

MOBILE PHONE AND SMART DEVICE POLICY

September 2026

Scope	Applicable to all Trust Schools
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Contents

1. Purpose and aims
 2. Legislation and guidance
 3. Scope
 4. Pupils
 5. Exceptions and reasonable adjustments
 6. Contact between pupils and parents/carers
 7. Educational visits and activities outside the normal school day
 8. Safeguarding and online safety
 9. Photography, video and audio recording
 10. Staff use of mobile phones
 11. Parents, carers, visitors and volunteers
 12. Breaches of the policy
 13. Confiscation
 14. Refusal to hand over a device
 15. Searching pupils and mobile phones
 16. Safeguarding concerns arising from a device
 17. Loss, theft and damage
 18. Teaching pupils about mobile phone use
 19. Communication with parents and carers
 20. Monitoring and review
- Appendix 1 – Pupil Mobile Phone Agreement
- Appendix 2 – Request for an Exception / Reasonable Adjustment
- Appendix 3 – Summary for Pupils
- Appendix 4 – Summary for Parents and Carers
- Appendix 5 - Searching, Screening and Confiscation procedures.

1. Purpose and aims

The Lanes Primary School recognises that mobile phones and other smart devices are an important part of modern life. However, the school believes that pupils should be able to learn, play and socialise without the distraction, disruption and safeguarding risks that can arise from mobile phones and similar devices.

This policy sets out clear expectations for the use and possession of mobile phones and other personal smart devices by pupils, staff, parents/carers, volunteers and visitors.

The policy aims to

- enable a calm, safe and focused environment for learning to be created;
- comply with the Department for Education's statutory guidance on mobile phones in schools;
- reduce distraction and disruption caused by mobile phones and similar devices;
- support pupils' wellbeing and positive relationships;
- protect pupils and staff from inappropriate recording, photography, communication and online behaviour;
- support the school's safeguarding responsibilities;
- provide clear and consistent procedures for confiscation, searching and the management of exceptions;
- ensure that reasonable adjustments are made where required by law or where individual circumstances make this necessary.

This policy should be read alongside the school's

- Behaviour Policy;
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy;
- Online Safety Policy;
- Staff Code of Conduct;
- Data Protection Policy;
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy;
- SEND Policy;
- Educational Visits Policy.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy has regard to and should be read alongside:

- Department for Education, Mobile Phones in Schools (statutory guidance, June 2026);
- Department for Education, Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026;
- Department for Education, Searching, Screening and Confiscation in Schools;
- Department for Education, Behaviour in Schools;
- Department for Education guidance on relationships, health and online safety;
- Equality Act 2010;
- Children and Families Act 2014;
- Education Act 1996 and other relevant legislation.

The DfE's mobile phone guidance became statutory on 29 June 2026 and schools should follow it from 1st September 2026. The guidance expects schools to operate as mobile-phone-free environments by default and prohibits access to mobile phones throughout the school day, including lessons, transitions, break and lunchtime.

3. Scope

For the purposes of this policy, the term mobile phone includes mobile phones and other personal devices with similar communications or smart technology.

- smartphones;
- mobile phones;
- smartwatches capable of sending or receiving messages or notifications;
- smartwatches capable of making or receiving calls;
- devices capable of recording audio or video;
- other personal communications devices which could reasonably be used to circumvent this policy.

School-issued devices used for educational purposes are not covered by the pupil restrictions in this policy, provided they are being used in accordance with the school's acceptable use and online safety arrangements.

4. Pupils

4.1 The school's expectation

The Lanes Primary School is a mobile-phone-free school throughout the school day.

Pupils must not:

- use a mobile phone or similar personal smart device during the school day;
- have access to a mobile phone during lessons;
- use a mobile phone during break or lunchtime;
- use a mobile phone between lessons or while moving around the school;
- use a mobile phone in toilets, changing areas or other parts of the school;
- use a mobile phone to photograph, film or audio-record pupils, staff or visitors;
- use a mobile phone to communicate with people outside school during the school day;
- use a smartwatch or similar device to send or receive messages or notifications during the school day.

4.2 Bringing a phone to school

The school recognises that some pupils in Year 6 and Year 5 in the Summer term, may travel independently or may need access to a phone before they arrive at school or once they have left the school grounds.

Where a pupil needs to bring a mobile phone to school, the phone must:

- be switched off before entering the school grounds;
- be handed to the class teacher on arrival;
- be stored securely by the school for the duration of the school day;
- be collected by the pupil at the end of the school day;
- not be switched on until the child has left the school grounds.

Pupils must not keep their mobile phone in their pocket, coat, school bag, classroom, toilet, changing area or any other personal storage location.

The precise arrangements for handing in and collecting phones will be communicated to pupils and parents/carers.

4.3 Smartwatches and similar devices

Smartwatches and other personal devices which can communicate, receive notifications or record audio/video are subject to the same expectations as mobile phones.

A pupil wearing a smartwatch must ensure that communications and notifications are disabled during the school day and that the device cannot be used to circumvent the school's mobile phone restrictions.

Where a smartwatch has functionality which cannot reasonably be disabled, the school may require the pupil to hand the device in for secure storage.

5. Exceptions and reasonable adjustments

The expectation is that pupils will not have access to mobile phones during the school day. However, the school recognises that there may be circumstances in which an adjustment is necessary.

These may include:

- a medical condition requiring access to a mobile phone or connected device;
- a disability where access to the device is required as a reasonable adjustment;
- specific communication or assistive technology needs;
- exceptional family or safeguarding circumstances;
- other individual circumstances identified by the school.

Requests for an exception should normally be made by a parent/carer to the Headteacher.

Where an exception is agreed, the school will specify why access is necessary; when the device may be accessed; where it may be accessed; who will supervise or support its use, where appropriate; and how the device will be stored when it is not required.

An exception does not provide unrestricted access to the device.

The school will review individual arrangements regularly and may amend them where circumstances change.

The school will make reasonable adjustments where required under the Equality Act 2010 and will consider its duties in relation to pupils with medical conditions.

6. Contact between pupils and parents/carers

Parents/carers should not contact pupils directly by mobile phone during the school day.

If a parent/carer needs to contact their child urgently, they should contact the school office.

If a pupil needs to contact a parent/carer during the school day, they should speak to a member of staff. The school will facilitate appropriate contact using school systems.

7. Educational visits and activities outside the normal school day

The school prohibits children's phones on educational visits, residential visits and activities taking place outside the normal school day unless there is a need as outlined in the reasonable adjustments and exceptions section of this policy.

Staff may need the use of a mobile device during educational visits, residential visits and activities taking place outside the normal school day. These will only be used for communication purposes and no photos or videos will be taken.

8. Safeguarding and online safety

Mobile phones can provide opportunities for positive communication but can also create safeguarding risks.

These may include cyberbullying; harassment; inappropriate communication; sharing of harmful or abusive material; recording or photographing others without permission; coercion or exploitation; sharing of personal information; inappropriate or harmful online content; contact with unsafe individuals; and sharing of images or videos which may place a child or another person at risk.

Staff must consider whether inappropriate mobile phone use may indicate that a pupil is experiencing harm, abuse, bullying, exploitation, coercion or other vulnerability.

Where there is a safeguarding concern, staff must follow the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and report the concern to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or deputy DSL.

Staff must not investigate safeguarding concerns independently where this could compromise the school's safeguarding response.

9. Photography, video and audio recording

Pupils must not use personal mobile phones or other personal smart devices to photograph, film or audio-record other pupils; staff; visitors; lessons; school activities; confidential information; documents; or displays or work where this could identify another pupil or contain personal information.

This applies whether or not the recording is subsequently shared.

The school's rules regarding photography and recording at public events will be communicated separately where appropriate.

10. Staff use of mobile phones

Staff must model the behaviour expected of pupils.

Staff must not use personal mobile phones in front of pupils during the school day.

Personal mobile phones should normally be switched to silent; stored securely; and used only in designated staff areas or at other times when pupils are not present.

There may be legitimate exceptions, including emergencies; a significant personal or family circumstance; use of multi-factor authentication; authorised work-related activity; and educational visits or residential trips where a personal phone is authorised for operational purposes.

Staff must use professional judgement and ensure that any use is appropriate and seek permission from the headteacher.

10.1 Photography and recording by staff

Staff must not use personal mobile phones to photograph or record pupils. School-owned equipment must be used for photography or recording undertaken for legitimate educational, safeguarding or school purposes.

Any school photography or recording must comply with the school's data protection, safeguarding and photography arrangements.

10.2 Staff communication

Staff must not use personal mobile numbers, personal messaging accounts or personal social media accounts to communicate directly with pupils or parents/carers for school purposes. Where communication is required, approved school communication systems must be used.

10.3 Work-related use of personal phones

Where a member of staff is authorised to use a personal phone for a work-related purpose, they must use it appropriately and professionally; comply with the Staff Code of Conduct and data protection requirements; not photograph or record pupils unless specifically authorised and using an approved system; and not store confidential school or pupil information on the personal device.

Where practicable, the school should provide school-owned devices for regular work-related mobile phone use.

11. Parents, carers, visitors and volunteers

Parents/carers, volunteers, contractors and visitors are expected to support the school's mobile-phone-free environment.

They must not use mobile phones while working directly with pupils; photograph or record pupils without the school's permission; record staff or other members of the school community without permission; or use mobile phones in classrooms or other areas where pupils are being taught or supervised, unless specifically authorised.

Visitors will be informed of the school's expectations when signing in or attending school events.

Parents/carers attending public events may use mobile phones in accordance with the specific arrangements communicated by the school.

12. Breaches of the policy

A breach of this policy will be managed in accordance with the school's Behaviour Policy.

Where a pupil is found using or accessing a mobile phone or similar device without permission, the device may be confiscated.

Examples of a breach include using a phone; having a phone switched on or accessible during the school day; allowing a phone to ring or produce notifications; using a smartwatch to communicate; refusing a reasonable instruction to hand over a phone; using a device to photograph, record or communicate with others; attempting to conceal a device; and using a device to access inappropriate or harmful material.

The school will use sanctions which are reasonable and proportionate to the circumstances.

In deciding on an appropriate response, the school will consider the pupil's age; the nature and seriousness of the breach; whether it is a first or repeated incident; the pupil's individual circumstances; SEND; disability; medical needs; and whether the behaviour raises safeguarding concerns.

13. Confiscation

The school may confiscate a mobile phone or similar device where it has been used in breach of this policy or where confiscation is considered an appropriate disciplinary response.

Confiscated devices will be clearly identified and labelled if require and securely stored in the school office or headteacher's office.

In most circumstances, once a device has been confiscated, parents/carers will be contacted and asked to collect the device from school at the end of the day. In the event of a parent/carer or other responsible adult not being able to collect the device, school will keep the device until a time which is convenient for the parents/carers/responsible adult.

The Headteacher has the authority to determine the length of confiscation where this is proportionate.

The school will not allow a pupil to access a confiscated device during the school day.

The school will consider individual circumstances when determining the appropriate response.

14. Refusal to hand over a device

If a pupil refuses to hand over a mobile phone or similar device when reasonably instructed to do so, staff should remain calm and follow the school's behaviour procedures.

The refusal itself may constitute a breach of the Behaviour Policy.

Staff should not engage in a prolonged confrontation with a pupil. Where appropriate, the matter should be referred to a member of the senior leadership team.

Where there are reasonable grounds to believe that a pupil has a mobile phone or other item which may be searched for under the school's behaviour rules, an authorised member of staff may conduct a search in accordance with the school's Searching, Screening and Confiscation procedures. See Appendix 5.

15. Searching pupils and mobile phones

Mobile phones and similar devices are identified as items which may be searched for under the school's behaviour rules.

The Headteacher, or a member of staff authorised by the Headteacher, may search a pupil or their possessions where there are reasonable grounds to suspect that the pupil is in possession of an item which may be searched for.

All searches must comply with the Department for Education's Searching, Screening and Confiscation in Schools guidance and the school's Searching, Screening and Confiscation procedures.

Searching a pupil is different from simply confiscating a phone which has been seen or is being used in breach of the rules.

Where there is a need to examine information or material on an electronic device, this must only be undertaken by an appropriately authorised member of staff where there is a good reason to do so and in accordance with DfE guidance and the school's safeguarding procedures.

Staff must not routinely search the contents of a pupil's phone simply because the phone has been confiscated.

16. Safeguarding concerns arising from a device

If a device contains, or is suspected of containing, material which may indicate abuse; exploitation; bullying; harassment; threats; violence; harmful sexual behaviour; illegal activity; inappropriate sexual imagery; or other safeguarding concerns, the device should be secured and the DSL or deputy DSL informed immediately.

Staff should not unnecessarily view, copy, forward, save or distribute potentially harmful or illegal material.

Where appropriate, the school may seek advice from the police or other relevant agencies.

The school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy will determine the safeguarding response.

17. Loss, theft and damage

Pupils are responsible for taking reasonable care of any mobile phone or similar device they bring to school.

The school does not encourage pupils to bring valuable personal devices to school.

Where a device is brought to school in accordance with this policy, the school will take reasonable steps to store it securely.

Where a device has been confiscated by the school, it will be stored securely in accordance with the school's procedures.

Any loss, theft or damage will be investigated in accordance with the school's normal procedures.

Parents/carers should ensure that pupils understand the school's arrangements before allowing them to bring a device to school.

18. Teaching pupils about mobile phone use

The school will provide age-appropriate opportunities for pupils to understand the benefits of a mobile-phone-free school environment; the risks associated with excessive or inappropriate mobile phone use; online bullying and harassment; privacy and personal information; appropriate photography and recording; safe and responsible online behaviour; how to report concerns; and the potential consequences of sharing harmful or inappropriate material.

This learning will be incorporated into the school's curriculum and wider safeguarding and online safety provision.

The school will seek to develop pupils' understanding and intrinsic motivation rather than relying solely on sanctions.

19. Communication with parents and carers

The school will publish this policy and make it accessible to parents/carers.

Parents/carers will be informed of the school's expectations; why the school operates a mobile-phone-free environment; how phones are stored; how parents can contact their child during the school day; what happens when the policy is breached; and how exceptions and reasonable adjustments can be requested.

The school will communicate any significant changes to the policy to pupils and parents/carers.

20. Monitoring and review

The Headteacher is responsible for implementing and monitoring this policy.

The school will review incidents involving mobile phones; confiscation records; safeguarding incidents involving devices; feedback from pupils, staff and parents/carers; the effectiveness of arrangements for storing devices; reasonable adjustment arrangements; and relevant changes to legislation and DfE guidance.

This policy will be reviewed at least annually or sooner where there is a significant change to statutory guidance, legislation or school practice.

Appendix 1 – Pupil Mobile Phone Agreement

Where a pupil is permitted to bring a mobile phone to school, the pupil and parent/carer agree that:

1. The phone will be switched off before entering the school grounds.
2. The phone will be handed in to the designated member of staff on arrival.
3. The phone will remain securely stored throughout the school day.
4. The pupil will not attempt to access the phone without permission.
5. The pupil will follow all school rules relating to mobile phones and smart devices.
6. The pupil will not use a phone to photograph, film or record others.
7. The pupil will not use a phone to bully, threaten, harass or intimidate anyone.
8. The pupil will not use a phone to access or share inappropriate or harmful material.
9. The pupil will follow reasonable instructions from staff relating to their device.
10. Permission to bring the phone to school may be withdrawn if the agreement is not followed.

I understand that if the school has reason to believe my child is carrying a mobile phone or device, an appropriate person may search my child or their possessions.

I understand that if my child's phone or device has been confiscated I am responsible for collecting it from school at the end of the day.

Appendix 2 – Request for an Exception / Reasonable Adjustment

Pupil name: _____ Class: _____

Parent/carer name: _____

Reason and nature for request:

Permitted purpose:

Permitted times:

Permitted location: _____

Supervision/support arrangements:

Review date: _____ Approved by: _____

Date: _____

Appendix 3 – Summary for Pupils

OUR MOBILE PHONE RULE

School is a mobile-phone-free environment.

If you need to bring a phone to school because you travel independently or have another agreed reason:

SWITCH IT OFF BEFORE YOU ENTER THE SCHOOL GROUNDS → HAND IT IN → LEAVE IT SECURELY STORED → COLLECT IT AT THE END OF THE DAY

You must not use mobile phones; smart watches for messaging or calls; devices to take photographs or videos; devices to record other people; or devices to bully, threaten or upset others.

If you need to contact home, speak to a member of staff.

If something happens online that worries you, tell an adult you trust.

Appendix 4 – Summary for Parents and Carers

Our school is a mobile-phone-free environment throughout the school day.

If your child needs to bring a phone to school, it must be switched off and stored securely in accordance with the school's arrangements.

If you need to contact your child during the school day, please contact the school office.

If you believe your child requires access to a mobile phone for medical, disability, safeguarding or other exceptional reasons, please contact the Headteacher so that an appropriate individual arrangement can be considered.

We ask parents and carers to support the policy by discussing with their child why phones are not used in school; responsible and respectful online behaviour; the importance of privacy; the risks of sharing images or information; and what to do if something online makes them worried or uncomfortable.

Appendix 5 – SEARCHING, SCREENING AND CONFISCATION

SEARCHING, SCREENING AND CONFISCATION PROCEDURE

The Lanes Primary School

Academic Year: 2026–2027

1. Purpose

The Lanes Primary School is committed to maintaining a safe, calm and supportive environment in which children can learn.

The school has legal powers to search pupils, screen pupils and confiscate items where appropriate. These powers will always be exercised reasonably, proportionately and with regard to the age, needs and individual circumstances of the child.

This procedure should be read alongside the school's:

- Behaviour Policy;
- Mobile Phone and Smart Device Policy;
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy;
- Equality and SEND policies.

The procedure follows the Department for Education's **Searching, Screening and Confiscation in Schools** guidance and the statutory **Mobile Phones in Schools** guidance.

2. General principles

Searching a child is a serious intervention and should not be undertaken routinely or unnecessarily.

Staff should:

- use the least intrusive approach that is appropriate;
- consider the child's age, maturity, SEND and individual circumstances;
- seek the child's cooperation wherever possible;
- explain calmly why a search is necessary;
- avoid confrontation or humiliation;
- maintain the child's dignity and privacy;
- record searches appropriately;
- inform parents/carers where required by the school's procedures;
- involve the DSL where there is a safeguarding concern.

A search should only take place where there are reasonable grounds to suspect that the child has an item which the school is permitted to search for.

3. Items which may be searched for

In addition to items prohibited by law, the school's Behaviour Policy identifies the following as items which may be searched for:

- mobile phones;
- smartwatches and similar communication devices;
- devices capable of recording audio or video;

- any item which the school reasonably believes may have been used to cause harm, commit an offence or breach the school's behaviour rules.

4. Before searching

Where possible, the member of staff should first:

1. speak calmly to the child;
2. explain what the concern is;
3. ask the child to hand over the item voluntarily;
4. give the child an opportunity to explain the situation.

If the child voluntarily hands over the item, a physical search may not be necessary.

A child should not be searched simply because a member of staff has a general suspicion or because another child has made an unverified allegation.

5. Who can carry out a search?

The Headteacher may search a pupil or their possessions.

The Headteacher may also authorise appropriately trained members of staff to carry out searches.

Staff who are authorised to search must understand the school's procedure and the limits of their legal powers.

Where a search is required, the school should use the most appropriate member of staff available, taking account of the child's age, needs and circumstances.

6. Searching a primary-aged child

Searches of primary-aged children should be kept to the minimum necessary.

A search should normally be carried out:

- away from other pupils;
- by a member of staff of the same sex as the child;
- with another member of staff present as a witness.

The child should not be asked to remove clothing other than outer clothing such as a coat, hat or shoes where appropriate.

Staff must not conduct an intimate search.

If a more intrusive search appears necessary, the school should seek appropriate advice and consider whether the matter should be referred to the police or another appropriate agency.

7. Searching possessions

Where there are reasonable grounds to believe that a child has an item which may be searched for, staff may search the child's possessions in accordance with the DfE guidance.

This may include:

- school bags;
- coats;
- trays or other personal storage;
- other possessions belonging to or under the control of the child.

The search should be limited to what is necessary to establish whether the relevant item is present.

Staff should not conduct a general search of a child's possessions without a reasonable basis.

8. Mobile phones and electronic devices

If a mobile phone or similar device is seen, heard or reasonably believed to be in a child's possession in breach of the school's Mobile Phone and Smart Device Policy, staff may confiscate it.

Confiscation does not automatically give permission to look through the contents of the device.

In most cases involving primary-aged children, the appropriate response will be to:

- confiscate the device;
- secure it safely;
- record the incident where appropriate;
- inform the relevant member of staff;
- apply the school's behaviour procedures;
- contact parents/carers to collect the device from school

Staff should not routinely scroll through a child's messages, photographs, apps or other content simply because the phone has been confiscated.

9. When information on a device may need to be examined

There may be circumstances where there is a good reason to believe that information stored on a device is relevant to:

- serious misconduct;
- harm to another person;
- a safeguarding concern;
- an offence;
- serious bullying or harassment;
- another matter which the school is required to investigate.

In these circumstances, the matter should normally be referred to the Headteacher or DSL before the contents of the device are examined.

Any examination of information on an electronic device must be:

- necessary;
- proportionate;
- limited to what is required;
- carried out by an appropriately authorised member of staff;
- undertaken in accordance with DfE guidance and the school's safeguarding procedures.

Where possible, the school should seek specialist advice rather than asking staff to undertake extensive examination of a child's personal device.

10. Safeguarding concerns

If a search or confiscation raises a safeguarding concern, the member of staff must inform the DSL or deputy DSL without delay.

This includes concerns relating to:

- abuse or exploitation;
- bullying or harassment;
- threats or violence;
- harmful sexual behaviour;
- inappropriate or harmful images;
- coercion;
- contact with unsafe individuals;
- other information which suggests that a child may be at risk of harm.

Staff should not investigate a safeguarding concern independently.

The school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy will determine the subsequent response.

11. Harmful sexual imagery

If a member of staff becomes aware that a child may have created, received or shared a nude or semi-nude image:

Do not ask the child to show the image.

The member of staff should:

1. remain calm and reassure the child;
2. avoid asking unnecessary questions;
3. not copy, save, forward or distribute the image;
4. inform the DSL immediately;
5. follow the school's safeguarding procedures.

Staff should not intentionally view such imagery unless there is a clear and necessary reason to do so, determined by the DSL in accordance with current safeguarding guidance.

Where police involvement may be necessary, the DSL will follow the school's safeguarding procedures and seek appropriate advice.

12. Confiscation

A member of staff may confiscate an item where:

- it is prohibited by law;
- it is prohibited by the school's behaviour rules;
- it poses a risk to a person;
- it may be evidence of an offence;
- confiscation is being used as a proportionate disciplinary sanction.

For mobile phones and similar devices, confiscation may be used as a sanction for breaching the school's Mobile Phone and Smart Device Policy.

Confiscated items must be stored securely and dealt with in accordance with the school's behaviour and mobile phone procedures.

The school will consider the child's age, SEND, medical needs and individual circumstances when deciding how long an item should be retained.

13. Disposal of items

The school will not routinely dispose of confiscated personal property.

Where an item is illegal, dangerous or otherwise subject to specific disposal requirements, the Headteacher will seek appropriate advice and follow the relevant DfE guidance.

Where an item may be evidence of an offence, the school may retain it and contact the police where appropriate.

14. Recording and informing parents/carers

The school will maintain an appropriate record of searches, particularly where:

- a prohibited or potentially harmful item is found;
- a search is undertaken because of a serious concern;
- a device is searched;
- the police or another agency becomes involved;
- the incident raises a safeguarding concern.

Parents/carers will normally be informed when their child has been searched and about the outcome, particularly where an item has been found or a sanction has been applied.

The school may delay informing parents/carers where immediate notification could place a child or another person at greater risk, or where this would interfere with a safeguarding or police investigation.

16. Refusal to cooperate

Staff should normally seek a child's cooperation before conducting a search.

If a child refuses to cooperate, staff should:

- remain calm;
- avoid physical confrontation;
- explain the reason for the request;
- seek support from a member of the senior leadership team.

A refusal to cooperate may itself constitute a breach of the Behaviour Policy.

Where there is a serious risk of harm, staff may use their lawful search powers in accordance with DfE guidance.

The school will prioritise de-escalation and safeguarding rather than attempting to force compliance.

17. Police involvement

The school will contact the police where it considers this necessary and proportionate, including where there is a serious concern about:

- weapons or other dangerous items;
- suspected criminal activity;
- serious threats of violence;
- serious safeguarding concerns;
- material which may constitute evidence of an offence.

Where police involvement is appropriate, the school will preserve relevant evidence and avoid unnecessary examination or handling of electronic devices.

The school will follow local safeguarding and police liaison arrangements.

18. Proportionality

Staff will carefully consider whether a search or confiscation is appropriate for the age and developmental stage of the child.

In particular:

- younger children may need additional explanation and reassurance;
- staff should use simple, age-appropriate language;
- searches should be as brief and non-intrusive as possible;
- staff should consider whether behaviour is linked to additional needs, anxiety, communication difficulties or other vulnerabilities;
- sanctions should be proportionate;
- safeguarding concerns should take priority over punishment.

The purpose of these procedures is to maintain safety and support positive behaviour, not to criminalise or intimidate children.

19. Review

This procedure will be reviewed annually and sooner if there are significant changes to legislation, Department for Education guidance, safeguarding guidance or local police arrangements.

Approved by: _____

Date: _____

Review date: _____