



Thringstone Primary School

Believe and Achieve Together

Mobile Phone and Smart Device Policy

Approved by the Board of Trustees: 24.08.26

Last reviewed: August 2026

Next review due by: August 2029

1. Introduction and aims

At Thringstone Primary School, we recognise that mobile phones and other personal smart devices are an everyday part of modern life. Whilst these devices offer many benefits, they can also present risks to safeguarding, privacy, wellbeing and learning if not used appropriately.

Our priority is to provide a calm, safe and disruption-free environment where children can learn, socialise and develop without unnecessary distraction.

This policy reflects the Department for Education's guidance on mobile phones in schools and should be read alongside the school's:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Online Safety Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Data Protection Policy
- Acceptable Use Policy

For the purposes of this policy, **mobile devices** include:

- mobile phones
- smartphones
- smart watches capable of communication or photography
- tablets
- any personal device capable of recording, photographing, messaging or accessing the internet.

2. Aims

This policy aims to:

- maintain a calm and focused learning environment
- safeguard children and staff
- minimise disruption during the school day
- protect privacy and personal data
- promote responsible use of technology
- provide clear expectations for children, staff, parents, volunteers and visitors.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

The Board of Trustees

The Board of Trustees is responsible for approving this policy and monitoring its effectiveness.

The Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- implementing this policy
- ensuring staff understand their responsibilities
- reviewing the policy regularly
- dealing with serious breaches.

Staff

All staff are responsible for:

- modelling appropriate use of technology
- enforcing this policy consistently
- reporting safeguarding concerns immediately
- ensuring personal devices are used professionally.

Volunteers, contractors and visitors are expected to follow this policy whilst on site.

4. Staff Use of Personal Mobile Phones

Staff should ensure that personal mobile phones do not interfere with their professional duties or compromise safeguarding.

Staff must:

- keep phones on silent during the school day
- only use personal phones during non-contact time
- only use phones in staff-only areas where children are not present
- never use personal phones whilst supervising children unless authorised in exceptional circumstances.

Examples of exceptional circumstances may include:

- emergency contact regarding their own child
- serious family illness
- other circumstances agreed by the Headteacher.

Where practical, staff should use the school office as the emergency contact point.

5. Photography and Recording

Staff should not normally use personal mobile phones or personal devices to photograph or record children. Wherever possible, school-owned equipment should be used.

In exceptional circumstances, where a school device is unavailable and taking a photograph is necessary for a legitimate school purpose, such as a sporting fixture, educational visit or emergency situation, the Headteacher or visit leader may authorise the use of a personal device.

In these circumstances, staff must:

- only take photographs for school purposes
- transfer images to the school's secure systems as soon as reasonably practicable
- permanently delete the images from their personal device immediately after transfer
- never retain, edit, share or upload images from their personal device
- report any accidental loss, unauthorised sharing or data breach immediately in accordance with the school's Data Protection and Safeguarding policies.

All photographs and recordings must be managed in accordance with the school's safeguarding and data protection procedures.

6. Personal Devices and School Information

Staff must not use personal mobile devices to:

- store confidential school information
- access or process sensitive personal data unless authorised to do so
- communicate with parents through personal telephone numbers, messaging services or social media
- communicate with children via personal accounts, messaging services or social media.

Communication with parents and children must take place through approved school systems unless specifically authorised by the Headteacher.

7. Mobile Phones on Educational Visits and Off-Site Activities

Where possible, staff should use school communication systems and equipment when working off site.

Where a school-owned mobile phone is not available, the Headteacher or visit leader may authorise staff to use their personal mobile phone for legitimate school purposes, such as:

- contacting the school or emergency services
- responding to an emergency
- coordinating educational visits or sporting fixtures
- communicating with transport providers or venues.

When using a personal mobile phone for school business, staff must:

- act professionally at all times

- avoid using personal messaging services where an approved school communication method is available
- not use their phone to photograph or record children except in accordance with Section 5 of this policy
- not share their personal contact details with parents or children unless authorised by the Headteacher.

8. Mobile Phones and Smart Devices Brought by Children

Children should not normally bring mobile phones or personal smart devices to school unless there is a genuine need, such as travelling independently to and from school.

Where permission has been granted:

- devices must be switched off before entering the school grounds
- devices must be handed into the school office immediately on arrival
- devices will be securely stored during the school day
- devices will be returned at the end of the school day.

Children must not use mobile phones or smart devices:

- during lessons
- at breaktimes
- at lunchtime
- before or after school clubs
- on educational visits unless specifically authorised by the visit leader.

Smart watches capable of messaging, internet access, photography or making calls are treated in the same way as mobile phones and should not be worn or used during the school day unless specifically authorised.

The school will take reasonable care of devices handed into the school office but accepts no responsibility for loss or damage beyond that required by law.

9. Permission to Bring a Mobile Phone

Permission will normally only be granted where there is a genuine need, for example where a child:

- travels independently
- has caring responsibilities
- has another exceptional circumstance agreed by the Headteacher.

Parents must complete the school's permission form before a mobile phone is brought to school.

The Headteacher reserves the right to withdraw permission where the conditions of this policy are not followed.

10. Educational Visits

Children are not permitted to bring mobile phones or personal smart devices on educational visits or residential visits unless exceptional permission has been given by the Headteacher.

Where a child has been authorised to bring a mobile phone due to exceptional circumstances, the arrangements for its storage and use will be determined by the visit leader and communicated to parents in advance.

Staff will continue to follow this policy regarding the use of personal mobile phones and photography during educational visits.

11. Parents, Volunteers and Visitors

Parents, volunteers, trustees, contractors and visitors are expected to use mobile phones responsibly whilst on the school site and support the school's safeguarding arrangements.

They should:

- keep mobile phones on silent or vibrate whilst on site
- avoid using mobile phones where children are present unless necessary
- not photograph or record children other than their own child without the permission of the school
- not publish photographs or videos containing other children on social media or other public platforms without appropriate consent
- follow staff instructions regarding mobile phone use.

Visitors working directly with children should not use personal mobile phones during activities unless authorised by a member of staff.

Parents wishing to contact their child during the school day should do so through the school office.

Anyone who does not follow these expectations may be asked to stop using their device or, where appropriate, leave the school site.

12. Searching, Confiscation and Sanctions

Where a child breaches this policy:

- the device may be confiscated until the end of the school day or until collected by a parent or carer;
- parents may be informed of the breach;
- permission to bring a mobile phone or smart device to school may be withdrawn; and
- appropriate sanctions may be applied in accordance with the school's Behaviour Policy.

Where it is necessary to search, examine or confiscate a mobile phone or smart device, staff will do so in accordance with the school's Behaviour Policy and current Department for Education guidance.

Where the misuse of a mobile phone or smart device raises safeguarding concerns or is suspected to involve criminal activity, the school will respond in accordance with its Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and, where appropriate, involve external agencies, including the Police.

13. Loss, Theft and Damage

Children and staff bring personal devices onto school premises at their own risk.

Devices handed into the school office will be stored securely. Whilst the school will take reasonable care of these devices, it cannot accept responsibility for accidental loss or damage beyond that required by law.

Lost property should be handed to the school office so that reasonable efforts can be made to reunite devices with their owners.

14. Safeguarding

Any inappropriate use of mobile phones or smart devices that raises safeguarding concerns will be dealt with immediately in accordance with the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

This includes concerns relating to:

- online abuse
- cyberbullying
- sharing inappropriate images
- recording children without permission
- misuse of social media
- inappropriate contact between adults and children.

Where necessary, referrals will be made to Children's Social Care, the Police or other appropriate agencies.

15. Monitoring and Review

The Headteacher will monitor the implementation of this policy to ensure it remains effective, proportionate and reflects current statutory guidance.

This policy will normally be reviewed every three years, or sooner if:

- legislation changes
- Department for Education guidance changes
- safeguarding requirements change
- a significant incident occurs
- school procedures change.

Feedback from staff, children, parents and trustees will be considered as part of each review.

8. Appendix 1: Permission form allowing a pupil to bring their phone to school

PUPIL DETAILS	
Pupil name:	
Year group/class:	
Parent(s) name(s):	

The school does not normally allow children to bring mobile phones or personal smart devices to school.

Permission may be granted where there is a genuine need. Please indicate the reason for this request:

- ☐ My child travels independently to and/or from school.
- ☐ My child has caring responsibilities.
- ☐ Other (please provide details):

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Parent/Carer Agreement

I understand that:

- my child must switch their mobile phone off before entering the school grounds;
- the mobile phone must be handed into the school office immediately on arrival;
- the phone will be stored securely during the school day and returned at the end of the school day;
- the phone must not be used during the school day unless specifically authorised by the Headteacher;
- the school will take reasonable care of the device whilst it is stored but cannot accept responsibility for accidental loss or damage beyond that required by law; and
- permission to bring a mobile phone to school may be withdrawn if the conditions of the Mobile Phone and Smart Device Policy are not followed.

Parent signature: _____ Date: _____

FOR SCHOOL USE ONLY	
Authorised by:	
Date:	

9. Appendix 2: Mobile phone information for visitors and volunteers

Use of mobile phones in our school



Mobile Phone Policy – Information for Visitors and Volunteers

Mobile Phone Use

To help keep our children safe, please:

- Keep your mobile phone on silent or vibrate whilst on the school site.
- Do not use your mobile phone where children are present. If you need to make or receive a call, please speak to a member of staff, who will direct you to an appropriate area.
- Do not photograph or record children or staff without the school's permission.
- Visitors and volunteers must not use personal mobile phones whilst working with children unless authorised by a member of staff

Thank you for helping us maintain a safe environment for all children.