



Ercall Wood Academy

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Mobile Phone Policy

Department for Education Guidance

Mobile Phones in Schools

Updated 19 Feb 2026

Approved by: Mr N Murphy (pending final sign off by Governing Body)

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1. Introduction and aims

1.1 Aims

At Ercall Wood Academy we recognise that mobile phones, including smart phones, are an important part of everyday life for our children, parents and staff, as well as the wider school community.

Our policy aims to:

- Promote, and set an example for, safe and responsible phone use
- Set clear guidelines for the use of mobile phones for children, staff, parents and volunteers
- Support the school's other policies

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

1.2 Rationale

Aside from the safeguarding issue, the rationale for this policy is that it has been shown that the effect of banning mobile phones from school premises adds up to the equivalent of an extra week's schooling over a child's academic year. This is according to research by Louis Philippe Beland and Richard Murphy, published by the Centre for Economic Performance at the London School of Economics.

"Ill Communication: The Impact of Mobile Phones on Student Performance" found that after schools banned mobile phones, the test scores of students aged 16 improved by 6.4%. The economists cite that this is the "equivalent of adding five days to the school year". According to Beland and Murphy, a phone ban produced improvements in test scores among students, with the lowest-achieving students gaining twice as much as average students. The ban had a greater positive impact on students with special education needs and those eligible for free school meals, while having no discernible effect on high achievers. "We found that not only did student achievement improve, but also that low-achieving and low-income students gained the most. We found the impact of banning phones for these students was equivalent to an additional hour a week in school, or to increasing the school year by five days."

2. Roles and responsibilities

2.1 Staff

All staff (including teachers, support staff, and supply staff) are responsible for 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 Senior Leadership Team (SLT) are responsible for monitoring and reviewing the policy every 2 years and are also responsible for holding staff and children accountable for its implementation.

3. Use of mobile phones by children

3.1 Children's Use

The school recognises that parents/carers in the community feel the need for their children to have access to a mobile phone for communication home. This helps with safeguarding and child protection especially in the long dark winter months. Erccall Wood Academy supports this approach wholeheartedly.

To that end, the school has adopted the following mobile phone best use policy:

- Children are allowed to bring mobile phones to and from school to ensure their personal safety at all times
- We are restricting the use of mobile phones as learning aids. Staff have been asked not to plan lessons or activities where mobile phones are required
- Children must not use a mobile device, smart watch or electronic device including headphones anywhere in school during the school day, except under the specific direction of a Senior Leader or Pastoral Year Lead. For the purposes of this policy, the school day begins the moment the children enter the school grounds and ends once the children leave the site
- Mobile phones will not be permitted to be used at any after school extracurricular clubs
- If a child brings their phone to school, then before arrival it should be switched off and kept out of sight, for example in a bag. It should not be seen or heard (including vibrate) throughout the school day
- The phone can be switched back on upon leaving the school site. Not before and not during any period of social time (break or lunch)
- **Any child found using or known to have used their phone during the school day will have the phone confiscated and it can be collected by a parent/carer up to 48 hours later. It must be collected in person from the School Office. We will no longer give phones back to students after a period of confiscation. Parents/carers can collect the**

phone within the 48 hours if they are available. The person collecting the phone must be listed on our MIS system (Bromcom).

You will be informed by Pastoral Year Leads if your child's phone is confiscated.

- Any refusal to hand a phone over to members of staff will result in a follow up sanction in line with the school's Behaviour Policy. This would constitute the refusal of a reasonable request by a member of staff. In some cases, this may lead to a suspension or equivalent sanction.
- We will not accept reasons such as;
"I was just turning it off"
"I was just checking the time"
"I was just checking my timetable"

This list is not exhaustive but aims to remove reasons that students may seek to justify their use of a mobile phone.

3.2 Designated areas:

The Principal reserves the right to allow phones in selected areas given individual circumstances.

3.3 Contacting Children and Parents/Carers

In non-urgent situations, parents wishing to contact their child during the school day should telephone the school. We have a well-established and efficient system for getting messages to children and pastoral support if it is needed.

Children who need to contact parents during the course of the school day should speak to their Pastoral Year Lead, who will make a phone available.

3.4 Sanctions

If a phone is seen by a member of staff it will be confiscated by them. Schools are permitted to confiscate phones from children under sections 91 and 94 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006.

Once confiscated, this will be placed in the School Office awaiting collection by parents/carers.

If we have reason to believe the phone contains pornographic images, or if it is being/has been used to commit an offence or cause personal injury, staff have the power to search children's phones, as set out in the DfE's guidance on searching, screening and confiscation. This will always be done by a member of the SLT or pastoral team.

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
- 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

4. Use of mobile phones by staff

4.1 Personal mobile phones

Staff (including volunteers, contractors and anyone else otherwise involved/employed by the school) are not permitted to make or receive calls, or send texts, while children are present. Use of personal mobile phones must be restricted to non-contact time, and to areas of the school where children are not present (such as departmental offices and the staff room).

There may be circumstances in which it is appropriate for a member of staff to have use of their phone during contact time.

For instance:

- For emergency contact by their child, or their child's school
- In the case of acutely ill dependents or family members

The Principal will decide on a case-by-basis whether to allow for special arrangements.

4.2 Safeguarding

Staff must refrain from giving their personal contact details to parents or children, 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 or children.

Similar details and guidance can be found in the Online Safety Policy.

Staff must not use their mobile phones to take photographs or recordings of children, their work, or anything else which could identify a pupil. If it is necessary to take photos or recordings as part of a lesson/school trip/activity, this must be done using school equipment.

4.3 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:

- 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 children, their work, or anything else which could identify a pupil.

4.4 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:

- Ensure that communication or conduct linked to the device is appropriate and professional at all times, in line with our Staff Code of Conduct.

4.5 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 parents, volunteers and visitors

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

This means:

- Not taking pictures or recordings of children, unless it is a public event, 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 children

Parents, 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.

Parents or volunteers supervising trips are also responsible for enforcing the school's policy for children using their phones, as set out in section 4 above.

Parents must use either reception or Pastoral Year Leads 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 his/her personal mobile during the school day.

6. Loss, theft or damage

Children bringing phones to school must ensure that phones are stored securely and out of sight when not in use.

Children must secure their 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 GDPR breaches.

Where a mobile phone is brought into school, it is entirely at the child's and parents' own risk. The school accepts no responsibility for the loss, theft or damage of any phone or electronic device brought into school. (Ref: Section 94, Education and Inspections Act 2006 states that "where a teacher disciplines a pupil by confiscating an item, neither the teacher nor the school will be liable for any loss or damage to that item'). Equally, there is no statutory liability on schools for items that go missing in other ways.

Confiscated phones will be stored in the Main Office which is a secure location.

Lost phones should be returned to Pastoral Year Leaders. The school will then attempt to contact the owner.

7. Monitoring and review

The school is committed to ensuring that this policy has a positive impact on children's education, behaviour and welfare. When reviewing the policy, the school will take into account relevant advice from the Department for Education, the local authority or other relevant organisations.

This policy will be reviewed every two years.