



Diocese of Salisbury
Academy Trust

'Beyond expectations for all of God's children'

PHONE POLICY

Policy Date: September 2026

Review Date: September 2027

This policy applies to all schools in the Trust

Purpose:

To establish clarity around expectations in relation to the use of mobiles phones on school sites and to ensure a safe, focused, and conducive learning environment for all students.

Aim of the policy:

To allow all our children to flourish in our environment by:

- Maintaining the highest standards of education through distraction and disruption-free school environments
- Ensuring the maximum level of safeguarding, health and wellbeing of students on the school site and in our wider community

Policy Statements:

1. In line with government guidance, our schools are 'mobile phone-free environments by default'.
2. Pupils should not bring phones or other digital devices into school.
3. We make exceptions for those with recognised medical needs.
4. For safety reasons, we can make arrangements for pupils in Years 5 and 6 who walk to and from school alone. This can only be with a simple phone (without the potential for internet access), not a smartphone or any smart device (with internet or potential internet access).
5. The policy mitigates the safeguarding, health and safety risks related to early access to devices, particularly smartphones, and supports the school site being a safe environment for all students.
6. The policy supports families to make their own decision about when it is appropriate for their child to have access to smarttechnology at home.

Please note that throughout this policy, 'smartphone' refers to any electronic device with potential access to the internet. This includes Kindles, tablets, smart watches and smart glasses.

Rationale:

A significant number of studies have been completed providing robust evidence of the harm of smartphones on the learning, behaviour, wellbeing and safety of children when provided with access at an early age. This policy has been introduced to minimise disruption to the school environment and to help tackle cyber bullying, sexting, sharing of indecent images, online grooming and device addiction. The impact of smartphones on children's mental health and development is well documented. Excessive exposure to social media platforms can increase anxiety, depression and even lead to suicidal ideation.

An increasing number of students state that they have been victims of bullying and crime related to online phone use.

Our schools are responsible for safeguarding students during the school day. It is increasingly important to control the presence of smart and other mobile devices that have potentially harmful or inappropriate content on them, and functions that enable inappropriate behaviour or cyberbullying e.g. access to social media, photo and video capability.

Nursery to Year 4

Pupils in Nursery to Year 4 are not permitted to bring any type of phone to school. If there is a specific reason that you feel your child needs to bring a simple phone in before Year 5, permission must be sought from the Headteacher, whose decision is final.

Years 5 and 6

Parents and carers who wish their child to carry a mobile phone to school for the purpose of travelling to and from school alone, may bring a phone that does not have internet access and must not have a camera. The following phones are recommended due to cost, functions and durability: Nokia 105 (approx. £13.50), Samsung E1200 (approx. £69) or Alcatel 10.16G (approx. £19.99).



Nokia 105



Samsung E1200



Alcatel 10.16G

- The phone must be clearly marked with the pupil's name.
- The phone must be switched off and handed in to a member of staff at the start of the day and will be returned to the pupil at the end of the day.
- Smart watches and any other pocket-sized devices that can enable a pupil to access the internet are not permitted. If such a device is seen, these will be removed and stored in the school safe.
- Non-smartphone with GPS tracking, simple GPS trackers or an equivalent are permitted, if parents and carers want to track their child's location.
- Any phone that is seen outside of a school bag or heard during the school day (school approved or otherwise) will need to be handed to a school adult and will be stored safely in the school office to be returned to the parent at the school's discretion. If needed, the pupil will be allowed to use a school phone to contact their parents / carers before they leave the school.

Reasonable adjustments will be made for certain disabilities or medical conditions. This needs to be pre-arranged with the Headteacher who will work with parents or carers to determine the specific needs of each pupil. Only the Headteacher may grant exemption for a pupil to have a device with internet access in school.

Educational Visits and Residentials

This policy also applies to all educational visits and residentials. Staff on residential trips will have access to phones for pupils to contact parents / carers if necessary.

Searching for devices

There may be occasions where a member of staff is required to search a pupil's personal belongings to look for a mobile phone or other smart device to maintain high standards of behaviour and a safe environment. Any such search will be conducted in accordance with the DFE guidance on searching and screening.

- If during a search an 'approved phone' is found it will not be removed provided it does not contain any evidence relating to an investigation AND when it is found it is switched off.

- All prohibited phones and approved phones that are not switched off AND in a school bag will automatically be removed and safely stored in the school office. It will be returned as outlined below.
- Pupils who have previously brought prohibited items into school, including smart phones, may be subject to periodical bag searches as part of an on-going risk assessment.

Consequences

Any phone that is seen outside of a school bag or heard during the school day (school approved or otherwise) will automatically be removed and stored safely in the school office. This includes phones that have been heard from within a uniform or bag.

Any prohibited phone which is seen before or after school on the site, will automatically be removed and stored safely in the school office.

- When a phone is removed, it will be handed in at reception and locked away.
- When an approved simple phone or a prohibited phone is removed, it will be securely locked away until collection by a parent at the end of the day.
- A second incident will involve a three-day removal.
- A third incident will involve a five school-day removal.
- There will be no option for the SIM card to be removed – it will be kept along with the phone. If needed the pupil will be allowed to use a school phone to call home before they leave school.
- A pupil refusing to hand over their phone will be internally isolated until a parent can come into school to support the removal of the phone.

Further information

<https://www.smartphonefreechildhood.org/>

Appendix 1 - Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

1. Do schools have a legal right to keep a child's phone.

Yes, the DFE guidance allows schools to confiscate property. Ofsted supports schools' rights to confiscation of prohibited items in line with the DFE guidance. Link to the DFE documentation [Searching, Screening and Confiscation](#).

2. How can I contact my child if they do not have a smartphone?

There will be no change during school hours, as pupils are not permitted to use mobile phones during this time. If communication is required, it should be directed through the school office, as per existing protocols. If you feel it is necessary for your child to have a means of communication during their journey to and from school when in Years 5 and 6, a basic (non-smart) phone enables this while avoiding the risks associated with smartphone use. This approach supports a safer and more focused school environment by reducing exposure to potential harms from both their own and others' smartphones.

3. I want to be able to track my child.

There are tracking solutions available that do not involve smartphones. There are some non-smartphones that allow tracking and other trackable devices.

4. My child's smartphone has parental controls—isn't that safe enough?

While parental controls can be helpful, they are not fool proof. A recent Parentkind poll revealed that 47% of children with parental controls had managed to bypass them. Schools cannot verify or monitor the settings on every pupil's device and must consider broader risks, including exposure to inappropriate content via other students' phones, being photographed or filmed without consent at school and having the content shared or uploaded to the internet. Smartphones are designed to be engaging and, in many cases, addictive. With children receiving hundreds of notifications daily, it is unrealistic to expect parents and carers to monitor all activity. A smartphone-free school environment minimises these risks and helps protect children's mental well-being and development.

5. Do I have to buy a simple phone for my child?

No, there is no obligation to provide your child with any phone. However, if you wish to maintain communication with your child outside school hours, a simple mobile phone is an affordable option. These devices typically cost between £15–£50 new, and under £10 second-hand. Pay-as-you-go SIM cards are often free, and contracts offering unlimited calls and texts can be found for as little as £3–£4 per month. As they do not use mobile data, ongoing costs remain low.

6. I want to decide when my child gets a smartphone.

Absolutely. Parents and carers know their children best and should make decisions about smartphone use based on their own judgment. This policy supports this by maintaining a neutral environment in the school setting. Parents and carers who feel their child is ready for a smartphone can introduce one at home, while those who feel their child is not yet emotionally prepared can send them to school with the confidence that they won't be exposed to inappropriate content or peer pressure from other pupils' devices or be photographed or filmed without consent. This approach not only helps to safeguard children at school, it helps level the playing field, reducing social pressure and preventing any student from feeling excluded—whether they have a smartphone or not.

7. My child has a medical condition or special educational need and requires a phone.

If there are exceptional circumstances that necessitate your child having access to a phone during the school day, please contact the school directly to discuss appropriate arrangements.

8. Don't students need smartphones for homework?

This is a common misconception. There is no requirement for students to own a smartphone. If homework requires internet access, parents and carers are free to choose the most appropriate device for home use. This may be a smartphone, tablet, or computer—whichever suits your household best.

51%

of UK 11-13 year-olds have seen hardcore pornography online

British Board of Film Classification Report, March 2022

75%

of UK 15 year olds questioned had been sent beheading videos

Digital Childhoods, children's commissioner report, 2022

90%

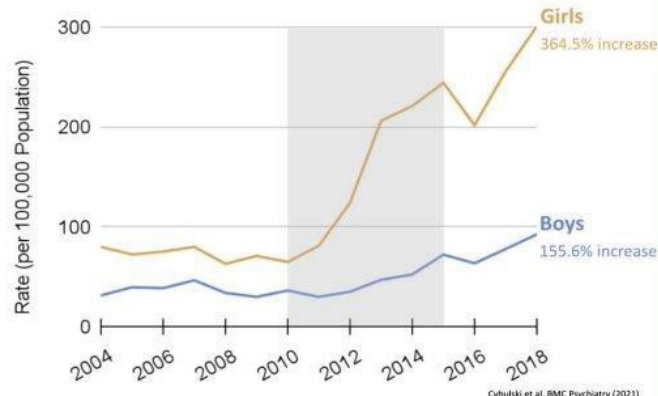
of girls and 50% of boys say they are sent unwanted explicit content

Ofsted review of sexual abuse in schools, 2021



SMARTPHONES ARE FUELLING A MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS

UK Teens, Self-harm Episodes (Ages 10 – 12)



3x

Teens with problematic smartphone-use are three times as likely to have depression

King's College London, 2024



SMARTPHONES AFFECT ALL ASPECTS OF SCHOOL LIFE



ATTENTION

Bedtime use of smartphones doubles children's risk of poor sleep, hindering their learning



BULLYING

84% of bullying now takes place on a device, spilling into the school day



ROAD SAFETY

Mobile phone distraction is a major cause of road accidents involving children



FIGHTS

Teachers tell us fights escalate more because students are filming them



SOCIALISING

Smartphones reduce face to face socialising at break and lunchtimes



CRIME

500 children a day were mugged in 2020 in the UK, almost all for smartphones