

Mobile Phone Policy

Swanshurst School



Approved by:	M. Dunn	Date: 29.06.25
Last reviewed on:	10.06.2025	Author: S. Fletcher
Version	V1	
Next review due by:	June 2026	

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1. Introduction and aims

For the purposes of this policy, the term “mobile phone” includes any smart device capable of accessing apps, such as smartphones, smartwatches, tablets, or similar portable technology. Where “mobile phone” is referenced, it should be understood to encompass these devices unless explicitly stated otherwise.

At Swanshurst we recognise that mobile phones, including smart watches, are an important part of everyday life for our pupils, parents/carers, and staff, as well as the wider school community.

By the age of 12, 97% of children own a mobile phone, but the use of mobile phones in school can lead to distractions, disruption and can increase the risk of online bullying.

We also know that technology can bring many benefits to children’s education, but it’s crucial that pupils stay engaged in their learning to ensure high and rising standards in schools. Phones have no place in classrooms.

<https://educationhub.blog.gov.uk/2024/10/mobile-phones-in-schools-are-they-being-banned/>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/mobile-phones-in-schools>

According to 2022 – Parenting for a Digital Future

How social media affects children at different ages – and how to protect them

<https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/parenting4digitalfuture/2022/05/04/social-media-at-different-ages/>

“New research suggests that there appear to be differences across age groups with regards to the effects social media use can have on life satisfaction. In a large UK sample of over 17,000 young people aged ten to 21, researchers found the detrimental effects of high levels of social media use may be especially pronounced at ages 14-15 and 19 for boys, and **11-13 and 19** for **girls**. Former Facebook employee Frances Haugen revealed in 2021 that internal Facebook research has repeatedly shown detrimental mental health impacts of Instagram use for young girls.

Separately, we know excessive screen time can be associated with symptoms of stress, anxiety, depression, and addiction.”

Our policy aims to:

- Promote, and set an example for, safe and responsible phone use
- Set clear guidelines for the use of mobile phones for pupils, staff, parents/carers and volunteers

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

2. Roles and responsibilities

2.1 Staff

All staff (including teachers, support staff and supply staff) are responsible for 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 for Pastoral is responsible for monitoring the policy annually, reviewing it, and holding staff and pupils accountable for its implementation.

2.2 Governors

Governors will ratify this policy and review it as required.

3. Use of mobile phones by staff

3.1 Personal mobile phones

Staff (including volunteers, contractors, and anyone else otherwise engaged by the school) are not permitted to make or receive calls, or send texts, 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 and office spaces).

There may be circumstances in which it's appropriate for a member of staff to have use of their phone during contact time. For instance:

- › 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 [0121 464 2400] as a point of emergency contact.

3.2 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 Data Protection policy.

3.3 Safeguarding

Staff must refrain from giving 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 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.

3.4 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:

- 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

3.5 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.

3.6 Sanctions

Staff that fail to adhere to this policy may face disciplinary action.

See the school's staff disciplinary policy for more information.

4. Use of mobile phones by pupils

The school accepts that parents / carers may wish their child(ren) to carry a mobile phone to school (for safety reasons whilst travelling). Where a student is carrying a mobile phone the following expectations must be adhered to (from a 'safeguarding' or 'health and safety' perspective):

- Mobile phones should be password protected.
- Mobile phones should be kept in school bag and switched off.
- Mobile phones should not be visible within the school building during the school day.

The school policy is that a mobile phone will be confiscated if it is seen or heard anywhere on the school site during school hours. Pupils need to wait until they are outside the school building at the end of the school day before they use their phone, or it will be confiscated.

Pupils must ensure their phone is switched off and stored away before they enter the school site each morning.

Any phone that is confiscated will only be handed back to the pupil it was taken from or their parent/carer.

If a pupil needs to make an urgent phone call, they can go to their year group pastoral office and they will be allowed to make a phone call.

On occasions pupils may be allowed to use their mobile phone in classroom activities / trips and visit / educational activities only to enhance their learning. They are **ONLY** to use their mobile phone under the guidance of the member of staff. If they **DO NOT** use the mobile phone for learning or not following instructions to switch off their mobile phone, the member of staff will apply the school behaviour policy.

If it is found that a phone has been used during the school day, it will be confiscated by an appropriate member of staff and the school mobile phone policy will be applied.

All pupils receive education to ensure they understand how to stay safe and behave online through PSHE, RSE and Computing. Where more serious concerns arise, a referral is made by Heads of Year to the Pupil Support Hub so a more intense workshop can be delivered.

4.1 Sanctions

If a phone has not been turned off and is **heard** then it will be confiscated (**Schools are permitted to confiscate phones from pupils under sections 91 and 94 of the [Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)**)

If a pupil brings a mobile phone onto the school site and it is **seen** by a member of staff during the school day, it will be confiscated. **Randomised spot checks during Standard Walks will take place as a way of monitoring and enforcing this policy.**

Any phone that is confiscated will be handed back at the end of the school day on the first occasion after a 30-minute Pastoral detention.

When a phone is confiscated it will be:

- a) taken to the year team administrator by the member of staff that confiscated the phone or through the SLT on Call if the incident happens during a lesson.
- b) an envelope is completed and phone is placed inside envelope
- c) envelope sealed and kept in a secure office until it is collected.
- d) the phone is kept until the end of day and will be given back after the pupil has completed the **30-minute Pastoral detention**; when a pupil asks for their phone it must be done in an acceptable manner or the phone will be kept for an additional 24 hours (on a Friday this will be after school the following Monday).

On the first occasion a phone is confiscated, parent/carer will be informed that if the phone is confiscated again, it will not be returned until the following day.

The second time a phone call will be made to inform parent/carer that the phone has been confiscated for 24 hours, and the pupil has a 60-minute detention. Parents / carers will be informed if it is confiscated again, they will have to come in and collect it. If the phone is confiscated on a Friday it will not be returned until the following Monday.

The third time the phone is confiscated **parent/carer has to collect the phone** the following day. The pastoral leadership team will contact parent/carer to collect the phone and inform parent / carer that the pupil will have **Leadership detention for 90-minutes**. Each subsequent time the phone is confiscated parent/carer will be contacted and they will arrange for the phone to be collected by parent/carer the next day.

If it is a Friday, it can be collected the following Monday. **This will be classed as defiance and the pupil may be placed in isolation.**

Where this occurs at the end of half term the phone will be kept in the school safe for the duration of the break until pupils return to school and parents are able to collect.

Where there are extenuating circumstances only the Headteacher may release the phone at the end of the day before the school closes for half term if parents are able to collect.

If a pupil refuses to hand the phone over (whether it is their phone or someone else's), an appropriate member of staff will be called to ask for the phone. If the phone is not handed over, staff will not negotiate with a pupil over whether they hand over their mobile phone. Failure to follow instructions will be deemed an act of defiance. The school behaviour policy will be applied. **(see behaviour policy)**

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.

If a phone is used to commit any of these offences to a pupil in this school whether this has happened during school time or not the phone will be confiscated and returned only to a parent/carer once the investigation is over. If a pupil refuses to hand the phone over, an appropriate member of staff will deal with the pupil appropriately in accordance with our behaviour policy.

Staff have the power to search pupils' phones, as set out in the DfE's guidance on searching, screening and confiscation. The DfE guidance allows the search of a pupil's phone if there is reason to believe the phone contains inappropriate content, or if it is being/has been used to commit an offence or cause harm/ personal injury.

5. 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 a public event (permission has been given prior to event), 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 4 above.

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 his/her personal mobile during the school day.

6. Loss, theft or damage

Pupils must secure their 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. This includes when a mobile phone is confiscated.

All pupils and parents/carers are made aware by:

- › Having signs up in the school hub and year offices
- › Directing new pupils and parents/carers to our policy on the website

Confiscated phones will be stored in the Year Team / SLT offices in a secure location.

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

7. 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 teachers
- › Records of behaviour and safeguarding incidents
- › Relevant advice from the Department for Education, the local authority or other relevant organisations
- › Feedback from governors and ratifying

- › This policy links and supports the school's other policies, especially those related to child protection and behaviour.
 - Safeguarding
 - KCSIE
 - Searching, screening and confiscation
 - Behaviour policy
 - Online safety policy
 - Acceptable Use policy
 - Data Protection policy
 - BCC Policy and Guidance for Educational Visits and Learning Outside the Classroom
 - Complaints procedure

8. Appendix 1: Home School Agreement



Swanshurst School

Home School Agreement

Swanshurst School recognises that the successful development of its pupils depends on an effective partnership of school, students and parents. All three parties share responsibility for the development and achievement of each pupil. Together, we commit ourselves to the following:

Swanshurst School will:	As parent/ carer, I/ we will:	As a student, I will:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have high expectations for all our students • Ensure that all students have the same opportunities, support and guidance to achieve their full potential • Provide a safe learning environment that is stimulating and challenging • Ensure your child is taught well everyday • Treat everyone with respect and promote tolerance through our open culture • Contact parents to celebrate success • Give parents access to Edulink in order to allow parents to monitor their child's progress • Be open and welcoming at all times and offer opportunities for students to become involved in the life of the school • Provide students with opportunities to meet the Swanshurst Pledge • Have zero tolerance approach to Bullying, Discrimination (of any kind), Violence, Defiance and the use or possession of Drugs, alcohol or tobacco (including 'vapes') 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that my child attends school every day, on time, in the correct uniform and is properly equipped for the day • Support the above by actively screening and monitoring my child's social media activity as well as use of school laptops whilst they are at home • Agree to the school's attendance policy including informing the school on the first day of absence • Provide a supportive environment that enables my child to complete homework • Attend all relevant parents'/information events • Attend the internet safety workshop organised by the school (year 7 only) • Support the school in implementing its behaviour policy as well as the step consequence ladder • Make sure that the school is aware of any concerns or problems that might affect my child's learning • Talk to my child about their day at school • Encourage my child to participate in all pledge opportunities offered by the school • Support the school's zero tolerance approach to Bullying, Discrimination (of any kind), Bullying, Violence, Defiance and the use or possession of Drugs, alcohol or tobacco (including 'vapes') 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arrive at school every day at 8:30am, wearing my uniform with pride and with the right mindset to learn • Behave well at all times, lead by example, and be a positive ambassador for Swanshurst School • Follow the Swanshurst Way in order to reach my full potential first time and every time • Treat everyone with respect, (including online safety) regardless of culture, race, beliefs and values. I will encourage and support and show the Swanshurst values • Strive for success in everything I do and ask for support when needed • Have a positive attitude and maintain high expectations of myself • To accept responsibility for my actions • Show a willingness to learn by completing work on time and to the best of my ability • Involve myself in additional responsibilities provided by the school through the pupil pledge • Show pride in my school, respect its environment and encourage others to do so
Signed by Form Tutor Date	Signed by Parent/ Carer Date	Signed by Student (printed) Date

Aspirational • Resilient • Reflective • Creative • Confident Communicators • Kind & Respectful • Independent

11. Appendix 4: Mobile phone information slip for visitors

Use of mobile phones in our school

- › Please keep your mobile phone on silent/vibrate while on the school grounds
- › Please do not use phones where pupils are present or when walking around the school buildings/ site. If you must use your phone, you may go to staffrooms or office spaces.
- › Do not take photos or recordings of pupils (unless it is your own child), or staff
- › Do not use your phone in lessons, or when working with pupils
- › Be aware that pupils and staff will report breaches of the mobile phone policy to a member of the senior leadership team

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.

Use of mobile phones in our school

- › Please keep your mobile phone on silent/vibrate while on the school grounds
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