



# Watermill School

## Mobile Phone and Smart Device Policy

Policy Information		
Policy Author: Jennifer Lomas, Governing Board approval date/date policy is in effect from: April 2026		
Review information:	Summary of amendments	Date of next review:
Date: <b>September 2028</b> or following further DFE guidance		

## Policy Statement

Watermill School recognises that mobile phones and smart devices are a part of modern life. However, in line with Department for Education (DfE) guidance, this policy aims to create a safe, calm and focused learning environment, while recognising the additional needs of pupils in a special school setting.

The school's priority is safeguarding, wellbeing, and supporting pupils to develop appropriate independence skills, particularly around technology use.

## Scope of the Policy

This policy applies to:

- All pupils at Watermill School
- All staff, volunteers and visitors
- All mobile phones, smart devices and wearable technology including:
  - Mobile phones
  - Smart watches
  - Tablets
  - Devices with camera, internet or messaging capabilities

## Rationale

DfE guidance makes clear that schools should prohibit the use of mobile phones during the school day to:

- Prevent distraction from learning
- Reduce bullying, harassment and online harm
- Support positive behaviour and social interaction
- Improve safeguarding and pupil wellbeing

As a special school, Watermill recognises that:

- Some pupils may require reasonable adjustments, including access to devices for communication, medical or behaviour support. This will be rare unless it is a curriculum or accessibility device purchased through the school.
- Decisions may be individualised, proportionate and agreed through appropriate plans.

## Use of Mobile Phones by Pupils

### General Rule

- Pupils must not use mobile phones or smart devices during the school day, including:
  - Arrival and departure times
  - Lessons
  - Break and lunch times
  - School trips and off-site activities

### Mobile Phones to School

- Pupils are discouraged from bringing mobile phones to school.
- Where a phone is brought:
  - It must be handed in on arrival to Reception staff and stored securely.
- The school accepts no responsibility for loss or damage.

### Exceptions and Reasonable Adjustments

Watermill School recognises that flexibility may be required for some pupils.

Exceptions may be made where:

- The device is required as part of:
  - A communication aid
  - A medical alert or monitoring device
  - A behaviour regulation strategy
- This is agreed through:
  - EHCP
  - Individual Behaviour Plan
  - Medical care plan
  - Risk assessment

Any agreed use:

- Will be clearly documented
- Will be supervised
- Will be reviewed regularly

### Misuse of Mobile Phones

Mobile phone misuse includes:

- Using a phone during the school day without permission
- Taking photos, videos or audio recordings

- Accessing social media, games or messaging apps
- Bullying, harassment or threatening behaviour
- Bypassing school safeguards

## Sanctions

Where misuse occurs, the school will respond in line with the Behaviour Policy and may include:

- Confiscation of device for the day
- Device returned directly to parents/carers
- Restricted access arrangements
- Further sanctions where safeguarding concerns arise

Serious incidents may be dealt with under the Safeguarding, Behaviour or Online Safety Policies.

## Use of Personal Devices by Staff

- Staff must not use personal mobile phones when supervising pupils.
- Phones may be used:
  - During break times in staff-only areas
  - In emergencies
- Personal devices must never be used to:
  - Take photos or videos of pupils
  - Communicate with pupils or families via personal accounts

All staff must follow:

- Safeguarding Policy
- Acceptable Use Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct

## Smart Watches and Wearable Devices

- Devices with camera, internet or messaging functions are treated the same as mobile phones.
- Wearables used for medical monitoring may be permitted under agreed arrangements.
- Fitness-only devices without communication functions may be allowed at the school's discretion.

## Safeguarding and Online Safety

The school recognises that unsupervised access to mobile technology can increase risks including:

- Cyberbullying
- Exposure to harmful content
- Inappropriate contact

This policy supports and links to:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Online Safety Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy

Any safeguarding concerns linked to mobile phone use will be dealt with immediately under safeguarding procedures.

## School Trips and Off-Site Activities

- The same expectations apply on all school trips.
- Mobile phone use will only be permitted where:
  - Explicitly agreed in advance
  - Risk assessed
  - Supervised by staff

These occasions will be rare and must be agreed by the Head Teacher.

## Parental Responsibility

Parents and carers are asked to:

- Support the school's approach to mobile phone use
- Avoid contacting pupils directly during the school day
- Contact the school office if important messages need to be passed on

## Policy Monitoring and Review

- This policy will be reviewed:
  - In 2028
  - Or earlier if changes to DfE guidance occur

- Feedback from staff, pupils and parents will inform future review.

Linked Policies

- Behaviour Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Online Safety Policy
- Acceptable Use Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct

Date adopted: \_\_\_\_\_

Review date: \_\_\_\_\_

Headteacher: \_\_\_\_\_

Chair of Governors: \_\_\_\_\_