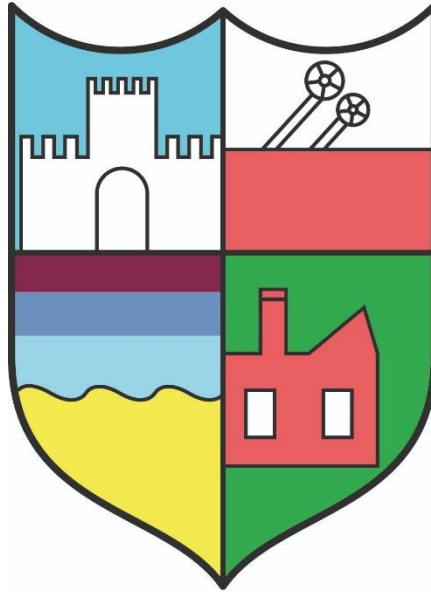




Smart Phone and Smart Watch Policy

Rationale

The school is committed to a smartphone-free environment to protect learning, wellbeing and safeguarding. From September 2026, pupils are not permitted to bring smart phones or smart watches to school.

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

This is in line with The Department for Education (2026) which states that **all schools should be smart phone-free environments.**

This aligns with behaviour guidance and safeguarding expectations, reinforcing that phones are not appropriate for the primary school day.

Historically, children in Years 5 and 6 have been able to bring a phone with them into school and hand this in to their class teacher when entering school. However, we have found the introduction of mobile phones in Year 5 has led to continuing issues in and outside of school.

Therefore, from September 2026, no children will be able to bring a smart phone or smart watch into school.

If a child does bring in a smart phone/watch, this will be kept in the school office and will need to be collected by an adult.

Why we are banning smart phones?

Safeguarding – Our number one priority in school is always safeguarding. We believe that children using smartphones are more at risk of harm. WhatsApp and TikTok are two of most prominent safeguarding concerns on smart phones.

Safeguarding Concerns: WhatsApp

1. Group-chat bullying and exclusion

WhatsApp groups can quickly become spaces for unkind comments, ganging-up, or excluding a child from the group — often happening late at night when emotions run high.

2. Exposure to inappropriate content

Children can be sent images, videos or messages they are not emotionally ready for. WhatsApp has **no content filtering**, so anything shared in a group is instantly visible.

3. Pressure to respond and constant notifications

Primary pupils struggle with boundaries. Group chats can run late into the evening, causing anxiety, sleep disruption and emotional overload.

4. Sharing personal information

Children may share their phone number, location, photos or voice notes without understanding the risks or permanence.

5. Forwarding messages and accidental harm

WhatsApp makes it easy to forward messages or screenshots, which can escalate conflicts or spread private information.

6. Age-inappropriate use

WhatsApp's minimum age is **16**.

Safeguarding Concerns: TikTok

1. Exposure to harmful or adult content

TikTok's algorithm can surface inappropriate videos — violence, sexualised content, swearing, risky challenges — even without searching for them.

2. Contact from strangers

TikTok allows comments, DMs (depending on settings), and interactions from unknown users. Children may not recognise grooming behaviours or manipulative praise.

3. Pressure to create and perform

Children may feel pushed to copy trends, dance routines or challenges that are unsafe, sexualised or beyond their emotional maturity.

4. Data and privacy risks

Posting videos can reveal a child's school uniform, home environment, routines or location. Even "private" accounts can leak content through screenshots or re-uploads.

5. Online comparison and self-esteem issues

TikTok's fast-paced, appearance-focused content can affect body image, confidence and emotional wellbeing — especially in younger children.

6. Age-inappropriate use

TikTok's minimum age is **13**, but the platform is designed for older teens and adults. Primary pupils lack the developmental maturity to navigate it safely

Impact in School

Impacting school work – In recent years, issues stemming from smart phones have frequently caused disturbances in school. This has led to learning time being wasted and staff spending more and more time dealing with problems arising from smart phones.

Impacting friendships – We all know that children will 'fall out' from time to time and this is part of growing up. However, we have found that smart phones have increased these instances tenfold. WhatsApp groups being the main culprit in this.

Smartphone Free Childhood

Smartphone Free Childhood is a rapidly growing UK movement uniting parents, schools and communities to delay children's access to smartphones and social media, aiming to protect childhood from the pressures and harms of the digital world.

What is the Smartphone Free Childhood campaign?

Smartphone Free Childhood (SFC) is a UK-based grassroots movement launched in 2024 that encourages families to delay giving children smartphones, typically until age 14, and to delay access to social media until age 16. It has rapidly grown into a national and international campaign with hundreds of thousands of parents involved.

1. A fast-growing parent-led movement

SFC began as a small WhatsApp group created by two parents in Suffolk and went viral in early 2024. It now has over 140,000 parents from 13,500 schools signed up to its pact, with members in more than 60 countries.

2. The core message: delay smartphones

The campaign asks parents to sign a voluntary pact promising not to give their child a smartphone before age 14. It focuses on cultural change, not legislation, and aims to reduce peer pressure by encouraging whole communities to delay together.

3. Why it exists: rising concern about childhood and tech

The movement grew in response to increasing evidence and public concern about the impact of smartphones on children's mental health, attention, sleep, social development and exposure to harmful content. This concern was amplified by books like *The Anxious Generation* and documentaries such as *Swiped*.

4. A wider cultural shift

The campaign has gained support from public figures, MPs, health professionals and educators. It has influenced school policies and contributed to a broader national conversation about children's digital wellbeing

Some questions we think you may have:

Q – Why now?

A – This isn't a decision we have taken lightly. However, we have had some serious incidents occur this academic year due to smartphones. In previous years, some children in Year 4 have been given smartphones in preparation for Year 5. By informing you now, we hope this may allow you to speak to your child and delay buying them a smart phone.

Q – My child already has a smart phone, so how will this help them?

A – We don't believe by stopping smart phones coming into school that we will solve all issues; however, we believe that this is a step in the right direction and will hopefully limit the use of smart phones.

Q - How can my child contact me if they are walking home from school?

A - 'Brick phones' will be permitted, but would still need to be handed in to class teachers when entering school. Example: [Nokia 105](#)

Q – I like to check my child's location when they leave school, how can I do this?

A – Your child could have an air tag in their bag/coat.

Staff Use of Mobile Phones

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

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/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).

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).

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. Refrain from using their phones to contact parents/carers. If necessary, contact must be made via the school office

Sanctions

Staff that fail to adhere to this policy may face disciplinary action. See the school's staff disciplinary policy for more information. 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

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.

Reviewed: 7th July 2026

Approved by governors: 11th November 2026

Definitions:

Smartphone - A smartphone is a mobile device that combines mobile connectivity with advanced computing capabilities. It typically includes internet access, apps, a touchscreen interface, camera, and features such as social media, messaging platforms, and games. Examples include iPhones, Android phones, and other devices capable of running third-party applications.

Basic Phone - A basic or brick phone is a basic mobile device designed solely for calling and texting. It does not support internet browsing, apps, or advanced features.