



Star

NURTURING TODAY'S **YOUNG PEOPLE**,
INSPIRING TOMORROW'S **LEADERS**

PERSONAL ELECTRONIC DEVICES (MOBILE PHONES) POLICY



Document control

This document has been approved for operation within:	All Trust Schools		
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Introduction

1. Star Academies actively promotes the use of technology in facilitating high-quality learning experiences for pupils. If used appropriately, technology can increase pupils' engagement and aid their understanding. It can make information more accessible and dynamic, and it allows pupils to benefit from an interactive learning environment.
2. However, technology can also become a persistent distraction and have a detrimental impact on pupils' learning if steps are not taken to effectively manage and monitor its use during the school day.
3. Numerous studies demonstrate the negative impact that personal electronic devices, particularly mobile phones, can have on pupils' productivity and their ability to focus within the classroom.
4. Schools may struggle to foster an effective learning environment if pupils have access to devices that allow them to conduct text conversations, make calls, access the internet, take pictures and videos, listen to music, watch TV and films, or play games when they are supposed to be fully engaged in their learning.
5. Whilst the Trust accepts that mobile phones are often given to pupils by their parents to ensure their safety and personal security, such devices can also present a serious safeguarding and data protection risk. Mobile phones have contributed significantly to the rise in cyberbullying (bullying that takes place online, particularly via social media), sexting (sending sexually explicit messages or images via text) and data protection breaches arising from filming/photographing subjects without their consent.
6. This Policy sets out the Trust's position for personal electronic devices, defined as:
 - Mobile phones
 - 'Smart' watches¹
 - Headphones
 - Non-learning tablets/iPads
 - Music players
 - Handheld entertainment/games systems, e.g., a Nintendo Switch
 - Any device that can be used for image capture/recording, sound recording and information transmitting/receiving/storing
7. This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:
 - DfE (2018) 'Keeping children safe in education'
 - DfE (2018) 'Searching, screening and confiscation'
 - The Data Protection Act 2018
 - The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)
 - The Voyeurism (Offences) Act 2019
8. This policy should be considered in conjunction with the Trust's Safeguarding (Child Protection) Policy, Powers of Search Policy and Data Protection Policy.

¹ excluding fitness tracking devices that have no image capture/recording, sound recording and communication transmitting/receiving/storing capability



Aims

9. To provide a clear framework of expectations in relation to pupils' possession and/or use of personal electronic devices on school premises.
10. To keep pupils safe, happy, and well.
11. To minimise distractions in the classroom and ensure optimal behaviour for learning.
12. To ensure all pupils achieve to the best of their capabilities.
13. To help pupils to recognise and accept responsibility for their actions.
14. To enable staff to apply rewards and sanctions relating to the use of personal electronic devices consistently and effectively.
15. To support the mission, vision and values of the Trust and its establishments.

Who is responsible for this Policy?

16. The school has overall responsibility for the implementation of this Policy and for ensuring compliance.
17. The Senior Leadership Team has a specific responsibility to ensure the fair application of this Policy and all members of staff are responsible for supporting colleagues and ensuring its success.
18. Pupils are responsible for adhering to the provisions outlined in this policy.

Ownership and responsibility

19. Pupils are responsible for their own belongings.
20. The school accepts no responsibility for replacing property that is lost, stolen or damaged either at school or travelling to and from school.

Access

21. The Trust has a strict 'no personal electronic devices' policy for pupils.
22. Personal electronic devices should not be seen or used on school premises at any point during the school day.
23. Researchers at the London School of Economics assessed how implementing a school-wide ban on mobile phones had a positive effect on pupils' performance. This was especially true of pupils with low prior attainment, whose tests scores improved by 14.23% following a ban on mobile phones. The study reached the conclusion that *"Schools could significantly reduce the education achievement gap by prohibiting mobile phone use."* ([Beland and Murphy, May 2015](#)).
24. Another study published in the [Journal of Communication Education](#) found that pupils who were not permitted to bring mobile phones into school knew more and remembered more. Their notes were 62% more detailed than their peers who were permitted to bring their mobile phones to school, and they were able to recall much more information from their classes, resulting in them scoring a grade-and-a-half higher in tests than those who were actively using their mobile phones.
25. In a study entitled '[Brain Drain: The Mere Presence of One's Own Smartphone Reduces Available Cognitive Capacity](#),' researchers at The University of Chicago noted that even if mobile phones are turned off, placed face-down or put away, their presence alone reduces pupils' cognitive capacity, concluding: *"As educational institutions increasingly embrace "connected classrooms,"*



the presence of pupils' mobile devices in educational environments may undermine both learning and test performance - particularly when these devices are present but not in use."

26. By refusing to allow the use of personal electronic devices in its schools, the Trust will ensure pupils are given the best possible chance of achieving their academic and personal potential, without being distracted from their targets.

Implementing the 'no personal electronic devices' Policy

27. Schools will communicate to parents and pupils that personal electronic devices are **not allowed on school premises**.
28. New sponsored academies on joining the Trust may, if required, follow the transitional arrangements outlined below.
29. Schools will ensure that their Parent Handbook references the fact that pupils are not permitted to bring personal electronic devices to school, and this will be reinforced by regular letters to parents.
30. At the beginning of each academic year, schools will send an 'Expectations Letter' to parents. This will reference the school's ban on personal electronic devices as well as the sanctions pupils will face if they are found with a device in school.
31. Pupils will be continually reminded, through assemblies and registration programmes throughout the year, that they are not permitted to bring their personal electronic devices into school.
32. This policy will be available on the school website.

Transitional arrangements for sponsored academies

33. Sponsored academies are expected to ensure compliance with the Trust's 'no personal electronic devices' policy.
34. All sponsored academies will work towards the model currently utilised by Trust schools, However, if pupils have previously been allowed to use personal electronic devices in school, interim arrangements can be made during a transition process.
35. The intention to move to the 'no personal electronic device' policy will be communicated to parents, along with a statement as to how long the transition process with interim arrangements will be in place.
36. The Trust recommends that this should be for no more than the remainder of any part academic year following Trust sponsorship, plus an additional academic year.
37. During this interim period pupils may keep their personal electronic devices in their school bags, but they must be kept out of sight for the duration of the school day, from the point of entering the school gates to the point of leaving.
38. Any pupil found using their personal electronic device - including during lunch or break times - will have their device confiscated immediately and it will need to be collected by their parents at the end of the school day.
39. Pupils using their personal electronic device will be referred to the school impact centre and a red line behaviour will be issued.
40. These expectations are continually reinforced throughout the transition period.



Exceptional circumstances

41. Star Academies recognise that there may be exceptional circumstances when a pupil may need to bring a mobile phone to school.
42. If parents feel that it is imperative for their child to bring a mobile phone to school for safeguarding purposes (e.g., if a pupil lives far away from the school and parents wish to check that they are getting home safely), parents must contact the school - verbally or in writing - to obtain permission before allowing their child to bring a mobile phone to school.
43. Parents will need to obtain written permission for their child to bring a mobile phone to school on an annual basis, in August or early September.
44. If circumstances arise during the school year, where a pupil who did not previously require the use of a mobile phone now needs to bring their mobile phone to school (e.g., because they have moved further away), schools should consider any such requests.
45. If, after considering the parents' request, the school decides to grant permission for a pupil to bring their mobile phone to school approval will be given in writing using the template provided (Appendix 1). The letter includes a set of rules that pupils will need to adhere to when bringing their mobile phone into school.
46. Schools will ensure that pupils, are explicitly taught the expectations regarding mobile phones and other personal electronic devices, using the template PowerPoint slides (Appendix 2).
47. During Half Term 4 (HT4), a further letter will be sent home to parents to remind them of the position set out above, using the template provided (Appendix 3).

In-school procedure for managing permitted mobile phones

48. Reception will hold a list of all pupils who have been given special permission to bring a mobile phone into school.
49. Phones must be handed in at Reception at the start of the school day and picked up at the end of the day.
50. Pupils should place their phone into an envelope, write their name on it, and place it in a storage tray at Reception.
51. All pupils are required to sign a sheet every day to confirm that they have dropped off and picked up their mobile phones from Reception.
52. If a pupil was expected to drop off their phone at the start of the school day but fails to do so, Reception staff should notify the pupil's Head of Year, who should follow up with the pupil to determine the whereabouts of their phone. If enquiries necessitate a search of the pupil's bag or pockets, this must be conducted in accordance with the Trust's Powers of Search Policy.
53. If a pupil comes to Reception to drop off their mobile phone but is not included on the list of pupils who have been given permission to bring their phone in to school, follow-up enquiries should be made with the pupil's Head of Year, who should consult with the pupil's parents as necessary.



Sanctions

54. Pupils found using a personal electronic device in school are subject to the following sanctions, which should be administered in accordance with the severity of the offence:
- Pastoral detention
 - Confiscation of their device (the pupil's parents will be asked to come and collect the device)
 - A meeting with their parents
 - A temporary or permanent ban from bringing their mobile phone into school²
 - Referral to the Exclusion Room/Impact Centre (for schools using the binary behaviour system)
 - In very serious cases, they will be reported to external agencies
55. If pupils are found using their phone in a way that could present a safeguarding or data protection risk, the matter should be referred to the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead or Data Protection Lead.
56. Under the Voyeurism (Offences) Act 2019, it is an offence to use devices to record an image beneath a person's clothing without consent and with the intention of observing, or enabling another person to observe, the victim's genitals or buttocks (whether exposed or covered with underwear), in circumstances where their genitals, buttocks or underwear would not otherwise be visible, for a specified purpose. This is known as upskirting and will not be tolerated by the school. Despite the name, anyone (including both pupils and teachers), and any gender, can be a victim of upskirting. Any incidents of upskirting will be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and handled in accordance with the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

² If the pupil has used a mobile phone and contravened the rules for which they have a written 'exceptional circumstances' exception



Appendix 1 - Letter to parents giving permission for their child to bring a mobile phone to school

<add text to school letterhead>

<insert date>

Dear Parent/Guardian,

The school's Personal Electronic Device (Mobile Phone) Policy is that pupils are not allowed to bring a such devices into school. This important rule is needed to safeguard the welfare and ethos of the school community.

Under the policy the school is able to grant permission for a pupil to bring a mobile phone into school due to exceptional circumstances.

After having considered your request we are granting permission for your child to bring their mobile phone into school because it will help them to remain safe during their journey to and from school.

This is being permitted subject to the rules outlined on the attached page being followed. Please discuss these rules with your child to help keep your child – and all of our pupils – safe. If these rules are not followed, please be aware that a range of sanctions may be implemented including permission being withdrawn.

I would like to thank you for your support with the implementation of our school's policies.

Yours sincerely,

<insert name>

<insert job title>



<insert school logo>

Mobile Phone Rules

As a pupil who has been given permission to bring your mobile phone into school, you must follow each of the rules listed below.

1. You are not allowed to bring a mobile phone to school unless your parents have requested and received permission - in writing - from the school.
2. You must hand in your mobile phone to a member of the Reception staff at the start of the school day, and follow the storage guidance provided.
3. It is important to remember that your mobile phone is left in school at your own risk.
4. Only you can drop off or pick up your mobile phone - another pupil cannot drop it off or collect it on your behalf.
5. You must sign a sheet every day to confirm that you have dropped off and picked up your phone.
6. If you have an intervention/detention, you must collect your phone at <insert time>.
7. You must be discreet about having your phone in school. For example, you should not show your phone to other pupils before you drop it off or after you pick it up.
8. You must not allow other pupils to use your phone.
9. You are not allowed to take a picture or make a recording on the school site. This also **applies if you use a school bus**, if you are in school for holiday or after-school intervention classes.
10. Even when you aren't on the school site, you are not allowed to upload any images or videos made of pupils in their uniforms.
11. You must not take or share images/videos of others without their permission.



Appendix 2 - Letter to parents reminding them about the school's "no mobile phone" policy

<add text to school letterhead>

<insert date>

Dear Parent/Guardian,

At the beginning of the academic year, I wrote to you to advise of the school's Personal Electronic Device (Mobile Phone) Policy. As you are aware, pupils are not permitted to bring mobile phones into school unless their parents or guardians have requested special permission for them to do so. Permission will only be granted in instances where pupils require the use of a mobile phone on their journey to and from school for safeguarding/welfare purposes. Permission must be obtained in writing from the school and pupils should not bring in a mobile phone until this has been received.

Pupils who have been given permission to bring a mobile phone to school are required to hand their phone in to Reception at the start of the school day and collect it at the end of the day. They are asked to sign a log confirming that they have safely dropped off and picked up their phone. Pupils are not permitted to keep a mobile phone in their possession during the school day and any pupil found with a phone will be disciplined in line with the school's Behaviour Policy and Rewards and Sanctions procedure. The phone will be confiscated, and the pupil's parent/guardian will be asked to collect it.

Our school takes stringent measures to ensure the privacy of our pupils and staff is protected and prohibiting the use of mobile phones helps to keep everyone in our school community safe, happy and well. Without the constant distraction of their mobile phones, pupils can focus more on their lessons and, as a result, their grades often improve.

We therefore ask that, if your child has been given permission to bring a mobile phone into school, you remind them of the rules set out overleaf. Breaking these rules can put all of our pupils and staff at risk – and may prevent us from allowing pupils to bring in mobile phones, even in exceptional circumstances.

If you need to contact your child throughout the school day, please feel free to call the School Office – your message will be passed on to your child as soon as we receive the call.

May I also take this opportunity to remind you that, if your child has been given permission to bring a mobile phone into school, they do so at their own risk. The school will not accept liability for lost, damaged or stolen phones.

Thank you once again for your cooperation.

Yours sincerely,

<insert name>

<insert job title>

<insert school logo>



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6. If you have an intervention/detention, you must collect your phone at **<insert time>**.
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