

Mobile Phone Policy

Dove Bank Primary School



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1. Introduction and aims

At Dove Bank Primary School, we recognise that mobile phones, including smart phones, are an important part of everyday life for our pupils, parents/carers 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 pupils, staff, parents/carers and volunteers
- Support the school's other policies, especially those related to child protection and behaviour

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

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 is responsible for monitoring the policy every 2 years, reviewing it, and holding staff and pupils accountable for its implementation.

3. Use of mobile phones by staff

3.1 Personal mobile phones

Staff (including volunteers, contractors and anyone else otherwise engaged by the school) are not permitted to make or receive calls, or send texts, 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 instance:

- For emergency contact by their child, or their child's school
- In the case of acutely ill dependents or family members
- If mobile phone use is necessary as part of a risk assessment for individual children

Where communication is needed to support with individual children, the class walkie-talkie should be used. Communication should not use children's names and should remain general e.g. 'Support needed in (location)'

The headteacher will decide on a case-by-case 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.

3.2 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 Board).

3.3 Safeguarding

Staff must refrain from giving 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 can use their mobile phones to take photographs (no faces) or recordings of pupils' work. But all photographs and recordings must be deleted from the clouds once uploaded.

If it's necessary to take photos or recordings as part of a lesson/school trip/activity (faces), this must be done using school equipment such as iPads.

3.4 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 aren't limited to:

- Emergency evacuations
- Supervising off-site trips
- Supervising residential visits
- Phone- Parent Consultation meetings

In these circumstances, staff will:

- Withhold their personal mobile number
- 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 which could identify a pupil
- Refrain from using their phones to contact parents/carers. If necessary, contact must be made via the school office

3.5 Sanctions

Staff that fail to adhere to this policy may face disciplinary action.

See the school's staff disciplinary policy for more information.

4. Use of mobile phones by pupils

We also recognise that mobile phones are part of everyday life for many children and that they can play an important role in helping pupils to feel safe and secure. However, we also recognise that they can prove a distraction in school and can provide a means of bullying or intimidating others.

Therefore:

- Pupils are allowed to bring mobile phones into school if they are walking to or from school without parents (years 5/6 only)
- The phone must be handed in to their class teacher and must be switched off
- Pupils must not use their phone while on school grounds.
- The phone is left at the owner's own risk and school is not responsible for loss or damage

- Phones should not be taken on school trips/visits

Where mobile phones are used in or out of school to bully or intimidate others, then the Headteacher or DSL does have the power to intervene 'to such an extent as it is reasonable to regulate the behaviour of pupils when they are off the school site.'

Pupils must adhere to the school's Mobile Phone Agreement (see appendix 1).

4.1 Exceptional Circumstances

In some exceptional circumstances, a pupil may need to have their mobile phone with them at all times, for example for medical reasons such as glucose monitors for diabetes. In these circumstances, we will ensure the following:

- The mobile phone is carried in a zipped bag and is away unless needed for its' intended purpose
- All staff are aware that the pupil has the mobile phone with them for medical purposes
- The mobile phone is only used for the purpose for which it is needed, and other apps and functions are not used

Individual cases where exceptional circumstances need to be considered are reviewed and approved at the discretion of the Headteacher.

4.2 Sanctions

The following sanctions will be issued if pupils do not follow this policy:

- Will phones be confiscated? (Schools are permitted to confiscate phones from pupils under sections 91 and 94 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006)
- If they are confiscated, parents/ carers will need to collect from school.

Other sanctions are explained in the school's behaviour policy.

Staff have the power to search pupils' phones, as set out in the DfE's guidance on searching, screening and confiscation. The DfE guidance allows staff to search a pupil's phone if you have reason to believe the phone contains pornographic images, or if it is being/has been used to commit an offence or cause personal injury.

Certain types of conduct, 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 (consensual and non-consensual sharing nude or semi-nude images or videos)
- Upskirting
- 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.

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

Parents/carers, 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 pupils, 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 pupils- see section 3.5

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 which 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 4 above.

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 his/her personal mobile during the school day.

6. Loss, theft or damage

Pupils bringing phones to school must ensure that phones are appropriately labelled and are stored securely when not in use.

Pupils 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 data breaches.

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.

We will ensure that pupils and parents/carers are aware of the disclaimer above by providing a copy of our policy and disclaimer to new pupils and parents/carers.

Confiscated phones will be stored in the school office in a secure locked cabinet.

Lost phones should be returned to the school office. 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 on pupils' education, behaviour and welfare. When reviewing the policy, the school will take into account:

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

8. Appendix 1: Mobile Phone Agreement

Dove Bank Primary School Mobile Phone Agreement

Dove Bank Primary School is committed to maintaining the safety and well-being all of our children, which includes their use of devices such as mobile phones. We do not permit mobile phones to be brought into school, however, we also recognise that there may be occasional exceptional circumstances where it is helpful for a pupil to bring a mobile phone to school, such as walking home unaccompanied or being collected by a different family member.

In these circumstances, we ask that parents or carers to read the following agreement and sign the request, stating the specific reasons for a phone to be in school.

Our Mobile Phone Rules

- All pupils bringing a phone to school must have a valid reason for doing so and must have returned this agreement.
- Dove Bank Primary School will continue to help children learn about staying safe online but recognise that the primary responsibility for online safety lies at home with parents/carers. The school will seek to work with families to help them to encourage children to adopt safe use of mobile technology.
- Children should be reminded that they are not permitted to take photographs or videos of people without their consent, and they should not be taking these on the way to or from school.
- All phones should be turned off and handed into the office or class teacher as soon as children arrive in school each day.
- Dove Bank Primary School cannot accept responsibility for damage or loss of a mobile phone brought into school.
- Dove Bank Primary School has the right to confiscate or search a mobile phone if there is cause for concern. In the unlikely event of needing to do this, we will endeavour to contact a parent or carer. As part of this agreement, your child should agree to unlock the phone if required by a member of staff.
- Children not following these rules will not be allowed to bring a phone into school. Any phone brought in without permission will be confiscated and only returned to a parent or carer.

Further information about being safe online, such as the use of parental controls and supervised use of social media, can be found on www.internetmatters.org. In addition, parents are encouraged to read the weekly #WakeUpWednesday poster which is sent out weekly for further advice around online safety.

Please sign and return the agreement attached if you consider it essential your child brings their phone to school.

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Name: _____

Reason for needing mobile phone in school: _____

Parent/Carer: I confirm that I have explained the school rules regarding mobile phones to my child and confirm that they may take a mobile phone into school on that basis.

Parent/Carer Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Pupil: I understand and agree to follow the school mobile phone rules.

Pupil Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

10. Appendix 2: Template mobile phone information slip for visitors

Use of mobile phones 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 the staffroom.
- 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.

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