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| **Policy Name** | **Mobile Phones and Devices** |
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# 1. Introduction and aims

At Old Farm 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, safeguarding, online safety and behaviour (applicable to all pupils, staff, parents/carers, visitors and volunteers).

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](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/mobile-phones-in-schools) and [behaviour guidance](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/behaviour-in-schools--2). Further guidance that should be considered alongside this policy is [Keeping Children Safe in Education](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2).

# 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 Head Teacher (Steve Graham), Designated Safeguard Lead (DSL) (Michael Coldwell), Deputy DSL and Assistant Heads (Emma Overy-Gibson and Rachael Brown) are responsible for monitoring the policy regularly (at least annual), 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

**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 pupils are present for anything other than work-related reasons. Due a combination of the nature of both the Old Farm School Rigwood (throughout the rest of the policy hereby referred to as Rigwood) and Old Farm School sites, regular outdoor and/or offsite activities and the ethos of the school overall not being conducive regarding the use of handheld radios, internal phones or other means of communication, the safest and fastest means of communication among all staff is the use of an end to end encrypted Whatsapp Group on each site. Staff are aware of the need to ensure pupil’s full names are not used and/or sensitive information is shared (as per Staff Code of Conduct policy regarding confidentiality). Staff have the option to lock the group, should they wish, for additional security however this is not compulsory as it can create a delay in viewing what could potentially be urgent information. Use of personal mobile phones must be restricted to non-contact time, and to areas of the school where pupils are not present (such as the downstairs offices on both sites or classrooms when students are not present).

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

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 01287 677 178 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).

Old Farm School’s responsibilities in relation to confidentiality and data protection are outlined in the following GDPR policy: <https://halcyon-ne.com/oldfarmschool/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/GDPR-Policy-January-2023-2025.pdf>

**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:

* Issuing homework, rewards or sanctions
* 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 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

**4.5 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 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

**4.6 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 by pupils

Due to individual SEMH needs of pupils at both Rigwood and Old Farm School and in agreement with pupils, parents/carers and staff (along with seeking additional external advice from outside agencies and other school settings) both sites have a specific approach to mobile phone use.

At the KS2 and KS3/4 Nuture Group site of Old Farm School, most pupils travel to and from school in shared taxis (in some cases up to 1 hour depending on passengers and routes) and use their mobile phones for a range of different reasons; some sensory (including the use of headphones for music, white noise or the use of noise cancelling functions to aid regulation), some for distraction from the journey, some to keep in contact with home. Upon arrival at Old Farm School, pupils positively adhere to handing over their devices to be stored in the school safe until home time. Pupils are aware (and agree as part of their induction) to this acceptable use policy. As such, pupils do not use their mobile phones during the school day.

At the KS3/4 site of Rigwood school most pupils travel to and from school in shared taxis (in some cases up to 1 hour depending on passengers and routes) and use their mobile phones for a range of different reasons; some sensory (including the use of headphones for music, white noise or the use of noise cancelling functions to aid regulation), some for distraction from the journey, some to keep in contact with home. Students and staff are aware of the expectations regarding the use of mobile phones within learning time (regardless of whether on or offsite e.g. weekly visits to East Barnby Outdoor Education Centre) is not acceptable. After consultation specifically with pupils regarding consequences should this not be adhered to, the pupil/s concerned will receive a 1 day phone ban. Should this not be adhered to, this will potentially increase to partial or total ban of a mobile phone within school hours. It will be handed to a member of staff upon arrival and stored in the school safe until home time.

**5.1 Use of smartwatches by pupils**

The DfE’s [non-statutory mobile phone guidance](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/mobile-phones-in-schools) 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 smart watches have wellness and health-related features. Rigwood and Old Farm School’s approaches to mobiles outlined above applies also to smartwatches.

**5.2 Exceptions for special circumstances**

The school may permit pupils to use a mobile phone in school, due to exceptional circumstances. This will be considered on a case-by-case basis. To request such permission, pupils or parents/carers should contact any of the staff named above in section 3.1 on 01287 677 178 or [office@oldfarmschool.co.uk](mailto:office@oldfarmschool.co.uk) .

Any pupils who are given permission must then adhere to the school’s acceptable use agreement for mobile phone use (see appendix 1).

Sixth-form pupils are allowed access to their mobile phones during the school day, to reflect their increased independence and responsibility, but must not compromise our policy on the use of mobile phones for other pupils.

Misuse of mobile phones by pupils in the sixth form will lead to sanctions according to our behaviour policy.

**5.3 Sanctions**

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](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2)

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.

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

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 pupils, 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, or when working with pupils

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.

Old Farm School’s

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 pupils, their work, or anything else that could identify a pupil

Parents/carers or volunteers supervising trips are also responsible for enforcing the school’s policy for pupils using their phones, as set out in section 5 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 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.

# 7. Loss, theft or damage

Pupils bringing mobile phones to school must ensure that the phones are appropriately labelled and are stored securely when not in use.

Pupils 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.

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.

Should there be an immediate risk regarding the use of a mobile phone or device by a student school will confiscate with immediate effect the phone or device. Confiscated phones will be stored in the safe in the school office and will be required to be collected by a parent or carer at the end of the school day.

Lost phones will be returned to the school office and stored securely in the office safe. School will then attempt to contact the owners parents or carers.

# 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 or questions regarding this policy, please contact any member of staff named in section 3.1 of this policy on 01287 677178 or [office@oldfarmschool.co.uk](mailto:office@oldfarmschool.co.uk).

### 9. Appendix 1: Acceptable use agreement for pupils allowed to bring their phones to school due to exceptional circumstances

**Acceptable Use Agreement**

You must obey the following rules if you bring your mobile phone to school:

1. You may not use your mobile phone during lessons, unless the teacher specifically allows you to.
2. Phones must not be seen or heard in class.
3. You may not use your mobile phone in the toilets or changing rooms. This is to protect the privacy and welfare of other pupils.
4. You cannot take photos or recordings (either video or audio) of school staff or other pupils without their consent.
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. This includes bullying, harassing or intimidating pupils or staff via:
   1. Email
   2. Text/messaging app
   3. Social media
8. Don’t use your phone to send or receive anything that may be criminal. 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 acceptable use 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.