

Fair Ways Fort Wallington School

Mobile Phone Policy

Document Ref:	Version No:	Summary of Changes:	Author:	Release Date:	Approved By:
GSC 41	1	New Under Section 36 of the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act, all state-funded schools in England are legally required to be phone-free environments	Thomas Backaller	July 2026	QSGC

Review Date: July 28 (every 2 years)

Contributors:

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Fair Ways Vision, Mission and Values

Our vision

To build a community that changes lives, makes a difference to society and leaves a legacy greater than us and our contributions.

Our mission

To grow a compassionate, resilient, and trauma-informed community, that embraces learning, so that we improve the lives and outcomes of individuals.

Our values

Our values form the heart of the work we do, defined by Fair Ways people, for Fair Ways people. These are the values by which we operate, by which we are governed, and to which we are held accountable.

We therefore expect every individual within Fair Ways to *play their part*:

P ROFESSIONAL	A CCEPTING	R EFLECTIVE	T RANSSPARENT
- We do what we say we will. - We approach challenges with optimism and enthusiasm. - We don't judge, we notice. - We put the needs of the service before our own personal gains.	- We don't give up on people. - We value all individuals and are willing to challenge them. - We embrace each other's differences as much as our similarities. - We accept responsibility for our actions.	- We give feedback, we invite feedback, we listen to feedback. - We look inward before we look outward. - We learn as much from our mistakes as from our successes. - We listen to each other, learn from each other and grow together.	- We are always willing to explain why. - We have the courage to be open and honest. - We earn trust through our transparency. - We live by our values even when no-one is watching.

1 Introduction and Aims

1.1 At Fort Wallington School this Mobile Phone Policy aims to:

- Ensure our environment is mobile phone-free by default
- Ensure the safe, responsible and lawful use of mobile phones, where applicable
- Provide clear guidelines for the use of mobile phones for students, staff, parents/carers, visitors and volunteers
- Support the school's other policies, especially those related to child protection and behaviours of concerns

1.2 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
- Risk of theft, loss, or damage
- Appropriate use of technology for learning purposes

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

2 Relevant Guidance

2.1 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.

3 Roles and responsibilities

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

3.2 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.

3.3 The Head teacher / head of school is responsible for monitoring the policy and reviewing it every two years and holding staff and students accountable for its implementation.

3.4 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

4.1 Staff have access for work purposes, to school specific mobile phones, these are agreed to be used by staff as a form of communication between staff when necessary for educational purposes only and for personal safety (Refer Lone Working Policy) and or relevant to child protection/ safeguarding purposes.

4.2 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. All schools should be mobile phone-free environments by default: anything other than this should be by exception only. The exceptions to these rules in relation to staff's personal mobile phones, can be found below.

5 Using personal mobiles for work purposes

5.1 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, Use of personal mobile phones must be restricted to non-contact time, and to areas of the school where students are not present (such as the staffroom).

5.2 There may be circumstances in which it's appropriate for a member of staff to have use of their phone during contact time for School safety reasons. For example:

- Due to the complex nature of the education, we offer and the risks this can entail, staff are required to have their own mobile phone on their person at all times for personal safety as written in Fair Ways' Lone Working Policy.
- Due to the complex nature of 1:1 education and the frequent changes this can create, staff may need to use their phone to keep up to date with any operational changes that occur throughout the day to ensure the smooth, safe, running of the school day. Staff are to communicate with any student they are working with to give a clear explanation as to why they need to use or check their phone, and the phone must then be put away immediately once any required information

has been sourced. This could also include School emergency procedures such as Lock Down, Evacuations, or Fire Information)

- 5.3 There may be circumstances in which it's 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
 - In the case of acutely ill dependents or family members
- 5.4 The headteacher will decide on a case-by-case basis whether to allow for special arrangements.
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 student.
 - Refrain from using their phones to contact parents/carers.
- 5.5 If special arrangements are not deemed necessary, school staff can use the school office number 02381 122200 as a point of emergency contact.

6 Use of mobile phones by staff/ Data Protection

- 6.1 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).
(Please refer to our school's Data Protection Policy and Acceptable Usage Policy.)
- 6.2 For further information please refer to Fair Ways Data Protection Policy and Acceptable Usage Policy.

7 Use of mobile phones by staff/ Safeguarding

- 7.1 Staff must not give their personal contact details to parents/carers or students, including connecting through social media and messaging apps.
- 7.2 Staff must avoid publicising their contact details on any social media platform or website, to avoid unwanted contact by parents/carers or students.

- 7.3 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

8 Work Phones

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.

9 Use of mobile phones by staff / Sanctions

- 9.1 Staff that fail to adhere to this policy may face disciplinary action.

10 Use of mobile phones by students

- 10.1 The DfE's mobile phone guidance says that the use of mobile phones is prohibited throughout the school day.
- 10.2 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 the senior leadership team.
- 10.3 At Fort Wallington, the expectation is that all phones will either be left at home, or if bringing to school, they will be placed in a specifically designed, and numerically allocated, lockable pouch and stored in the SLT office in a lockable box. Each phone will be recorded on a register to record which student's phone is in which pouch.
- 10.4 Students are allowed to bring a mobile phone to be used on their journey to and from school. For example, pupils travelling to school by themselves, but this will need to be handed in on arrival where the above process will be followed.

- 10.4 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.

11 Use of mobile phones by students/ Exceptions

- 11.1 Pupils with specific medical needs (for example, for diabetic pupils who use continuous glucose monitoring systems that connect to a smart device), may be allowed to have access to their mobile phone or devices if agreed by the School's Senior Leadership Team, and this will be written into a phone agreement which will outline the appropriate use of such devices. In such cases where a student needs to keep their mobile phone on their person is due to medical needs, the school will require documented necessity from the parent/carer. To request such permission, pupils or parents/carers should contact the Head of School, Thomas Backaller via email [Thomas.backaller@fairways.co].
- 11.2 Any pupils who are given permission must then adhere to the school's [code of conduct / acceptable use agreement] for mobile phone use

12 Use of smartwatches by students

- 12.1 The DfE's statutory mobile phones guidance includes in the term 'mobile phones' all devices with communications and smart technology.
- 12.2 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.
- 12.3 Similar to mobile phones, smart watches must also be either left at home or placed in a lockable pouch. The process outlined in the mobile phone section mirrors the expectations for other smart devices such as smart watches.

13 Use of mobile phones by students / Sanctions

- 13.1 The school identify that pupils have close ties to their phone, and for this reason we have taken an approach that rewards positive choices but has clear sanctions if the pupil does not adhere to the policy.
- 13.2 If a student hands in their phone/devices, or doesn't bring them in they will be incentivised at 2 separate points in the week:
- 1) If they hand in their devices on 3 separate days within the 5 day week (e.g. Monday, Tuesday and Thursday) then they will be eligible to choose one positive consequence reward from a set list of rewards.
 - 2) If a student hands their devices in all 5 days, then they will be awarded 20 bonus points for their weekly point reward on Friday, with these points also counting towards their end of term reward.
- 13.3 If a student refuses to hand in their devices, the student will be unable to earn their behaviour/respect point (pathway dependant) until they have handed in their devices.
- 13.4 The school adopts a three stage response based of frequency of not handing in devices as required to do so by law;
- 1st Occurrence - Parent contacted by someone within the student's tutor group.
 - 2nd Occurrence - Parent contacted by SLT.
 - 3rd Occurrence - Formal letter sent to parent outlining law and risk to placement.
- 13.5 Continued failure to adhere to this policy and subsequent negative impact on the student's engagement in learning will place the student's school placement in jeopardy and will result in an emergency annual review being called with parent/carers and SEN where appropriate actions and responses will be discussed and agreed.
- 13.6 In circumstances where the school suspect criminal offences have occurred on a student's mobile phone or device (such as having reason to believe the phone contains pornographic images, or if it is being/has been used to commit an offence or cause harm to another person), then school staff have the power to search pupils' phones in specific circumstances, as set out in the DfE's guidance on searching, screening and confiscation. This could then result in the police, and/or MASH being notified.

13.7 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)
- The student'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 Keeping Children Safe in Education. This will include speaking with the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) or deputy, who will consider if pastoral support, an early intervention, or a referral to children's social care, is appropriate

13.8 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 someone's ethnicity, religious beliefs or sexual orientation

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

14.1 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.

14.2 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.

14.3 Parents/carers, visitors and volunteers will be informed of the rules for mobile phone use when they sign in at reception via the poster displayed.

- 14.4 Parents/carers must use the school office 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.
- 14.5 Parents/carers must use the school office 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.

15 Loss, Theft or Damage

- 15.1 Students bringing mobile phones to school must ensure that their phones are appropriately labelled, ready to be stored away securely by the Senior Leadership Team when not in use during the school day.
- 15.2 Students must secure their mobile phones as much as possible, including using passwords or pin codes to protect access to the phone's functions. Staff must also secure their personal phones, as well as any work phone provided to them. Failure by staff to do so could result in data breaches.
- 15.3 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 students are travelling to and from school.

16 Monitoring and Review

- 16.1 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 consider:
- 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
- 16.2 If there are any concerns regarding this policy, these should be brought to the attention of the Head of School, Thomas Backaller in a timely manner via telephone [02381 122200] or email [Thomas.backaller@fairways.co].

17 Associated Documentation & legislation

- Acceptable Usage Policy
- Lone Working Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act 2026
- Department for Education (DfE)'s mobile phone guidance and behaviour guidance.
- Keeping Children Safe in Education(2026)