

BELLINGHAM

PARTNERSHIP OF SCHOOLS

Mobile Phone Policy

2026-27



Approved by:	Executive Headteacher	Date:	September 2026
Last review date:	May 2026	Next review date:	September 2027
Policy applies to:	Bellingham Primary School	Yes	Bellingham Middle School Yes

1. Introduction and aims

At Bellingham Primary School and Bellingham Middle School our policy aims to:

- Ensure our environment is mobile phone-free by default
- Ensure the safe, responsible and lawful use of mobile phones, where applicable
- Provide 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 schools, 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.

Please note, throughout this policy, "mobile phones" refers to mobile phones and similar devices.

2. Relevant guidance

This policy meets the requirements of Section 36 of the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act 2026, and the Department for Education's mobile phone guidance and behaviour guidance. Further guidance that should be considered alongside this policy is Keeping Children Safe in Education, which sets out the expectation that all schools should be mobile phone-free environments by default.

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 Staff

All staff (including teachers, support staff and supply staff) are required to actively enforce this policy and challenge any breach of mobile phone restrictions immediately and consistently.

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 Executive Headteacher is responsible for monitoring the policy every year, 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.

3.2 Governors

Governors will be made aware of this policy, which is approved at Executive Headteacher level. Governors will monitor the implementation of this policy through the normal selection of reports that are presented to their meetings, and may request additional information in relation to this policy specifically.

4. Use of mobile phones by staff

The DfE's guidance states that staff should not use their own mobile phone for personal reasons in front of pupils throughout the school day. All schools should be mobile phone-free environments by default: anything other than this should be by exception only.

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 children are present. 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, or an office).

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

The Executive Headteacher will decide on a case-by-case basis whether to allow for special arrangements, and unless a decision has been made by the Executive Headteacher then no permission is in place for this to happen. School staff should primarily use the school office number, 01434 220235, as a point of emergency contact.

Lockers are made available for staff outside the staff room. Staff are encouraged to ensure their personal items, including phones, are locked away.

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 information about data protection can be found in the Data Protection Policy and/or ICT acceptable use 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.

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 are not limited to:

- Issuing homework, rewards or sanctions
- Use of 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 that could identify a pupil
- Refrain from using their phone to contact parents/carers. If necessary, contact should be made via the school office.

4.5 Work phones

Some members of staff may be 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.

5. Use of mobile phones by pupils - Bellingham Primary School

5.1 Phone free school

Bellingham Primary School is a phone-free school.

- Pupils are not permitted to bring mobile phones into school.
- Pupils are not permitted to use mobile phones on school trips or activities, including residential activities.

For clarification, devices such as smart watches, smart glasses or any other device that has the ability to make or receive calls, messages, or take video/audio recordings, are not permitted. Wherever “mobile phone” is used in relation to pupils in this policy, this also covers these other devices.

Bellingham Primary School may permit pupils to use a mobile phone in school in the case of exceptional circumstances. To request such permission, parents/carers should contact the Executive Headteacher in school. Exceptional circumstances could include, but are not limited to:

- Pupils with diabetes who use their phones to monitor their blood sugar.

- Pupils travelling long distances to and from school, out of the normal travel distances associated with the school's usual catchment areas.

A request to the Executive Headteacher for special circumstances to be considered is not a guarantee that this will be accepted. Where a special circumstance is agreed, the parents/carers and pupil will be required to adhere to an additional code of conduct for mobile phone use (see appendix 1). In the case of permission due to exceptional circumstances, permission will only be granted where there is a documented safeguarding or medical necessity.

5.2 Sanctions

A breach of this policy will mean that the mobile phone is confiscated, in line with sections 91 and 94 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006. A member of staff confiscating the phone will inform a member of the Senior Leadership Team, and record this on CPOMS. The phone will be placed in the school admin office, where it will be kept securely. A parent/carer will be contacted to collect the mobile phone from the school at the end of the school day.

5.3 Searching phones

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 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 inappropriate images, or if it is being/has been used to commit an offence or cause harm to another person. Such searches will be undertaken by Senior Leaders or Designated Safeguarding Leads.

6. Use of mobile phones by pupils - Bellingham Middle School

6.1 Phone free school day

Bellingham Middle School operates a phone-free school day.

- Pupils who bring a mobile phone to school must place their phone in the phone trolley on arrival. This can be collected on departure at the end of the day.
- Pupils are not permitted to keep their mobile phones in other locations, such as bags, pockets or lockers.
- Pupils are not permitted to use mobile phones on school trips or activities, including residential activities.

For clarification, devices such as smart watches, smart glasses or any other device that has the ability to make or receive calls, messages, or take video/audio recordings, are not permitted. Wherever "mobile phone" is used in relation to pupils in this policy, this also covers these other devices.

Bellingham Middle School may permit pupils to use a mobile phone in school in the case of exceptional circumstances. To request such permission, parents/carers should contact the Executive Headteacher in school. Exceptional circumstances could include, but are not limited to:

- Pupils with diabetes who use their phones to monitor their blood sugar.
- Pupils travelling long distances to and from school, out of the normal travel distances associated with the school's usual catchment areas.

A request to the Executive Headteacher for special circumstances to be considered is not a guarantee that this will be accepted. Where a special circumstance is agreed, the parents/carers and pupil will be required to adhere to an additional code of conduct for mobile phone use (see appendix 1). In the case of permission due to

exceptional circumstances, permission will only be granted where there is a documented safeguarding or medical necessity.

6.2 Sanctions

A breach of this policy will mean that the mobile phone is confiscated, in line with sections 91 and 94 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006. A member of staff confiscating the phone will inform a member of the Senior Leadership Team, and record this on CPOMS. The phone will be placed in the school admin office, where it will be kept securely. A parent/carer will be contacted to collect the mobile phone from the school at the end of the school day.

Repeated breaches of this policy will result in sanctions being applied in line with the School's Behaviour Policy.

6.3 Searching phones

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 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 inappropriate images, or if it is being/has been used to commit an offence or cause harm to another person. Such searches will be undertaken by Senior Leaders or Designated Safeguarding Leads.

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.

7. 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 recording of pupils, unless it is at a public 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, or when pupils are present.

Parents/carers, volunteers and visitors may use mobile phones only in areas where staff are permitted to do so. The use of mobile phones or similar devices for taking photographs, making video or audio recordings, or live streaming is not permitted anywhere on site unless prior permission has been given by the Executive Headteacher.

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.

8. Loss, theft or damage

8.1 Bellingham Primary School

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 until they can be collected by the parent/carer at the end of the school day.

8.2 Bellingham Middle School

Pupils bringing mobile phones to school must ensure that their phone is appropriately labelled and are stored in the trolley at the start of the day. The phone must be labelled with the name of the child to whom it belongs.

Pupils must secure their mobile phones as much as possible, including using passwords or pin codes to protect access to the phone's functions.

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 until they can be collected by the parent/carer at the end of the school day.

9. Monitoring and review

The Partnership is committed to ensuring that this policy has a positive impact on pupils' education, behaviour and welfare. When reviewing this policy, the Partnership 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.

Appendix 1: Text used on visitor access system

Use of mobile phones and similar devices 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. If you must use your phone, you may go to a designated staff area.
- Do not take photos or recordings of pupils or staff.
- Do not use your phone in lessons, or when working with pupils.

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.

Appendix 2: Code of Conduct for Pupils allowed to bring their phones to school due to exceptional circumstances

Pupil Details	
Pupil name:	
Year group/class:	
Parent/carer(s) name(s):	

The school has agreed to allow the above pupil to bring their mobile phone to school because they:

Pupils who bring a mobile phone to school due to exceptional circumstances must abide by the school's policy on the use of mobile phones, and the following code of conduct.

The school reserves the right to revoke permission if a pupil does not abide by the policy.

Parent/carer signature: _____

Pupil signature: _____

Executive Headteacher: _____

Date: _____

Code of Conduct

1. You may not use your mobile phone throughout the school day, including lesson times, in between lessons, breaktime and lunchtime, unless a teacher specifically allows you to for a specific reason.

2. Phones must be switched off (not just put on 'silent').
3. You may not use your mobile phone in the toilets or changing rooms. This is to protect the privacy and welfare of other pupils.
4. You cannot take photos or recordings (either video or audio) of school staff or other pupils.
5. Avoid sharing your contact details with people you don't know, and don't share other people's contact details without their consent.
6. Don't share your phone's password(s) or access code(s) with anyone else.
7. Don't use your mobile phone to bully, intimidate or harass anyone or otherwise to act in breach of the school's Behaviour Policy. This includes bullying, harassing or intimidating pupils or staff via:
 1. Email
 2. Text/messaging app
 3. Social media
8. Don't use your phone to send or receive anything that may be a criminal offence. For instance, by making or sharing nudes or semi-nudes (including AI-generated images or 'deepfakes')
9. Rules on bullying, harassment and intimidation apply to how you use your mobile phone even when you aren't in school.
10. Don't use vulgar, obscene or derogatory language while on the phone or when using social media. This language is not permitted under the school's behaviour policy.
11. Don't use your phone to view or share pornography or other harmful content.
12. You must comply with a request by a member of staff to switch off, or hand over, a phone. Refusal to comply is a breach of the school's behaviour policy and will be dealt with accordingly.
13. Mobile phones are not permitted in any internal or external exam or test environment. If you have a mobile phone, you will be asked to store it appropriately, or turn it over to an exam invigilator, before entering the test room. Bringing a phone into the test room can result in your exam being declared invalid.