Mobile Phone Policy

Oakfield Short Stay School – **Primary and Secondary**

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RATIFIED BY:	

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Introduction and Aims

At Oakfield school, our Mobile Phone policy aims to:

- Ensure the safe, responsible and lawful use of mobile phones.
- Provide clear guidelines for the use of mobile phones for students, staff, parents/carers, visitors and volunteers.
- Support the school's other policies, including the Positive Behaviour policy and Child Protection policy

This policy also aims to address some of the challenges posed by mobile phones in school, such as:

- Risks to child protection and safeguarding for both students and staff
- Potential for the inappropriate use of phones to disrupt the learning of students
- Data protection issues
- Risk of theft, loss, or damage
- Appropriate use of technology for learning purposes

Please note: throughout this policy, 'mobile phones' refers to mobile phones and similar devices e.g. handheld gaming consoles, tablets, smart watches and smart glasses.

Relevant guidance

This policy meets the requirements of section 36 of the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act 2026, and the Department for Education (DfE)'s mobile phone guidance and behaviour guidance. Further guidance that should be considered alongside this policy is Keeping Children Safe in Education.

Roles and Responsibilities

Staff

All staff (including teachers, support staff, admin staff and supply staff) are required to actively enforce this policy and challenge any breach of mobile phone restrictions immediately and consistently.

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 Behaviour, Attendance, Pastoral and Belonging Lead alongside the Executive Headteacher is responsible for monitoring the policy and reviewing it annually and holding staff and students 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.

Management Committee

Review the Mobile Phone policy to ensure that all provisions are in place to allow all staff to implement this policy effectively and ensure that all legislation regarding mobile phones is complied with and that up-to-date guidelines are communicated to parents/carers, students and staff.

Use of Mobile Phones by Staff

Personal Mobile Phones

The DfE's mobile phone guidance says that staff should not use their own mobile phone for personal reasons in front of students throughout the school day. Staff (including volunteers, contractors and anyone else otherwise engaged by the school) are not permitted to use their personal mobile phone during the school day to make or receive personal calls/texts or engage in personal social media while students are present within the room/during contact time. Use of personal mobile phones must be restricted to non-contact time with students, and to areas of the school where students are not present e.g. office space, private non-teaching work areas.

There may be circumstances in which it is appropriate for a member of staff to have use of their phone during contact time for personal reasons. For instance (this list is non-exhaustive).

- For emergency contact by their child, or their child's school
- For handling urgent personal matters which are considered an emergency
- In the case of acutely ill dependents or family members
- In the case of needing to contact the school when working with students offsite

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 site leads or site admins number as a point of emergency contact.

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 Gemini). For further information on this please refer to Oakfield School's Information Security and Acceptable Use Policy.

Safeguarding

Staff must avoid publicising their contact details on any social media platform or website, to avoid unwanted contact by parents/carers or students.

Staff must not give their personal contact details to parents/carers or students, including connecting through social media and messaging apps. Staff should not attempt to contact students or their parents/carers via social media, or any other means outside of school. Please refer to the Oakfield Staff Code of Conduct for further details.

Staff must not use their personal mobile phones to take photographs or recordings of students, 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.

Using personal mobiles for work purposes

In some circumstances, it may be appropriate for staff to use personal mobile phones or a similar device during the school day in front of students for work. Such circumstances may include, but are not limited to:

- Use of multi-factor authentication
- Emergency evacuations
- 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 students, 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 admin or site lead.

Staff may use their personal mobile phones when supervising residential visits or school trips, if necessary, when a school mobile isn't available. However, their contact details should not be available for parents/guardians.

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 students, their work, or anything else which could identify a pupil
- Try to refrain from using their phones to contact parents/carers. If necessary, contact must be made via the site lead, site admin or school mobile.

Work phones

Some members of staff are provided with a mobile phone by the school for work purposes.

Only authorised staff are permitted to use school phones, and access to the phone must not be provided to anyone without authorisation.

Staff must:

- Only use school phone functions for work purposes, including making/receiving calls, sending/receiving emails or other communications, or using the internet
- Ensure that communication or conduct linked to the device is appropriate and professional at all times, in line with our staff code of conduct.

Sanctions

Staff that fail to adhere to this policy may face disciplinary action. Please refer to Oakfield School's Disciplinary Policy and Procedure.

Use of Mobile Phones by Students

The DfE's mobile phone guidance says that the use of mobile phones is prohibited throughout the school day. Students must not use their mobile phones during the school day, including during lessons, in the time between lessons, at breaktimes and at lunchtimes, unless explicitly authorised by a member of staff (for example, for a specific medical reason or safeguarding issue).

Students are allowed to bring a mobile phone to school. Students will be asked on arrival to either;

- Hand their phone in to a member of staff to be stored securely in a locker or another secure lockable place until the end of the school day.
- Place their mobile phone in a lockable pouch which can then be stored in safe place such as a student's bag/rucksack or within their pocket until the end of the school day.
- Primary students are not permitted to bring mobile phones or electronic devices/tablets with external connectivity or cellular features onto the school transport. Students can bring devices onto transport which have no way of connecting to the internet or cellular features.

In England, schools are legally required to be mobile phone-free environments by default, and individual primary schools can completely prohibit pupils from bringing phones or cellular-enabled devices onto school premises

Mobile phones should not be accessed whilst the student is onsite throughout the day this includes at unstructured times such as break or lunch. If students are accessing their lunchtime offsite, then their belongings/including their mobile phone will be handed back to them for safeguarding reasons. Parents/carers must provide consent for students to be allowed offsite at lunchtime.

The use of mobile phones may be used in circumstances at the direction of the teacher such as for offsite trips and visits/educational activities. This is at the discretion of the teacher, for example for longer journeys or full day activities. In addition to this flexibility will be allowed to support students with specific medical needs (for example, for diabetic students who use conditions glucose monitoring systems that connect to a smart device). Permission will only be granted where there is a documented safeguarding or medical necessity. To request such permission parents/carers should contact the following staff;

Primary North - lewis.pegg@leics.gov.uk (site lead)

Primary South – craig.collins@leics.gov.uk (site lead)

Secondary – Richard.doyle@leics.gov.uk (Head of Secondary) or kevin.curtis@leics.gov.uk (Behaviour, Attendance, Pastoral and Belonging lead)

Any students who are given permission to use their phone during trips/visits or due to safeguarding or medical needs must then adhere to the school's [code of conduct / acceptable use agreement] for mobile phone use (see appendix 1).

Students will be taught the risks that are associated with the use of mobile phones, both in school and more broadly, to ensure they understand the decision to prohibit the use of mobile phones throughout the school day. These risks can include a loss of focus in lessons, classroom disruption and an increase in bullying. Students will be encouraged to see a mobile-phone free environment as desirable and valuable.

Use of Smartwatches by Students

The DfE's mobile phones guidance includes in the term 'mobile phones' all devices with communications and smart technology that the school chooses to include in their policy.

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 smartwatches have wellness and health-related features.

Students are not permitted to wear Smartwatches in which there is a feature to send/receive text/voice messages, make calls or communicate with people outside of school. The above process for mobile phones should be followed.

Sanctions

The DfE's mobile phone guidance says that the use of mobile phones is prohibited throughout the school day, so at Oakfield School we expect that mobile phones are not **seen** or **heard** throughout the school day.

If a secondary student is in breach of this policy and the expectations set out above and their mobile phone is visible and/or heard during the school day, then the process set out in appendix 3 Oakfield School's Graduated Response to Mobile Phones will be followed.

For primary students who are in breach of this policy the site lead or other key member of staff will work together with the student and parents/carers to develop a plan to support the incident which be specific to the individual needs of the child.

If a student is not adhering to the expectations within this policy, then a phone may be confiscated. (Schools are permitted to confiscate phones from students under sections 91 and 94 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006).

When a phone is confiscated, it will be stored securely in the lockers or another appropriate lockable safe space and returned at the end of the day by a member of staff. If deemed necessary, the phone will be returned to a student's parent/guardian/carer, instead of the student, who will come to school to collect it. It is the responsibility of the school to keep the device safe.

Staff have the power to search a student's phones, as set out in the DfE's guidance on searching, screening and confiscation. The DfE guidance allows staff to search a student's phone if reason exists to believe the phone has been used inappropriately; such as contains pornographic images, or if it is being/has been used to commit an offence or cause personal injury. Such instances will be reported to the school's safeguarding lead or deputy safeguarding lead to decide on next steps.

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 (SEN), disability)
- Student 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 Keeping Children Safe in Education. This will include speaking with the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) or deputy safeguarding lead, who will consider if pastoral support, an early intervention, or a referral to children's social care, is appropriate

Certain types of conduct, bullying or harassment can be classified as criminal conduct. The school takes such conduct extremely seriously and will involve the police or other agencies as appropriate.

Such conduct includes, but is not limited to:

- Sexting (consensual and non-consensual sharing nude or semi-nude images or videos)
- Upskirting
- Threats of violence or assault
- Abusive calls, emails, social media posts or texts directed at someone on the basis of a person's ethnicity, religious beliefs or sexual orientation.
- Bullying through abusive calls, emails, social media posts or messaging.

Use of Mobile Phones by Parents/Carers, Volunteers and Visitors

Parents are encouraged to reinforce and discuss this policy at home as appropriate, including the risks associated with mobile phone use and the benefits of a mobile phone-free environment.

Parents/carers, visitors and volunteers (including governors and contractors) must adhere to this policy as it relates to staff if they are on the school site during the school day.

This means:

- Not taking pictures or recordings of students, unless it's at a public event (such as a school fair), or of their own child
- Using any photographs or recordings for personal use only, and not posting on social media without consent
- Not using phones in lessons, when working with students or while children are present

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. The expectations around phone use will be made clear on arrival to school to visitors and volunteers who are accessing the site whilst students are present.

Parents/carers or volunteers supervising school trips or residential visits must not:

- Use their phone to make contact with other parents/carers
- Take photos or recordings of students, their work, or anything else that could identify a student

Parents/carers or volunteers supervising trips are also responsible for enforcing this policy for students using their phones, as set out above, but must refer any sanctions to a member of staff, as they do not have the power to search or confiscate devices.

Parents/carers must use the site admin or site lead as the first point of contact if they need to get in touch with their child during the school day. They must not try to contact their child on their personal mobile during the school day.

Loss, theft or damage

Students bringing phones to school must ensure that phones are off and away, appropriately labelled / identifiable, and are stored securely when not in use following the guidelines above.

Students must secure their mobile phones as much as possible, including using passwords or pin codes to protect access to the phones functions or applications. Staff must also secure their personal phone, as well as any work phone provided to them. Failure by staff to do so could result in data breaches.

Where a mobile phone or smart device is brought into school, it is done so entirely at the students and parents own risk. Oakfield School cannot accept responsibility for the loss, theft, or damage of any phone or electronic device on the school site, during school visits/trips or while students are travelling to and from school. Parents/carers will be made of clear of the disclaimer above when the policy is communicated to parents/carers when it is implemented and following review. Parents/carers of new students to the school will be made clear of this during the admission process. A copy of this policy can also be found on the school website – www.oakfield.leics.sch.uk

Confiscated phones will be stored in the student lockers or another appropriate lockable safe space. In an event a phone is confiscated from a student, the school becomes responsible for the phone and can be held responsible for loss, theft, or damage. The site lead is responsible for the safe storage of phones throughout the day whilst students are onsite.

Schools that confiscate phones from students become responsible for the phone and can be held responsible for loss, theft or damage. The site lead and members of staff who meet and greet students will be responsible for ensuring phones are safely stored away during the day.

Lost phones should be returned to the site lead or site admin (if site lead is not available). The school will then attempt to contact the owner.

Monitoring and review

The school is committed to ensuring that this policy has a positive impact on students education, behaviour and welfare. When reviewing the policy, the school will take into account:

- Feedback from parents/carers and students
- 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 Executive Headteacher Victoria Edwards – email: victoria.edwards@leics.gov.uk or Head of Secondary Provision, Richard Doyle – email: richard.doyle@leics.gov.uk in a timely manner.

Appendix 1: Mobile Phone code of conduct/acceptable use agreement to bring their phones to school due to exceptional circumstances or during trips/visits.

You must obey the following rules if you bring your mobile phone to school due to exceptional circumstances due to safeguarding and/or medical reasons. In addition to this you must follow these rules if you are using your mobile phone whilst on trips/visits :

1. You may not use your mobile phone throughout the school day, including lesson times, in between lessons, breaktime and lunchtime, unless a teacher specifically allows you to.
2. Phones must be switched off (not just put on 'silent').
3. You may not use your mobile phone in the toilets or changing rooms. This is to protect the privacy and welfare of other students.
4. You cannot take photos or recordings (either video or audio) of school staff or other students.
5. Avoid sharing your contact details with people you don't know, and don't share other people's contact details without their consent.
6. Don't share your phone's password(s) or access code(s) with anyone else.
7. Don't use your mobile phone to bully, intimidate or harass anyone or otherwise to act in breach of the school's [behaviour policy]. This includes bullying, harassing or intimidating students

or staff via:

a. Email

b. Text/messaging app

c. Social media

8. Don't use your phone to send or receive anything that may be a criminal offence. For instance, by 'sexting'.
9. Rules on bullying, harassment and intimidation apply to how you use your mobile phone even when you aren't in school.
10. Don't use vulgar, obscene or derogatory language while on the phone or when using social media. This language is not permitted under the school's behaviour policy.
11. Don't use your phone to view or share pornography or other harmful content.
12. You must comply with a request by a member of staff to switch off, or hand over, a phone. Refusal to comply is a breach of the school's behaviour policy and will be dealt with accordingly.
13. Mobile phones are not permitted in any internal or external exam or test environment. If you have a mobile phone, you will be asked to store it appropriately, or turn it over

to an exam invigilator, before entering the test room. Bringing a phone into the test room can result in your exam being declared invalid.

Appendix 2: Template mobile phone information slip for visitors and volunteers

Visitors or volunteers who are entering the school whilst students are onsite will be made aware of the following.

Use of mobile phones and similar devices in our school

Our school is a mobile phone-free environment.

- Please keep your mobile phone on silent/vibrate while on the school grounds
- Please do not use phones where students are present. If you must use your phone, you may go to a suitable room which staff will direct you to or alternatively you can go offsite.
- Do not take photos or recordings of students (unless it is your own child), or staff
- Do not use your phone in lessons, when working with students or while students are present.

The school accepts no responsibility for phones that are lost, damaged or stolen while you are on the school grounds.

A full copy of our mobile phone policy is available from the school office or can be found on our school website – www.oakfield.leics.sch.uk

Appendix 3 – Graduated Response to Mobile Phones for Secondary Students

The DfE's mobile phone guidance says that the use of mobile phones is prohibited throughout the school day. Students must not use their mobile phones during the school day, including during lessons, in the time between lessons, at breaktimes and at lunchtimes. So at Oakfield School we expect that mobile phones are not **seen** or **heard** throughout the school day.

Step 1

Students will be asked on arrival to either;

- Hand their phone in to a member of staff to be stored securely in a locker until the end of the school day.
- Place their mobile phone in a lockable pouch which can then be stored in a safe place such as a student's bag/rucksack or within their pocket until the end of the school day.

If the student refuses to hand their phone in and it's clearly visible to staff that they have one on their possession, then the student won't be able to enter the site/learning environment and parents/carers may will be notified and may be asked to support their child in making a positive choice.

Step 2

If a student is seen on their mobile phone during the school day or refuses to hand it in at the start of lesson at the start of the day and after lunch, then they will be asked to hand it in to a member of staff or place it into a lockable pouch. Students will be given 5 minutes of take up time to reflect and make a positive choice.

- Hand their phone in to a member of staff to be stored securely in a locker until the end of the school day.
- Place their mobile phone in a lockable pouch which can then be stored in a safe place such as a student's bag/rucksack or within their pocket until the end of the school day.

If the student refuses to hand in their phone in after the 5-minute period, then the site lead will be made aware and one of the following actions will be implemented to best suit the individual needs of the student and the context of the situation. Reminder of expectations of phones the following day, contact with parent/carers to discuss the concern, meeting with parents/carers, suspension.

Step 3

If a student in continuously not adhering to the expectations above and all the actions have been exhausted, then this may result in the following:

- Additional parent/carer meeting
- Adjustment in timetable/provision
- Twilight sessions
- Risk assessment put in place to support with additional screening and searching measures which are aligned to DfE guidance.