



Use of Mobile Phone & Other Smart Devices Policy

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Period for review	Annual
Date of next review	September 2027

Policy Owner	Esther Brooks
Responsible Body	Resources and Infrastructure
Publication	Public

Equality Statement: We have carefully considered and analysed the impact of this policy on equality and the possible implications for our stakeholders with protected characteristics, as part of our commitment to meet the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) requirement to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations in our community.



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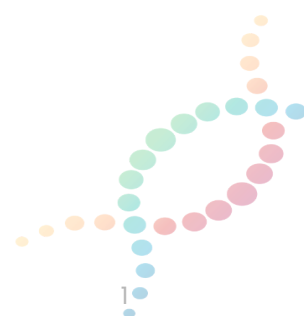
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Policy Scope and Purpose

The **Department for Education – *Mobile phones in schools*** guidance (updated **19 February 2026**) sets a strong national expectation that:

- **All schools should be mobile-phone-free by default**, with any use only by **clearly defined exception**
- The prohibition applies **throughout the school day**, including breaks and lunch

This policy should be read alongside:

- Behaviour Policy
- Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct

BYOD/Acceptable use Policy

In line with DfE guidance all Helix Learning Trust schools operate as mobile phone free environments by default.

The Trust will make reasonable adjustments in line with the **Equality Act 2010**.

Exceptions may be agreed **case-by-case** for:

- Medical needs
- Safeguarding needs
- Young carers or travel safety

All exceptions must:

- Be documented
- Be reviewed regularly

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. Within Helix Learning Trust we include Smart Watches, Smart Devices and location devices in this definition.

Photographs provide an important source of evidence for children and young peoples' achievements and progress. As technology has developed, the Internet and its range of content services can be accessed through various devices, including mobile phones, text messaging and mobile camera phones as well as computers and game consoles. As a consequence, the Internet has become a significant tool in the distribution of indecent/pseudo photographs and video clips of children and young people. 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.

Location devices are not permitted due to: Privacy concerns (unauthorised tracking), Disruption and anxiety from malfunctions or misuse, such as additional functionality beyond location tracking.

The policy outlined below aims to share the principles of use across Helix Learning Trust for staff, pupils, parents and visitors.

Policy Aim

We recognise that mobile phones and similar devices are part of daily life for pupils, families, and staff. This policy aims to:

- Promote safe, responsible use of phones and smart devices
- Set clear expectations for pupils, staff, parents/carers, visitors, and volunteers
- Support wider school policies, especially on safeguarding and behaviour

It also addresses key risks, including child protection, data security, lesson disruption, device loss or damage and appropriate use of technology in the classroom

Policy Limitations

The policy does not cover Chromebooks and ipads purchased by the school or, within our secondary schools the Chromebooks in the 1:1 device scheme; these are covered by the acceptable use policy. (Appendices within the ESafety Policy.)

1. Medical Needs and Devices

Electronic devices such as those needed to support medical conditions must be outlined in a care plan and approved by a line manager (for staff) or through a signed agreement (for pupils). These devices are strictly limited to medical use.

2. Staff Protocols

- Personal devices must be switched off and stored out of sight during contact time with children.
- A limited number of staff may use 3CX on personal devices for work calls; a central log of authorised users is maintained.
- Each school designates approved phone-use areas, such as staff rooms and offices.
- The school reserves the right to refuse staff permission to use their personal devices on school / Trust premises.

- Personal devices must not be used to photograph or record students.
- Only school-issued devices may be used to capture images or video. All permissions must be logged in the school's MIS system, Arbor.
- Trip phones must be used for communication and media capture during school visits.
- Urgent personal device use must be reported to a line manager.
- Smartwatches with camera or recording functions must have those features disabled.
- Smartwatches are prohibited entirely in EYFS settings.
- Contractors, site staff, and IT staff may use personal devices only for work-related purposes and in line with Health & Safety and contractor protocols.
- Staff must never share personal contact details with pupils or parents/carers, or connect through social media or messaging platforms.
- Staff must avoid publicising personal contact details online to prevent unwanted contact.
- Personal phones must not be used to process school data or confidential information, including in generative AI tools (e.g. ChatGPT or Google Bard) or on cloud servers linked to their personal accounts or devices.
- Any unauthorised access to, or distribution of, confidential information must be reported on GDPR Sentry/GDPRiS and to the Head Teacher as soon as possible in line with the Trust's data protection policies. This includes theft or loss of a personal device which has been used to connect to Trust / school information systems or which may contain personal data..
- Breaches will be managed in line with:
 - Behaviour Policy
 - Staff disciplinary procedures
- School staff will support the wider teaching of the importance of carefully considered mobile device usage, following each school's guidance. (Appendix 3)

3. Parent/Carer Principles

- Phones and smart devices must not be used inside school buildings without specific permission. The school reserves the right to refuse visitors permission to use their personal devices on school / Trust premises. Visitors must keep phones silent and out of sight.

- Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS): No devices allowed. Schools will share recordings and photos with families via approved channels. Visitors are informed of this policy upon entering EYFS spaces.
- Beyond EYFS: Photos/videos during school events are prohibited unless explicitly allowed and stated at the start or in advance of the event. Schools will state if they are able to facilitate families taking a photo of their child only. The prohibited use does not apply to a public event (such as a school fair).
- Schools may grant end-of-event photography permissions, where this is deemed appropriate, permission will be shared at the start of the event.

4. Staff Use of Cameras

- Only school devices and school-owned memory cards may be used.
- Images must be securely stored on school systems only.
- Photos must only be taken in public, visible spaces, with appropriate permissions.
- All image use must follow the Trust's Image Use Policy.

5. Pupil Smart Device Use

5a) Primary Schools (See Appendix Two)

- Mobile phones are not permitted unless agreed on a case-by-case basis (Years 5–6 walkers to school or young carers who may need to be contacted).
- When permitted, phones must be basic (no smart functions), switched off, and stored securely. This will be arranged with the leadership of the school. If a Smart Phone is needed, this must be discussed and agreed with the senior management of the school and is agreed on a case by case basis.
- Smartwatches are not allowed.

5b) Secondary School Smart Device use

- **Coombe Boys' School:** Phones must be stored in lockers at the start of the day and switched off.
- **Coombe Girls' School:** Phones must be stored in Yondr pouches at the start of the school day and switched off.
- Smartwatches are not permitted up to Year 11
- **Sixth Form:** There is limited phone use allowed in Sixth Form areas only, away from younger students. Smart Watches are strongly discouraged in the Sixth Form and must not be used for photography or recording on site.

5c) Special School Smart Device use

- Pupils/students are allowed to bring mobile phones in for emergency use only and these are handed in at reception every morning. Important messages and

phone calls to or from parents can be made at the school office, which will also pass on messages from parents to pupils in emergencies.

6) Location Tracking Devices

These are not permitted.

Appendix 1: Medical Device Use Agreement (Pupils)

I/we agree that the following recording device is needed for medical monitoring:

Device: _____

Condition monitored: _____

I/we agree that this device will only be used as per the medical care plan.

Signature: _____

Name of Pupil: _____

Date: _____

Appendix 2: Primary use of Mobile Phones by students – Exceptional Circumstances

Pupil details	
Pupil name:	
Year group/class:	
Parent/carer(s) name(s):	

The school has agreed to allow [pupil name] to bring [their] mobile phone to school because they:

List the appropriate reasons here.

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 agreement will include a discussion with regards to a suitable device, discouraging and providing guidance as to the negative impact of Smart Phones at this age.

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

Parent/carer signature: _____

Pupil signature (where appropriate):

For school use only	
Authorised by:	
Date:	

Appendix 3: Supporting Materials

EE PhoneSmart Licence: <https://eephonesmart.co.uk/> Breck Foundation Online Safety

Safeguarding children and protecting professionals in early years settings: online safety considerations for managers

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/mobile-phones-in-schools>