‘Learning for a fuller life…’

WHOLE SCHOOL POLICY FOR USE OF MOBILE PHONES (AND RELATED TECHNOLOGIES)

As a Church of England school, we see it as our duty to give children and members of the school community the skills to maximise their engagement with the world around them, enable them to grow spiritually, emotionally and personally, and develop the character and values which will serve them well in future life and support success.

Formally adopted by the Governing Body/ Trust of:-	Taverham VC CE Junior School
On:-	2/3/26
Chair of Governors/Trustees:-	Deidre Porter
Next review	March 2029

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1. Introduction and aims

At Taverham VC CE Junior 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 and behaviour

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 guidance for use of mobile phones in schools.

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 Headteacher is responsible for monitoring the policy every 3 years, reviewing it, and holding staff and pupils accountable for its implementation.

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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

The DfE's mobile phone guidance says that staff should not use their own mobile phone in front of pupils throughout the school day.

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 children are present. 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 staffroom).

There may be exceptional circumstances in which it's appropriate for a member of staff to have use of their phone during contact time for personal reasons. For example (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 as a point of emergency contact.

4.2 Data protection

Staff must not use their personal mobile phones to process personal pupil 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).

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.

More information to be found in 'Social Media and Electronic Communications Policy' and 'ICT code of conduct'

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 is 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:

- 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

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- 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, unless absolutely necessary (e.g. outside of school hours on a trip). If necessary, contact must be made via the school office

5. Use of mobile phones by pupils

Pupils are not permitted to use mobile phones at any point during the school day, including during lessons, in the time between lessons, at breaktimes and at lunchtimes.

Children who bring a mobile phone to school should always observe the following:

- Phones are not to be used at all on the school site. Any calls/messages that children need to make upon arrival at school should be made before entering the site
- Mobile phones should be switched off and kept in pupils' bags throughout the entire day, including break and lunch times.
- Mobiles phones should only be taken out of bags and switched on once children have left the school site at the end of the day *(unless explicitly directed by a member of staff in exceptional circumstances)*
- School approach is for pupil mobile phones to be 'not seen or heard'

5.1 Use of smartwatches by pupils

The DfE's mobile phone 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 smart watches have wellness and health-related features.

At our school, children are not permitted to wear a smartwatch that has the ability to do any of the following (either standalone or via a Bluetooth connection to a device):

- Connect to the internet
- Send or receive messages
- Take photographs

If staff notice that a child has a smartwatch of this type, it will be dealt with in the same way as a mobile phone.

Simple fitness trackers (that record steps etc.) are permitted in school as long as they are not used in lessons or become distracting for pupils

Exceptions may be made for technology linked to medical conditions. E.g. diabetic monitoring via a smartwatch.

5.3 Sanctions

If pupils are in breach of the requirements of this policy, the school will act in one or more of the following ways:

- Confiscate the mobile device and return to the pupil at the end of the day
- Confiscate the mobile device and return to a parent at the end of the day
- If necessary (e.g. for repeated issues), follow sanctions in the school behaviour policy (e.g. reflection time)

As set out in the DfE's guidance on searching, screen and confiscation, the school reserves the right to search pupil's phones. This will only be done in exceptional circumstances, such as having reason to believe the phone contains pornographic images, or if it is being used/has been used to commit an offence or cause harm to another person. Parents/Carers would always be informed should this have occurred.

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In each case, any sanction given will be reasonable and proportionate. The school will 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

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 any pupils, unless explained how to at a public event (such as a school performance)
- Using any photographs or recordings for personal use only, and not posting on social media
- 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.

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 do so at their own risk and must ensure that the phones are stored securely in their bag throughout the school day.

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.

Confiscated phones will be stored securely in the Headteacher's office.

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Lost phones should be returned to the school office. The school will then attempt to contact the owner.

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

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9. Appendix 1: Mobile phone information for visitors

Use of mobile phones and similar devices in our school

- Please keep your mobile phone on silent while on the school grounds during the school day
- Please do not use phones where pupils are present. If you must use your phone, you may go to the staffroom or the outside area adjacent to the school office
- Do not take photos or recordings of pupils or staff (unless explained how to do so appropriately during a school event such as a performance).
- Do not use your phone in lessons, or when working with pupils

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.

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