



ASPIRE ACADEMY MOBILE PHONES AND DEVICES POLICY

2026-2027

Contents

Introduction.....	2
Prohibited Items.....	2
Student Responsibilities.....	3
During the School Day (8:30am–3:00pm or later if attending an extracurricular activity)	3
Device Compliance Checks	3
Classroom Exits and Bathroom Protocol.....	4
Acceptable Exceptions (By Staff Permission Only)	4
Medical Exceptions	4
Individual Circumstances and Young Carers.....	4
Exams.....	5
Educational Visits and Residential Trips.....	5
Sanctions and Confiscation Procedures.....	5
Sanction Ladder	5
C5 (Serious Incident) – Misuse of Phones/Devices.....	6
Confiscation Procedure & Logging.....	6
Refusal to Comply.....	6
Device Storage and Tracking.....	6
Searching and Legal Justification	7
Parental Role and Communication	7
Contacting Home During the School Day.....	8
Safeguarding Assurance.....	8
Access for Reporting Online Safety Concerns	8
Sanction Tracking & Persistent Breaches	8
Staff Modelling and Professionalism.....	9
Staff Procedures: Confiscation & Logging.....	9
Summary: Core Rules for Students	9
Policy Enforcement and Support.....	9

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, peer-on-peer 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 all wearable connectivity devices must be completely powered off and stored inside the student's school bag prior to 8:30am. They must not be worn on the wrist, kept in pockets, or visible anywhere on the body at any point during the school day. Any smartwatch found being worn by a student—regardless of whether it is active or silent—will be treated as a direct breach of this policy and will result in immediate confiscation
- 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.

Student Responsibilities

"Out, Off & Away" Routine

To support clear routines and prevent misuse, students must follow this daily procedure during morning line-up or indoor form time:

- **Out:** Take phone out of pocket or bag
- **Off:** Switch the device off completely (not silent or airplane mode)
- **Away:** Place the device in their bag (not in clothing or visible on person)

Failure to follow this will result in **immediate confiscation**.

During the School Day (8:30am–3:00pm or later if attending an extracurricular activity)

- Phones and smart devices must **remain switched off and out of sight**.
- Devices may **not be used to check time, messages, notifications, timetables**, or for any other reason.
- Students may **not use phones for music, calls, photographs, videos, or social media** at any time.
- Smart watches must be **left at home or powered off and stored in bags**.

There are some school-owned devices used under staff supervision (e.g., for SEND or curriculum access). These are school-owned, monitored, and not personal property.

Device Compliance Checks

To ensure compliance with the school's "Out, Off & Away" expectations, staff may carry out device compliance checks during the school day.

Where a student is suspected of having a phone or smart device switched on or in use, they may be instructed to hand the device to a member of staff so that the device can be checked to confirm whether it is powered on.

If the device is found to be switched on, the phone will be confiscated in line with the school's sanction system. This will result in:

- A lunchtime detention
- Collection of the device at the end of the school day for a first offence
- Escalated sanctions for repeated breaches in line with the school behaviour policy

Any refusal to hand over a device when instructed will be treated as defiance and failure to follow a reasonable staff instruction. This may result in:

- Removal from lessons
- After-school detention
- Placement in isolation
- Suspension or alternative provision placement at another school for serious or repeated refusal

Following any serious incident, a reintegration meeting with parents/carers will take place before the student returns to mainstream lessons.

Classroom Exits and Bathroom Protocol

To ensure student safety and eliminate unsupervised device use during lesson transitions, personal electronic devices are strictly prohibited from being carried on a student's person if they are granted permission to leave a classroom (e.g., to use the bathroom, run an errand, or visit pastoral offices).

- **The 'Bag-Left' Rule:** The student's school bag—which contains their switched-off device under the 'Out, Off & Away' routine—must remain inside the classroom under the supervision of the class teacher.
- **The Zero-Device Onus:** By leaving the room without their bag, the student is declaring they carry no devices on their person.
- **Deception Sanction:** If a student leaves their bag in the room but is subsequently found in possession of a phone or device on their person in the corridors or toilets, this will be treated as direct defiance and deliberate deception. This will bypass minor sanctions and trigger an immediate **C5 (Serious Incident)** isolation/internal exclusion and a mandatory parent collection meeting.

Acceptable Exceptions (By Staff Permission Only)

Students who need to make a call or access their phone for urgent reasons may only do so by: Speaking to a staff member and requesting to use a school phone; or gaining explicit permission from their pastoral office to temporarily power on a device.

Medical Exceptions

Students with a diagnosed medical condition that requires the use of a mobile device to monitor their health — such as diabetes (for glucose monitoring apps) or epilepsy (for seizure detection apps) — are permitted to carry and use their device for this purpose only. These exceptions must be approved in advance by the school, with supporting medical documentation and agreement from the Senior Leadership Team.

“The school will make reasonable adjustments for pupils with disabilities or medical needs in line with the Equality Act 2010.”

Individual Circumstances and Young Carers

Beyond medical needs, the academy recognises that a "need for mobile phone access for some pupils may depend on their individual circumstances, including at home". This

specifically includes registered Young Carers who may require emergency contact with family. In such "exceptional circumstances," the academy will assess each case on its own merits and may permit the pupil to "use their mobile phone for a specific purpose at specific times and locations," such as within a Head of Year's office. These adaptations will be recorded in the pupil's individual support plan to ensure a consistent and supportive approach.

Exams

During formal exams, e.g., Yr 11 Pre-Public exam as well during all external exams e.g., the GCSE exams, all students are required to hand in any electronic devices including their mobile devices and smart watches. These are returned to students once the exam has concluded. This is in line with the current JCQ Instructions for Conducting Examinations.

Educational Visits and Residential Trips

To ensure the "educational experience on a school trip is not disrupted by the presence of mobile phones," the academy's "Out, Off & Away" rule remains the default expectation for all day trips, including careers days and sporting fixtures. For residential trips, the academy will develop specific "arrangements so boarders can contact their parents and families in private" at designated times that do not interfere with the programme of activities. While away from the academy site, staff will remain "vigilant to risks relating to online safety" and may impose additional restrictions on device use to safeguard the welfare of all pupils in accordance with national minimum standards.

Sanctions and Confiscation Procedures

All sanctions will be applied reasonably, proportionately and consistently, with reasonable adjustments made where required for pupils with SEND, disabilities or medical needs.

Sanction Ladder

Offence	Sanction
First (in any half-term)	Confiscation until 3:00pm. Lunchtime detention. Student collects from Attendance Office.
Second	Phone retained. Parent must attend a meeting with the Head of Year to collect the phone. After school detention 3pm-4:30pm.
Third or serious misuse	Immediate device confiscation will occur alongside immediate placement in internal exclusion/isolation for a designated period of time, and the student will be required to serve a mandatory extended leadership detention from 3:00pm to 5:30pm on the day of the infraction. Furthermore, the Headteacher may impose a formal ban on the student bringing a device to school. Following the implementation of a ban, searches will be carried out by authorised staff where there are reasonable grounds to suspect a device is on site, executed strictly in accordance with DfE statutory guidance.

C5 (Serious Incident) – Misuse of Phones/Devices

Any of the following will result in a C5 sanction or higher. Please see the behaviour policy for full details of sanctions that may apply, which can include suspension, off-site direction, placement at another school, or permanent exclusion. Serious misuse includes:

- Filming, photographing, or audio recording staff or students, or sharing such images/recordings.
- Attempting to share harmful content.
- Accessing inappropriate material.
- Using a phone in direct defiance of staff instruction.

Important Note: “I was checking the time” or “I was using it for the timetable” are not valid excuses. Classrooms and corridors are equipped with visible clocks. Students are responsible for knowing their timetable.

Confiscation Procedure & Logging

- Staff must deliver confiscated devices to the Attendance Office **promptly**
- Devices are logged and placed in the **school safe**
- A **text message** is sent home to inform parents of the confiscation
- All incidents are recorded on **Class Charts**
- On Call will be notified by the member of staff to confiscate the phone and place it in the safe in the Attendance Office.
- In accordance **with Section 94 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006**, Blackpool Aspire Academy and its staff hold statutory immunity from liability for loss or damage to any electronic device that has been lawfully confiscated, retained, or stored in line with this policy. The safe storage of the item is an act of pastoral courtesy; the financial risk remains entirely with the student and their parent/carer.

Refusal to Comply

Any student who refuses to hand over a phone or device when instructed will be removed from lessons. They will be placed in Isolation for defiance and issued a 1-hour after-school detention. If refusal continues, the student may be removed from mainstream learning, and the device ban extended. Further refusal may result in a fixed-term suspension/placement to another school.

Device Storage and Tracking

All confiscated devices will be placed in clearly labelled envelopes, 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

In accordance with:

- Searching, Screening and Confiscation Guidance (DfE, July 2022)
- Mobile Phones in Schools: Guidance for Schools on Prohibiting the Use of Mobile Phones (DfE, February 2024)
- Education and Inspections Act 2006, Section 91
- Education Act 1996
- School Behaviour Policy

The school has a **legal right and statutory authority** to **search for, confiscate, retain, and dispose** of mobile phones and other prohibited devices where reasonable.

Aspire Academy has the legal right to search and confiscate mobile phones and related devices under:

- *Searching, Screening and Confiscation: Advice for Headteachers, School Staff and Governing Bodies* (DfE, July 2022)
- *Mobile Phones in Schools* Guidance (DfE, February 2024), **Page 10** states:

"Headteachers, or staff they authorise, have a statutory power to search a pupil or their possessions where they have reasonable grounds to suspect that the pupil is in possession of a prohibited item as set out in legislation or any item identified in the school rules as an item that may be searched for. Headteachers can and should identify mobile phones and similar devices as something that may be searched for in their school behaviour policy."

Aspire Academy's Behaviour Policy identifies mobile phones, smart watches, and related devices as **prohibited items**, and as such, they **can and will be searched for and confiscated** when seen, heard, or suspected of being used.

This ensures:

- The enforcement of clear routines and expectations
- The protection of teaching time, privacy, and safeguarding
- That misuse is addressed swiftly and lawfully

Confiscated phones are stored securely, and the school holds **no liability for loss or damage** if a phone is **lawfully confiscated under these powers**, as confirmed by DfE guidance.

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.

- Respect that confiscation is lawful and proportionate as backed by the DfE (Feb 2024).

Contacting Home During the School Day

Students must not use personal mobile phones to contact parents/carers during the school day for any reason unless authorised by a member of staff. If a student needs to contact home, they must speak to a member of staff and use a school phone where appropriate. Using a personal mobile phone to contact home during the school day will be treated as a breach of the Mobile Phones and Devices Policy and sanctions will apply in line with the Behaviour Policy.

Extract from DfE Guidance (2024):

“Parents and carers must not come to school to demand return of a device. The school has discretion to retain a phone for as long as deemed proportionate.”

Safeguarding Assurance

Confiscation of a phone **does not create a safeguarding risk**. In cases where a child needs to contact home:

- They will be allowed to use a **school phone at Reception or Attendance Office**.
- Parents are expected to **arrange travel and communication plans in advance**.

Access for Reporting Online Safety Concerns

In line with statutory safeguarding duties, the academy ensures that "pupils are able to access their mobile phone where necessary when raising concerns with teachers about issues which have occurred online". If a student needs to provide evidence of cyberbullying, online harassment, or exposure to "harmful or inappropriate content," they will be granted temporary, supervised access to their device. This ensures that the prohibition of phones does not act as a barrier to pupils seeking protection or reporting serious online behaviour incidents.

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:** Any student who reaches a 'Third Offence' threshold at any point in the academic year will forfeit the privilege of bringing a device onto the academy grounds. The Headteacher will issue a formal, long-term device ban. Upon arrival at school, these designated students must surrender their devices to the Attendance Office immediately at 8:30am for secure storage, or leave the device at home.

Staff Modelling and Professionalism

To reinforce a culture of focus and "effectively enforce the prohibition of mobile phones," all academy staff are expected to model professional boundaries. In accordance with DfE expectations, "staff should not use their own mobile phone for personal reasons in front of pupils throughout the school day." However, the academy actively recognizes that mobile devices are vital professional tools that support staff well-being, flexible working, and efficient workload management. Staff are fully permitted to use mobile devices for professional communication and administration—including accessing class registers, checking staff emails, responding to urgent school messages, logging rewards or sanctions via Class Charts, and completing multi-factor authentication (MFA) prompts. To maintain a clear distinction between professional duties and personal use, and to protect staff from student counter-challenges, any required phone use during lesson time should be brief and conducted discreetly away from the direct focus of the classroom where possible, while full personal use remains restricted to non-contact time in designated staff-only areas.

Staff Procedures: Confiscation & Logging

- The confiscating staff member must take the phone to the Attendance Office at the earliest opportunity.
- Staff must log the incident in Class Charts immediately.
- Phone is placed in the safe with identification details.

Summary: Core Rules for Students

- Phones must be switched off and placed out of sight from 8:30am to 3:00pm (or later if attending an extracurricular activity).
- Smart watches and earphones must not be worn or used.
- Devices seen, heard, or used will be confiscated immediately.
- Repeated or serious breaches will lead to device bans, detentions, isolation, or suspension.
- Devices will not be charged in school either with their own cable & plug, power bank or using school equipment.

Policy Enforcement and Support

- This policy will be shared during assemblies and parental newsletters.
- **Educational Rationale** 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.

