



MOBILE PHONE POLICY

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Person responsible: Deputy Head: Pastoral

Next review due: Autumn 2028

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1. Introduction and aims

At Southmoor Academy 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 non-statutory [mobile phone guidance](#) and [behaviour guidance](#). Further guidance that should be considered alongside this policy is [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#).

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 Deputy Headteacher (Pastoral) is responsible for monitoring the policy, regularly 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 during contact time. 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). Staff should not use their own personal mobile phone on the school yard or in the school restaurant when there are pupils 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.
- Members of SLT, the Pastoral Team, Site Team and PE staff are permitted to use mobile phones to communicate when absolutely necessary.
- Members of SLT, the Pastoral Team, Site Team and PE staff are permitted to use mobile phones to access Class Charts.

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 0191 5949991 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).

More detailed guidance on data protection can be found in the school's data protection policy.

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 which 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 aren't limited to:

- To issue homework, rewards or sanctions.
- To take registers via Class Charts.
- To use 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 which could identify a pupil.
- Refrain from using their phones to contact parents/carers. If necessary, contact must be made via the school office.
- There may be some rare instances where staff may need to contact parents or carers via their personal mobile, for instance in the case of an emergency on a school visit. In such cases, the member of staff should conceal their own phone number (either in their own phone settings or by dialing 141 before dialing the contact number).

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

At Southmoor Academy our goal is to promote a focused and distraction-free learning environment whilst encouraging responsible use of technology. To support this, we have introduced a mobile phone policy that incorporates the use of phone pouches.

We believe that every student deserves the chance to experience a phone-free education and the pouches provide a simple, secure way of supporting this approach across our school. This approach provides a balanced solution, ensuring young people retain possession of their phones while minimising distractions during school hours. The pouch helps foster social interaction, improve focus on learning, and reduce stress associated with phone use, all while maintaining communication for families during travel to and from school.

Student Phone Policy & Guidelines

Our school is a phone-free community. Each student will be assigned a personal phone pouch and they are responsible for bringing it to school daily and keeping it in good working condition. **Phones and wearable tech will be secured in the pouch upon arrival and remain there until dismissal.**

Daily Process

Upon arrival, students will:

- 1) Turn their phone off or switch it to airplane mode.
- 2) Place their phone and wearable tech inside their pouch and lock it **in the presence of school staff.**
- 3) Keep the pouch with them throughout the school day.

At dismissal, students will unlock their pouch, retrieve their phone and tech, and re-close the pouch to protect the locking mechanism from damage. Pouches must be brought to and from school each day, regardless of whether a pupil brings a mobile phone to school.

Procedures and Sanctions

Late Arrivals/Early Dismissals

Students arriving late or leaving early must pouch/unpouch their phones and wearable tech at the main or pupil reception.

Forgotten Pouches

The student's phone will be collected and securely stored in the office until the end of the day. The pupil will be issued with 1 hour after school detention. Parents/carers will be contacted and reminded of the procedures. If the pouch is repeatedly forgotten their pouch will be treated as lost and a replacement fee of £25 will be charged.

Phone Use During the School Day

If a student is found in possession of a phone **outside their pouch** on school site the phone will be confiscated daily and stored in the main office for the remainder of that week. The phone will be returned once a parent/carer collects it. The pupil will be issued with 2 days in inclusion.

Bag searches may be conducted if teachers have concerns that a student has a mobile device on them that hasn't been placed into their pouch.

Damaged Pouches

Any attempt to tamper with the phone pouch, including use or possession of high-strength magnets will be treated as a **serious offence**, resulting in 1 day in inclusion and if necessary a £25 replacement fee. The phone will be confiscated and parent/carer will need to collect it.

If accidental damage occurs, students must report it immediately. If damage is discovered during checks and has not been reported, it may be considered **intentional**.

The following examples may indicate intentional damage:

- ❖ Ripped or cut fabric
- ❖ Bent or cut pin
- ❖ Signs of force to the black locking mechanism
- ❖ Pen marks inside the pouch
- ❖ Pouch opening without a station
- ❖ Scuff marks on the black ball

Placing A 'burner' Phone Into The Pouch

If a pupil is discovered to have placed a phone in their pouch that is not their current phone i.e. an old unconnected phone that will be treated as a serious offence. Their real phone will be confiscated and parent/carer will need to collect it. The pupil will be issued with 1 day in inclusion.

The pouch should not be used as a replacement for a protective case and/or screen protector on a mobile device.

Emergencies and Safeguarding

Communications During the School Day

Parents/carers who need to contact their child during the school day should do so via the **school office**. We will then pass this message onto your child.

Medical Conditions

Students who require access to their mobile devices for specific medical purposes will be provided with a medical pouch.

Emergency Procedures

In an emergency, the priority is for students to follow school safety procedures under staff guidance. Unauthorised phone use during such situations may:

- Delay emergency responses
- Spread misinformation
- Put students and staff at increased risk
- Disrupt coordinated safeguarding measures

All emergency communications will be managed through the school.

5.1 Exceptions for sixth-form pupils

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.

Therefore, they are only permitted to use their mobile phones out of sight of younger pupils, please see below for when and where allowed.

Sixth formers must not use their mobile phones when in lower school areas of the school.

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

- Sixth form pupils are permitted to use their mobile phone in the sixth form café at any time.
- Sixth form pupils are permitted to use their mobile phones at breaktime and lunchtime in the study and communal areas of sixth form.
- Sixth form pupils are not permitted to use their mobile phones in lessons.

The school may permit pupils to use a mobile phone in school, under exceptional circumstances. This will be considered on a case-by-case basis. To request such permission, pupils or parents/carers should contact the Headteacher to seek permission

5.3 Sanctions

Southmoor Academy do not accept any responsibility for any loss or damage to mobile phones. If a pupil decides to bring any electronic device into school they do so at entirely their own risk.

School staff have the power to search pupils' phones in specific circumstances, as set out in the DfE's guidance on searching, screening and confiscation. The DfE guidance allows school staff to search a pupil's phone if there is a good

reason to do so (such as having reason to believe the phone contains pornographic images, or if it is being/has been used to commit an offence or cause harm to another person).

If inappropriate content is found on a phone, or if staff suspect inappropriate behaviour, the police will be contacted.

A 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 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.

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 which 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 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 in the school office in a secure location.

Lost phones should be handed 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 of 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