

Great Bardfield Primary School



PERSONAL ELECTRONIC DEVICES IN SCHOOL POLICY

Approved by:	Elizabeth Crow (Headteacher)
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Ratified by Governors:	September 2026
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Next review due by:	September 2027
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Statement of intent

Mobile phones, tablets and other personal electronic devices have become widely available and accessible to pupils. This policy is designed to prohibit the use of mobile phones and other personal electronic devices by pupils throughout the school day.

Great Bardfield Primary School accepts that personal mobile phones and tablets are often given to pupils by their parents to ensure their safety and personal security; however, such devices pose inherent risks and may jeopardise the learning environment.

As a school, we must strike a balance between personal safety and a suitable educational setting. We understand that parents may wish for their child to carry a mobile phone for their personal safety, whilst pupils may wish to bring additional devices to school for other reasons. This policy establishes how personal electronic devices should be used by pupils in school to ensure both personal safety and an appropriate learning environment.

Personal electronic devices include, but are not limited to the following items:

- Mobile phones
- Smart watches
- Personal digital assistants (PDAs)
- Handheld entertainment systems, e.g. video game consoles, iPods
- Portable internet devices, e.g. tablets, i-pads, laptops
- Wireless handheld technologies or portable information technology systems, e.g. devices used for word processing, wireless internet access, image capture and/or recording, sound recording, and information transmitting, receiving and/or storing (examples could include digital cameras, digital voice recorders, portable audio recorders, handheld translation devices, etc.)

Legal framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory and good practice guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- DfE Mobile phones in schools
- DfE Communicating your policy for prohibiting the use of mobile phones in schools to parents
- DfE Behaviour in schools
- DfE Keeping children safe in education 2026
- DfE Searching, screening and confiscation in schools
- DfE Preventing and tackling bullying
- DfE Preventing and tackling the bullying and harassment of school staff, where relevant
- Equality Act 2010
- Children and Families Act 2014
- Data Protection Act 2018
- UK General Data Protection Regulation
- Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act 2026
- Voyeurism (Offences) Act 2019
- Protection of Children Act 1978

- Sexual Offences Act 2003

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Online Safety Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Searching, Screening and Confiscation Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Complaints Procedures Policy
- Social Media Policy
- Child-on-child Abuse Policy
- Behaviour and Relationships Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Records Management Policy

Roles and responsibilities

The governing board will be responsible for:

- The implementation of the policy and procedures.
- Evaluating the effectiveness of the policy and procedures.
- Ensuring that the policy, as written, does not discriminate on any grounds.
- Reviewing the policy **annually**.

The headteacher will be responsible for:

- Handling complaints regarding this policy as outlined in the school's Complaints Procedures Policy.
- The day-to-day implementation and management of the policy.
- Informing parents and pupils of the Personal Electronic Devices Agreement.
- Communicating this policy to the relevant staff members and the wider school community.
- Communicating what devices can be brought to school and when they can and cannot be used.
- Deciding how best to achieve a mobile phone-free school environment.
- Initiating and managing responses to incidents with relevant staff members and in line with the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.
- Liaising with and reporting the relevant information to children's social care and/or the police, when it is necessary to do so.

Staff members will be responsible for:

- Applying this policy consistently and proportionately, including confiscating devices where appropriate.
- Managing and responding to incidents of cyberbullying in conjunction with the Headteacher, in line with the Behaviour and Relationships Policy.
- Reporting any safeguarding concerns to the DSL, or deputy, where misuse indicates risk of harm.
- Avoiding use of their mobile phones in front of pupils for any non-work related issues.

- Teaching pupils about the risks associated with mobile phones, other devices and social media, both in school and more broadly.

Ownership and responsibility

- Pupils are responsible for their own belongings. The school accepts no responsibility for replacing property that is lost, stolen or damaged either on school premises or travelling to and from school, and at school events.
- Staff are protected against liability in any proceedings brought against them for any loss or damage to personal devices that have been confiscated as an appropriate sanction, provided that they have acted lawfully.
- Pupils are responsible for replacing school property they lose, damage or steal, including electronic devices.
- Pupils and staff should enable a personal PIN, passcode or password on all the devices they bring to school to protect their personal data, images and videos in the event that the device is lost, stolen or accessed by an unauthorised person.

Bringing and storing personal electronic devices

Mobile Phones

As a general rule, only Year 6 pupils may bring a mobile phone to school. Phones must be switched off before entering the school site and handed to a member of staff before entering the classroom. They will be stored in a lidded box inside a locked cupboard during the school day.

At the end of the day, phones will be handed back to a member of staff as pupils leave the classroom. Phones must remain switched off until the pupil has left the school premises.

Other Personal Electronic Devices

Pupils bringing any other personal electronic device into school must make their parent/carer aware. The device must be handed to the school office by a parent/carer, where it will be stored in a locked cabinet during the school day. A parent/carer must collect the device at the end of the school day.

These procedures also apply to pupils attending breakfast club or after school club.

The school accepts no responsibility for the loss, theft or damage of any mobile phone or personal electronic device brought onto the school site.

Staff Use of Personal Devices

- Staff must **model appropriate use of personal devices** when in the presence of pupils throughout the school day.
- Personal devices may only be used in front of pupils where necessary for **work or safeguarding purposes**.
- Personal calls and messages must be dealt with **away from areas accessible to pupils**, including classrooms, playgrounds and public areas of the school, in line with the Staff Code of Conduct.
- Staff must comply with the **Social Media Policy** at all times.

- Personal electronic devices must not be **charged using school electrical outlets** unless authorised by the Headteacher.
- Staff must not share **personal contact details** with pupils. Where communication is required for homework, examinations or other school purposes, staff must use their **school contact details**.

Adaptations and reasonable adjustments

- Unless **express permission is granted by the Headteacher**, or an agreed adaptation or reasonable adjustment applies, mobile phones and similar devices must not be seen, heard or accessed during the school day.
- The school will make **reasonable adjustments** where required by law to meet a pupil's individual needs, including where access to a mobile device is necessary because of a disability.
- Mobile phones will not be prohibited where a pupil needs to use their device to **manage a medical condition effectively**, for example, using a monitoring app to manage diabetes.
- The school may also agree limited access in other circumstances where this is necessary for a pupil's **safety or welfare**, for example, where a pupil is a young carer.
- Any agreed adaptation or exception will be **clearly defined in an individual plan** and will specify when, why and how the device may be used.
- Permitted use will be **strictly limited to the agreed purpose**. All other use of the device during the school day will be prohibited.

Cyberbullying

All personal electronic devices will be used in line with our Online Safety Policy.

Incidents of cyberbullying will be dealt with and reported in line with the Behaviour and Relationships Policy.

As part of the school's ongoing commitment to the prevention of cyberbullying, regular teaching and discussion about online safety will take place as part of PSHE lessons.

Searching pupils

Pupils have a right to respect for their private life. Any search must be lawful, reasonable, proportionate and carried out with the minimum level of intrusion necessary.

All searches will be carried out in accordance with the school's Searching, Screening and Confiscation Policy and relevant DfE guidance

The Headteacher and authorised members of staff may search a pupil or their possessions where there are reasonable grounds to suspect that they have a prohibited item or an item identified in the school's rules as an item that may be searched for. Mobile phones and similar personal electronic devices are identified by the school as items that may be searched for.

Where it is safe and practicable to do so, staff will explain to the pupil why a search is being carried out and how it will be conducted. Staff will seek the pupil's cooperation wherever possible.

Searches may include a pupil's outer clothing, pockets and possessions, including bags, desks and lockers. Pupils will not be required to remove clothing other than outer clothing.

Where an electronic device has been confiscated following a lawful search and there is good reason to do so, an authorised member of staff may examine data or files on the device in accordance with the school's Searching, Screening and Confiscation Policy and relevant DfE guidance.

Staff will not deliberately delete data that may be evidence of an offence. Where staff suspect that a device may contain an indecent image of a child, they must not deliberately view, copy, save, print or share the image. The device should be secured and the matter referred immediately to the DSL or deputy DSL, who will determine the appropriate safeguarding response in accordance with DfE guidance.

Items found during a search may be confiscated where this is lawful and proportionate. Stolen items and items that may be evidence of an offence will be dealt with in accordance with the school's Searching, Screening and Confiscation Policy and may be passed to the police.

Searches will normally be carried out by a member of staff of the same sex as the pupil and in the presence of a witness, in accordance with the legal requirements and procedures set out in the school's Searching, Screening and Confiscation Policy.

Pupils are expected to cooperate with a lawful search or examination of their electronic device. Refusal to cooperate may result in a behaviour response in accordance with the Behaviour and Relationships Policy.

Sanctions

The school will apply sanctions for breaches of this policy in a consistent and proportionate manner, in line with the school's Behaviour and Relationships Policy.

Where this policy is clearly breached, for example where a device is used, seen, or heard ringing, staff will feel confident to confiscate mobile phones or similar devices.

Confiscated devices may be retained for a proportionate length of time, as determined by the Headteacher and in consideration of the circumstances, including the pupil's age, SEND, and any agreed exceptions or reasonable adjustments.

Additional sanctions may include other disciplinary measures in accordance with the Behaviour and Relationships Policy.

Where a breach gives cause to suspect a pupil may be suffering, or may be at risk of, harm, staff will follow the school's safeguarding procedures and report concerns to the DSL.

Confiscated personal electronic devices will be locked away securely in the school office.

Bullying via personal electronic devices will be dealt with in line with the school's Behaviour and Relationships Policy

Monitoring and review

This policy is reviewed annually by the Headteacher and adopted by the Governing Body.

Any changes to this policy will be communicated to members of staff, parents and pupils by the headteacher.