

DRAFT Student Mobile Phone Policy

Purpose

This policy sets out the expectations for the use of mobile phones and other personal smart devices by students attending the school. Its purpose is to:

- Safeguard all students and staff.
- Promote a positive learning environment free from unnecessary distractions.
- Protect privacy and confidentiality.
- Support students to develop safe and responsible digital behaviours.
- Ensure compliance with safeguarding, data protection, and online safety requirements.

This policy applies to all students attending the school.

Principles

The school recognises that some students may need access to a mobile phone for travel arrangements, communication with parents / carers or because of identified medical, accessibility or communication needs.

The school also recognises that many students have additional needs, including communication differences, sensory needs, medical conditions and disabilities. Decisions regarding the use of personal devices will therefore be made with consideration of each student's individual needs while maintaining the safety of the wider school community.

General Expectations

Students are expected to:

- Bring mobile phones to school only when necessary.
- Keep mobile phones switched off or set to silent throughout the school day unless permission has been given by staff.
- Store phones safely as directed by school staff.
- Follow staff instructions regarding the use of personal devices.
- Respect the privacy of others at all times.

The school accepts no responsibility for loss, theft or damage to personal mobile phones.

Students who travel independently or are transported into school may bring a mobile phone to school.

Unless specifically authorised:

- Phones must be switched off or placed in aeroplane mode.
- Phones must remain out of sight during lessons, in corridors, during social times and during assemblies.
- Phones should remain securely stored in bags or in a designated secure location if requested.

Students may only use mobile phones:

- Before and after the school day.
- With direct permission from a member of staff.
- If it is to support regulation during breaks and lunch time (pre agreement from senior staff, external professionals and parents - register in place)

Students with Additional Needs

Some students require mobile devices as part of their:

- Communication system.
- Medical management.
- Accessibility requirements.
- Independence programme.
- Positive behaviour support plan.

Where this applies:

- The use of the device will be agreed with parents or carers and relevant professionals.
- Expectations will be documented in the student's support plan, Education Health Care Plan (EHCP), Individual Healthcare Plan or Behaviour Support Plan where appropriate.
- Staff will ensure use remains safe and appropriate.

Photography, Video and Audio Recording

Students must not:

- Photograph other students or staff without permission.
- Record video or audio on school premises
- Share images or recordings taken within school.
- Livestream from school.

Unauthorised recording is considered a safeguarding concern and will be addressed appropriately.

Social Media

Students must not access or use social media during the school day

Students must never:

- Post images of students or staff.
- Share confidential information.
- Use social media to intimidate, threaten or bully others.

Online Safety

Students are expected to:

- Use technology responsibly.
- Report any upsetting or inappropriate online content to a trusted adult.
- Respect others online.
- Follow the school's Acceptable Use Agreement.

The school will educate students about online safety and the law through the curriculum and age-appropriate learning.

Contact with Parents and Carers

Parents / carers who need to contact their child during the school day should contact the school office.

Students who need to contact parents or carers during the school day should do so through school staff unless alternative arrangements have been agreed.

Storage and Security

Students bringing phones into school do so at their own risk.

Where appropriate, phones should be:

- Switched off.
- Phones should remain in students bags / coats or can be handed in to a member of staff
- Clearly labelled. (Advised)

Loss or Damage

The school cannot accept liability for:

- Lost phones.
- Stolen phones.
- Damaged phones.
- Data loss.

Students are encouraged not to bring expensive personal devices unless essential.

Misuse of Mobile Phones

Examples of misuse include:

- Using phones during lessons or when moving around the building without permission.
- Refusing to hand over a phone when requested.
- Recording others without permission.
- Bullying or harassment using digital technology.
- Accessing inappropriate material.
- Using phones to disrupt learning.
- Cheating during assessments.
- Sharing inappropriate images or messages.

Where misuse occurs, staff will respond proportionately, taking account of the student's age, understanding, communication needs and any identified additional needs.

Possible consequences may include:

- Reminder of expectations.
- Temporary confiscation until the end of the school day.
- Meeting with parents or carers.
- Restriction of future phone use.
- Referral to safeguarding procedures where appropriate.

Where criminal activity or serious safeguarding concerns are suspected, the school will involve external agencies, including the police, in line with safeguarding procedures.

Please refer to Appendix one- *School mobile phone / electronic devices rules poster that is shared with children and parents.*

Searching Devices

Staff will only examine the contents of a student's phone where there is a lawful basis and where permitted under current legislation and school procedures.

In England and Wales, Teachers must follow specific statutory legislation and government guidelines when searching a pupil's mobile phone content. The core power stems from the Education Act 1996 (specifically section 550ZB), amended

by the Education Act 2011, and operationalised by the Department for Education's statutory guidance: Searching, Screening and Confiscation (2022) alongside the Mobile Phones in Schools (2024) directive.

A breakdown of the legal criteria, procedural constraints, and data-handling rules follows below.

1. Legal Requirements to Search Phone Content

Teachers cannot look through a phone simply out of curiosity. To legally examine the data or files on an electronic device without a pupil's consent, specific criteria must be met:

- **Authorised Staff:** The search must be conducted by the Head Teacher or a member of staff explicitly authorised by the Head Teacher.
- **Reasonable Grounds:** The Teacher must have "reasonable grounds" to suspect that the phone holds data or files that have been, or could be, used to cause harm, disrupt teaching, or break school rules.
- **Good Reason:** There must be a "good reason" to examine the data. This applies if the phone is suspected of being used for cyberbullying, sharing pornographic images, or coordinating a criminal offence.

2. Mandatory Search Procedures

If the legal thresholds are met, the authorised staff member must adhere to strict procedural rules to ensure safety and compliance:

- **The Witness Rule:** The search must be carried out by a staff member of the same sex as the pupil, and there **must** be a witness present (ideally also of the same sex). **Privacy:** The search should be conducted away from other pupils (e.g., not in an occupied classroom) to preserve the pupil's dignity.
- **Cooperation First:** Staff should always ask for cooperation first. If the pupil refuses to unlock or hand over the device, they can be sanctioned under the school's regular behaviour policy. Force cannot be used to compel a pupil to show their phone screen or content.

3. Deleting Data, Retention, and Police Involvement

The legislation grants Teachers unique statutory powers to act immediately on the data they discover:

- **Power to Delete:** If a Teacher finds files or data that have been—or are likely to be—used to disrupt teaching, break school rules, or cause harm, they have the legal power to delete them.
- **The "Do Not View" Exception (Indecent Imagery):** If a Teacher reasonably suspects the phone contains child sexual abuse material (CSAM) or extreme pornographic images, **staff must not view or examine the files**. Viewing this material could compromise criminal evidence or constitute an offence.
- **Police Handover:** For suspected illegal content, the device must immediately be confiscated, kept secure, and delivered to the police or the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) as soon as reasonably practicable.

4. Notifications and Records

- **Informing Parents:** Schools are not legally required to get parental consent before a search, nor do they have to notify parents beforehand. However, the guidance dictates that parents should be informed if a significant incident or safeguarding issue is uncovered.
- **Internal Audits:** While there is no baseline legal requirement to keep a log of all general property searches, schools are strongly advised by DfE guidance to record searches of electronic devices to protect staff from allegations of data misuse or privacy breaches

Roles and Responsibilities

Students

Students are responsible for:

- Following this policy.
- Using technology respectfully.

- Reporting concerns to staff.

Parents / Carers

Parents and carers are responsible for:

- Supporting the school's statutory expectations.
- Avoiding direct contact with students during the school day
- Informing the school where a phone is required because of an identified need or adaption and reasonable adjustment .

Staff

Staff are responsible for:

- Applying this policy consistently.
- Supporting students to use technology safely.
- Reporting safeguarding concerns.
- Considering adaptations and reasonable adjustments for students with disabilities or additional needs.

Related Policies

This policy should be read alongside:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Online Safety Policy
- Acceptable Use Agreement
- Data Protection Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy

Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner if changes in legislation, guidance or school practice require it.

Policy approved by Governors: Oct 2026

Date of next review by Governors: Oct 2027



**Mobile Phone/ Electronic
Devices
RULES**



At Epinay School, we understand that mobile phones and other electronic devices are an important part of life. Pupils can use them while on transport (with headphones) to play games and listen to music. On arriving at school, phones are put away and not seen.

Some pupils use their phones/ electronic devices to regulate in school during unstructured times. These pupils names are agreed with the senior staff, external professional and parents/ carers and kept on a school register.

*Phones are brought into school at the owner's risk.

When things change ...

- 1** If a pupil is seen using their phone in school, texting or ringing unexpectedly, staff will have a quiet word and ask for it to be put away.
- 2** If a pupil refuses to put the phone away or is seen using it again, the staff member will ask the child to hand it in.
- 3** If a pupil refuses to hand their phone in, the pupil will be informed that from the following day, they will have to hand it to a staff member on entering the building and they will not be able to use it during the day. The phone will be returned at the end of the day. This arrangement will continue for an agreed number of days (agreed between parent/ carer and Head Teacher)
- 4** If the pupil refuses to hand their phone to staff member on arriving at school, a meeting will be called with parent/ carer and Head Teacher, resulting in the phone staying at home for an agreed period (agreed between parent/carers and Head Teacher).

Please note:

- Pupil must be 16 or older to view social media platforms during any part of the day. If you are seen accessing these at school or on transport, we will commence from Rule 2 above.
- If a pupil is observed using their phone inappropriately, taking pictures/ video, recording people or not using headphones, we will commence from Rule 2 above.