6 points within a single school week**—will automatically trigger the Academy's **Stay Above the Line** intervention:
    - One full school day in Impact provision.
    - Senior extended detention to 5.30pm.

- Placement on Cream Report (monitored daily by Form Tutor for 5 school days).
- Entry into The Hive behaviour tracking process.

**3. Definitions of Breaches**

- **In-Lesson Breach:** Any device that is visible, used, or sounds (ringtones, alarms, notifications) during lesson time, registration, assembly, or structured learning without explicit, recorded teacher authorization.
- **Out-of-Lesson Breach:** Any device visible, used, or heard in corridors, social spaces, dining areas, stairwells, or during transitions before the pupil has passed through designated exit points at the end of the school day.

Each continuous incident will normally be recorded as one confirmed mobile-device breach. Serious misuse may justify a C4 or C5 response without progressing through the ordinary first-, second- or third-breach stages. Where the same incident falls within both the academic-year sanction ladder and the Behaviour Escalation Ladder, an authorised leader will determine a proportionate overall consequence and will avoid unnecessarily duplicating sanctions. The incident will remain recorded in the pupil's academic-year mobile-device history. Duplicate, withdrawn or incorrectly recorded incidents will not count towards escalation.

## Serious Misuse of Mobile Phones and Personal Devices

Serious misuse may include unauthorised filming, photography or audio recording; sharing or threatening to share recordings; recording fights or safeguarding incidents; cyberbullying; harassment; discriminatory or sexual abuse; accessing or distributing harmful content; using artificial intelligence to create or manipulate images or audio; impersonation; and using a device to facilitate criminal conduct, intimidation or exploitation.

Serious misuse will be considered individually under the Academy's Behaviour Escalation Ladder. A C4 or C5 response may be appropriate depending on the nature, seriousness, intent, context and impact of the incident. C5 will apply where the conduct meets the Academy's definition of serious, dangerous or safeguarding-related behaviour.

The Academy will consider the age and understanding of the pupil, SEND or disability-related needs, the actual or potential harm caused, whether material was shared, the vulnerability of those affected and any relevant safeguarding circumstances.

Where a safeguarding concern arises, staff must inform the DSL or a deputy without delay. Relevant evidence will be protected and the Academy's safeguarding procedures followed. Staff must not intentionally view, copy or distribute suspected nude or semi-nude images of children.

Following an individual assessment, consequences may include confiscation, C4 or C5 sanctions, Impact, targeted intervention or consideration of suspension. Any decision to suspend or permanently exclude may be made only by the Headteacher, or a person formally acting as Headteacher, in accordance with the applicable statutory guidance. No outcome will be automatic.

## Confiscation Procedure & Logging

When a personal device is confiscated, the member of staff must explain the reason, record the incident on Class Charts and arrange for the device to be taken to the Attendance Office at the earliest reasonable opportunity. On-Call may be requested to assist with confiscation or secure transfer where necessary.

The device must be placed in a labelled envelope or suitable secure container. A record must identify the pupil, device, date and time of confiscation, confiscating member of staff, receiving member of staff, reason for confiscation, sanction stage and agreed collection arrangements.

The device will be placed in the designated secure storage facility. Parents or carers will be informed as soon as practicable, normally by text message, and advised of collection arrangements. The release of the device must be recorded, including the date, time and identity of the person collecting it.

The staff member who initially confiscates the device remains responsible for ensuring that it is securely transferred and logged. Where responsibility is passed to another member of staff, this handover must be clear and recorded.

## Refusal to Hand Over or Stop Using a Mobile Phone

Where a pupil refuses a reasonable instruction to surrender a mobile phone or personal smart device, staff will repeat the instruction calmly, explain the reason, allow appropriate take-up time and consider any relevant SEND, disability, medical, communication or safeguarding circumstances.

An initial deliberate refusal will normally be recorded as C4 – serious non-compliance and will result in the published C4 consequence. Following the incident, the pupil will normally be placed on a temporary daily phone hand-in arrangement. The pupil must surrender the device to their Head of Year, or another designated member of staff, immediately on arrival at the Academy each morning.

The device will be logged and securely transferred to the designated school safe in the Attendance Office. Where a pupil is placed in Impact, staff must ensure that any confiscated device is transferred and recorded in accordance with the Academy's normal confiscation procedure. The device will be returned in accordance with the agreed collection arrangements.

The arrangement will have a recorded start date, review date and responsible member of staff. An authorised senior leader may vary the arrangement where justified by the pupil's individual circumstances, including reasonable adjustments. Any variation and reasons will be recorded.

Sustained refusal, threats, aggression, abusive language or other associated behaviour may be considered at C4 or C5 according to the facts. Refusal alone will not automatically constitute C5 or result in suspension.

## Device Storage and Tracking

All confiscated devices will be locked in the school safe. A record of the incident will be logged on Class Charts. Parents will receive a text message confirmation on the day of confiscation.

## Searching and Legal Justification

Reasonable grounds may include:

- the device has been seen or heard;

- reliable information indicates that the pupil possesses it;
- there is evidence that the device has been used;
- the pupil has concealed it following an instruction;
- the pupil is subject to a formal device ban;
- the pupil has refused to surrender a device believed to be present; or
- there is information indicating that the device may contain evidence of harm or an offence.

The statutory guidance expressly advises Headteachers to identify mobile phones and similar devices as items for which a search may be conducted.

### Who may search

A search may be conducted only by:

- the Headteacher; or
- a member of staff specifically authorised by the Headteacher.

Before the search, the authorised member of staff will normally:

1. explain why the search is proposed;
2. explain how and where it will take place;
3. seek the pupil's cooperation;
4. allow the pupil to ask questions;
5. consider the pupil's age, SEND, disability, communication needs and previous experiences; and
6. consider whether the search may reveal a safeguarding concern.

Searches must be carried out consistently, proportionately and fairly.

The Academy may authorise searches for mobile phones and other items identified as searchable under its published Behaviour Policy, where the relevant statutory requirements are met. Any search, confiscation, retention or disposal must be lawful, necessary where applicable, reasonable and proportionate, and carried out in accordance with the Academy's safeguarding procedures and current Department for Education guidance.

The Headteacher and members of staff specifically authorised by the Headteacher may search a pupil or their possessions where there are reasonable grounds to suspect that the pupil possesses an item identified in the Academy's rules as searchable. All searches must comply with the applicable statutory requirements, including requirements concerning the conduct of searches, privacy, dignity, safeguarding and the pupil's individual circumstances.

The power to search does not mean that a search must take place whenever a device is suspected. Staff must consider the circumstances, the evidence available, the pupil's cooperation and whether the proposed search is necessary and proportionate.

Physical force must not be used to search solely for a mobile phone or another item prohibited only by Academy rules. The use of force in connection with a search is restricted by legislation and statutory guidance.

Where a device may contain evidence of abuse, harmful images, exploitation or criminal conduct, the matter must be referred promptly to the DSL or a deputy. Any examination of data or files must be lawful, necessary and proportionate. Suspected nude or semi-nude images of children must not be intentionally viewed by staff.

The detailed requirements for authorisation, conducting and recording searches, confiscation, retention, safeguarding referrals and parental communication are set out in the Academy's Behaviour Policy and Searching, Screening and Confiscation procedures, which take precedence over any abbreviated account in this policy.

### Refusal to cooperate with a lawful search

Where a pupil refuses to cooperate with a lawful search, staff must follow the Academy's Searching, Screening and Confiscation procedures. The pupil will be given a clear explanation of the reason for the search, an appropriate opportunity to cooperate and an opportunity to explain their refusal.

A deliberate and sustained refusal to comply with a lawful and reasonable instruction may constitute C4 – serious non-compliance. The reviewing senior leader will consider the circumstances, the pupil's account, SEND and disability-related needs, safeguarding concerns and any reasonable adjustments before determining the appropriate response.

Where necessary and proportionate, the pupil may be removed from mainstream lessons and placed in Impact for a specified, supervised and time-limited period, with meaningful education continuing. The normal C4 detention is 3.00pm to 4.30pm, subject to the Academy's detention safeguards and senior authorisation where required.

The Academy will not use force solely to search for a mobile phone or other item prohibited only by Academy rules. Where there is a risk of harm, staff must follow the statutory guidance and the Academy's safeguarding and restrictive-intervention procedures.

Any search, refusal, safeguarding concern, decision, sanction, reasonable adjustment and communication with parents will be recorded. Refusal to cooperate with a search will not automatically result in suspension or permanent exclusion.

## Parental Role and Communication

Parents/Carers should:

- Reinforce the policy and help children understand why it is in place.
- Avoid calling or texting students during school hours; instead, contact the school office.
- Understand that phones will not be returned upon request during the school day.
- Understand that the Academy may lawfully confiscate and retain mobile phones and personal devices in accordance with its published behaviour procedures, the Education and Inspections Act 2006 and current Department for Education guidance, provided that the action is lawful, reasonable and proportionate.

## Contacting Home During the School Day

**Unauthorised use of a personal mobile phone or device to contact home during the Academy Day will normally be treated as C4.** The pupil will receive the published C4 consequence from **3.00pm to 4.30pm**, the device will be confiscated and the parent or carer will be informed. Any immediate medical, welfare or safeguarding need will always be addressed first. Relevant SEND, safeguarding or exceptional circumstances, and any **medical need already known to and recorded by the Academy**, will be considered before the consequence is confirmed.

Where phone access is required to manage a **medical condition known to the Academy**, the arrangement must be authorised, clearly defined and recorded within the pupil's **individual healthcare plan, reasonable-adjustment record or other agreed support plan**.

## Safeguarding Assurance

Confiscation will be managed so that it does not prevent a pupil from accessing necessary medical support, safeguarding help or an authorised communication arrangement. Where a pupil needs to contact home, staff will facilitate appropriate contact through the Academy Office or another authorised route. Any safeguarding, medical, SEND or other exceptional circumstance will be considered individually.

## Access for Reporting Online Safety Concerns

In line with statutory safeguarding duties, the Academy will ensure that its mobile-phone restrictions do not prevent pupils from reporting online-safety or safeguarding concerns. Where access to a device is necessary to explain or evidence a concern, temporary, supervised access to the device may be authorised by the DSL, a deputy DSL, a senior leader or another appropriately authorised member of staff. Where a genuine safeguarding concern exists, this will be reviewed individually and sensitively.

## Sanction Tracking & Persistent Breaches

While the academy recognises the value of a fresh start, persistent non-compliance undermines school discipline and safety. Confiscation records are logged continuously across the **entire academic year** via Class Charts.

- **Persistent Offenders:** Where a student reaches the **Third Offence** threshold at any point during the academic year, the Headteacher will normally impose a **formal device ban for the remainder of the academic year, subject to review**. The student will be required either to leave the device at home or hand it to the Attendance Office on arrival for secure storage until the end of the Academy Day.

## Staff Modelling and Professionalism

All Academy staff are expected to model responsible and professional mobile-phone use. Personal use of mobile phones should not take place in front of pupils during the Academy Day, except where necessary in an emergency.

Staff may use mobile devices for legitimate professional purposes, including registers, communication, Class Charts and multi-factor authentication. Such use should be purposeful, brief and discreet, ensuring that teaching, supervision and safeguarding responsibilities are not compromised.

Personal mobile-phone use should normally be restricted to designated staff areas and non-contact time.

### Staff Responsibilities

All staff must follow the confiscation, logging, secure-storage and return procedures outlined in the Confiscation Procedure & Logging section of this policy. Staff remain responsible for ensuring that any confiscated device is securely transferred and appropriately recorded.

### Summary: Core Rules for Students

Students may use mobile phones while waiting outside before the morning line-up begins. During morning line-up, students must follow the supervised Out, Off and Away routine. Phones must then remain completely switched off and stored inside school bags throughout the Academy day until students have passed through the designated student exit points and left the Academy site. Authorised exceptions and reasonable adjustments will apply where required. Smart watches and earphones must not be worn or used.

### Policy Enforcement and Support

- This policy will be shared during assemblies and parental newsletters.
- The academy will proactively "teach pupils the risks that are associated with the use of mobile phones" through the PSHE curriculum and assemblies. This includes educating students on how digital distractions lead to a "loss of focus in lessons" and "classroom disruption," as well as the link between device access and "an increase in bullying". By highlighting the "benefits of having a mobile phone-free environment," the academy aims to create "intrinsic motivation" among students to value a school culture that prioritises face-to-face interaction and mental wellbeing.
- Staff and students will be trained on the routine: **Out, Off, Away.**
- Posters will be visible around school as a reminder.
- A clear culture of **readiness, respect, and safety** underpins this policy.