



Mobile Phones, Smart Watches and Personal Electronic Devices Policy

Child Protection 2025 - 2026

1. Introduction and aims

At Helmshore Primary School we recognise that mobile phones and similar devices, including smartphones, 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 safe and responsible phone use
- Set clear guidelines for the use of mobile phones for pupils, staff, parents/carers, visitors 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

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

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 headteacher is responsible for monitoring the policy every year, 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.

4. Use of mobile phones by staff

The DfE's non-statutory mobile phone guidance says that staff should not use their own mobile phone for personal reasons in front of pupils throughout the school day.

4.1 Personal mobile phones

Staff (including volunteers, contractors and anyone else otherwise engaged by the school) are not permitted to use their personal mobile phone, while children are present.

Staff, volunteers and visitors will not use mobile phones and smart watches in toilet or changing areas.

Mobile phones belonging to staff, volunteers, students, and others should be left in the designated cloakroom area/stored securely in handbag/classroom. Phones must not be visible to children and should be switched off at all times.

Staff must not make personal calls during their working hours. However, in urgent cases, a call may be made or accepted if deemed necessary and by arrangement with the Head teacher/Assistant Head teacher.

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 01706 213756 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) – refer to school's 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:

- Use of multi-factor authentication
- Emergency evacuations
- School mobile phone not available.
- Supervising off-site trips
- Supervising residential visits

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/ school mobile.

Parents are provided with the school mobile number in case of an emergency when pupils are on an off-site trip or residential visit.

4.5 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 and smartwatches by pupils

The DfE's non-statutory mobile phone guidance says that pupils should not use mobile phones throughout the school day.

Helmshore Primary School policy is that children are not permitted to bring a mobile phone, smart watch or personal electronic devices to school or on trips.

5.2 Sanctions

Mobile phones, smart watches and personal electronic devices, where brought to school, will be removed from the child and sent to the school office where a parent/carers will have to collect them.

If we feel there is the need to search a pupil or trays, bags, cloakroom for a mobile device we will follow the DfE guidance; [DfE's guidance on searching, screening and confiscation](#).

If a mobile phone is brought into school the DfE guidance allows you to search the pupil's phone, if there is a good reason to do so (such as having reason to believe that the phone contains inappropriate images or it is being used to commit an offence or cause harm to another pupil).

In each case, the sanction given must be reasonable and proportionate. The school will also consider whether:

- There are any relevant special circumstances (for example, age, religious requirements, special educational needs, disability)
- The pupil's behaviour may indicate they may be suffering, or at risk of, harm. If this is suspected, staff will follow the appropriate procedure set out in Part 1 of [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)

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

Parents/carers, visitors and volunteers are requested to switch off their mobile phone on entering the school premises (notice on the door at the school office entrance).

Parent/carers are able to use their mobile phones at some public events such as the school fair/ Christmas nativity etc (parents will be notified if mobiles are permitted) but must adhere to this policy.

This means:

- Not taking pictures or recordings of pupils, unless advised prior to the event that these are permitted;
- Using any photographs or recordings for personal use only, and not posting on social media without consent

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.

7. Loss, theft or damage

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.

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

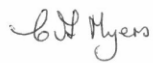
8. Monitoring and review

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

If there are any concerns regarding this policy, these should be brought to the attention of the Headteacher.

Approved by:



Date: 15th September 2025

Last reviewed on:

September 2025

Next review due by:

September 2026