



Mobile phone policy

Sept 2026

Derby Cathedral School

New or updated	Changes
New policy	Based on the April 2026 EDH policy

Review date: September 2027

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1. Introduction and aims

At Derby Cathedral School, we are committed to being *“a place of rigour and joy, where every student flourishes.”* Rooted in our Christian vision that all may “have life in all its fullness” (John 10:10), we seek to create an environment in which students can focus, grow and succeed.

We recognise that mobile phones are part of modern life. However, there is now significant evidence that their presence during the school day negatively impacts learning, wellbeing and relationships.

From September 2026, Derby Cathedral School will operate as a phone-free school.

This means that, for the vast majority of students:

- Mobile phones should not be brought onto the school site

Our policy aims to:

- Create a calm, focused and disruption-free learning environment
- Support positive behaviour, social interaction and wellbeing
- Reduce safeguarding risks associated with mobile technology
- Ensure clarity and consistency for students, staff and families
- Align with Department for Education guidance that schools should be phone-free by default

This policy supports our wider commitments to:

- Safeguarding and child protection
- Behaviour and culture
- Teaching and learning excellence

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: throughout this policy, 'mobile phones' refers to mobile phones and similar devices.

Derby Cathedral School operates a "phone-free, not phone-away" approach.

This means:

- Phones are not permitted on the school site
- Students should not bring mobile phones into school

We have made this decision because:

- Phones impact attention, memory and learning (“brain drain”)
- They reduce face-to-face social interaction
- They increase risks around bullying, safeguarding and mental health
- Evidence shows phone-free schools have improved behaviour, outcomes and

Our expectation is simple and clear:

If a phone is in school, it will be confiscated.

Ethos statement

Students learn best, grow best, and flourish most when they are fully present. By removing mobile phones from the school day, we are creating a calm, safe and purposeful environment where every student can thrive.

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 senior leaders for pastoral, safeguarding and behaviour are responsible for monitoring the policy annually, reviewing it, and holding staff and pupils 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.

Staff will:

- Apply this policy consistently
- Model professional conduct
- Communicate clearly with pupils and parents about expectations

Senior leaders will monitor implementation and review the policy annually.

4. Use of mobile phones by staff

Staff must not use personal mobile phones in the presence of students except in exceptional circumstances. Staff:

- Must not use personal devices to photograph or record students
- Must not share personal contact details with pupils or parents
- Must follow safeguarding and data protection policies at all times
- Staff are expected to model the school's phone-free culture.

4.1 Personal mobile phones

Staff (including the central team, volunteers, contractors and anyone else otherwise engaged by the school) are not permitted to use their personal mobile phone, while children are present. Use of personal mobile phones must be restricted to non-contact time, and to areas of the school where pupils 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 [01332 325710](tel:01332 325710) 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).

Further information can be found in our data protection policy and ICT acceptable use policy.

4.3 Safeguarding

Staff must not give their personal contact details to parents/carers or pupils, 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 pupils.

Staff must not use their personal mobile phones to take photographs or recordings of pupils, their work, or anything else that could identify a pupil. 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 (please see educational visit policy)
- Supervising residential visits (please see educational visit policy)

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 pupils, their work, or anything else that could identify a pupil
- Refrain from using their phones to contact parents/carers. If necessary, contact must be made via the school office

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

4.6 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 pupils

Derby Cathedral School operates a "phone-free, not phone-away" approach.

This means:

- Pupils should not bring mobile phones onto the school site
- Mobile phones must not be used at any point during the school day

This includes:

- Lessons
- Time between lessons
- Breaktimes and lunchtimes
- Corridors and toilets

5.1 Use of smartwatches by pupils

The DfE's [non-statutory mobile phone guidance](#) includes in the term 'mobile phones' all devices with communications and smart technology that the school chooses to include in their policy.

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.

Smartwatches and devices with communication capability are considered mobile phones.

These devices:

- Are not permitted in school
- Will be subject to the same rules and sanctions

5.2 Exceptions for special circumstances and for sixth-form pupils

Exceptions and Storage

We recognise that some students may need a mobile phone for specific reasons, including:

- Long or complex journeys to and from school
- Use of digital travel passes
- Medical needs
- Safeguarding considerations
- Sixth form students

Requesting an exception

Parents/carers must request permission through the school's formal process. Each request will be considered on a case-by-case basis by the senior leadership team.

If permission is granted

- Students must not carry their phone during the school day
- Phones must be handed in on arrival at school
- Phones will be stored in secure, lockable mobile storage systems
- Phones will be returned at the end of the school day

This ensures student safety while maintaining a fully phone-free environment during learning time.

Any pupils who are given permission must then adhere to the school's [code of conduct / acceptable use agreement] for mobile phone use (see appendix 1).

Sixth-form pupils are allowed access to their mobile phones during the school day, to reflect their increased independence and responsibility, but must not compromise our policy on the use of mobile phones for other pupils.

Therefore, they are only permitted to use their mobile phones out of sight of younger pupils in their study zones. Misuse of mobile phones by pupils in the sixth form will lead to sanctions according to our behaviour policy.

5.3 Sanctions

There should be **no need for a student to have a mobile phone on site**.

If a phone is seen, heard or used:

- **First offence:** confiscated for 7 days
- **Second offence:** confiscated for 14 days
- **Third offence:** confiscated for the remainder of the half term

Additional expectations:

- Phones will be stored securely by the school
- Parents/carers may be required to collect devices
- Further sanctions may be applied in line with the school behaviour policy

All sanctions will be reasonable, consistent and proportionate.

Schools are permitted to confiscate phones from pupils under [sections 91](#) and [94](#) of the Education and Inspections Act 2006

If a phone is confiscated, the parent or carer will be notified via ClassChart and/or a phone call.

The DfE's guidance on confiscation can be found here: [DfE's guidance on mobile phones in schools](#))

If a student refuses to hand in their phone, they will receive a 1 day suspension. The parent and student will attend a reintegration meeting during which the student's phone will need to be handed in for the confiscation period (7/14 days).

Schools have the power to search pupils' phones in specific circumstances, as set out in the [DfE's guidance on searching, screening and confiscation](#). The school will be conducting periodic screenings of groups of students using a mobile phone arch, to ensure that the policy is being followed and implemented successfully. If we suspect that a student has a mobile phone (for example multiple students in a toilet) we will search the student in line with the searching guidance.

6. Use of mobile phones by parents/carers, volunteers and visitors

Parents/carers, visitors and volunteers must:

- Not use mobile phones where students are present
- Not take photos or recordings of students (unless authorised)
- Not use phones during lessons or while working with students

Parents/carers must:

- Not contact students directly during the school day
- Contact the school office if communication is needed

Parental support is essential to ensure a consistent message between home and school.

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. This will be part of an information given around the safety and safeguarding requirements of the school.

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 pupils, their work, or anything else that could identify a pupil

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

The school accepts no liability for any mobile phones that are lost, stolen or damaged whilst travelling to or from school.

As a phone-free school, any mobile device brought onto the site under an approved exception remains the responsibility of the student and their family at all times.

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 pupils are travelling to and from school.

Confiscated mobile phones will be stored securely in a locked safe in reception.

The school will take reasonable care of devices while they are in its possession, but accepts no liability for any loss, theft or damage beyond this duty of care.

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

7.1 AirTags/Location Trackers

What are location trackers?

AirTags are small, remote tracking devices which are often used to keep track of the location of luggage and personal items such as keys and wallets. Some other devices, such as watches and smartphones, may also offer this functionality.

Although often not designed for this purpose, tracking devices are sometimes used by parents and carers to track their child's location.

Our policy on the use of trackers

We understand that location trackers such as AirTags can provide reassurance to parents and carers, particularly those whose children travel a long distance to and from school or who are going on a school trip.

However, we're concerned about:

- **Unauthorised tracking:** where a pupil is tracked without their knowledge, or by a person who has no legal access to them. Trackers can also indicate the location of anyone travelling with the pupil who has not consented to be tracked in this way
- **Additional functions:** alarms, two-way communication, remote listening capability and other functions that some trackers provide can be disruptive and raise data protection and legal concerns
- **Increasing anxiety:** disruptions to expected location data – due to unavoidable changes of route or plan (e.g. on a school trip), or to device loss or malfunction – can cause anxiety to both parents/carers and to pupils and staff who are aware of potential parent/carer worry

For these reasons, we have decided **not** to allow location tracking devices on school grounds, on school trips or at off-site events.

If we do find that a pupil is carrying or using a tracking device, we will confiscate it until the end of the school day in the first instance. After this, we will follow the same sanction system as mobile phones.

8. Monitoring and review

The school is committed to ensuring that this policy has a positive impact on pupils' education, behaviour and welfare. When reviewing the policy, the school will take into account:

- Feedback from parents/carers and pupils
- Feedback from staff
- Records of behaviour and safeguarding incidents
- Relevant advice from the Department for Education, the local authority and any other relevant organisations

9. Appendix 1: [Code of conduct/acceptable use agreement] for pupils allowed to bring their phones to school due to exceptional circumstances

[Code of conduct / acceptable use agreement]

This applies only to pupils who have been granted permission to bring a phone to school.

Students must:

- Hand in phones on arrival
- Not use phones during the school day
- Follow all instructions from staff

Failure to follow the agreement will result in permission being withdrawn.

10. Appendix 2: Permission form allowing a pupil to bring their phone to school

The school will send out a MS Forms survey to ask parents/carers to make a request for an exemption.

List the appropriate reasons here. We've listed some common reasons below (you can delete as required):

- Travel to and from school alone
- Are a young carer
- Need the phone to support their medical needs
- Are attending a school trip or residential where use of mobile phones will be allowed
- Attend a before- or after-school activity where a mobile phone is required for the activity, or to contact parents/carers

Pupils who bring a mobile phone to school must abide by the school's policy on the use of mobile phones, and its code of conduct / acceptable use agreement.

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

11. 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 pupils are present. If you must use your phone, you may go to [insert location]
- Do not take photos or recordings of pupils (unless it is your own child), or staff
- Do not use your phone in lessons, or when working with pupils

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.