Good Shepherd Trust
Life in all its fullness

Mobile Phone Policy

The Good Shepherd Trust

About this policy

This policy has been written in line with the Department for Education's statutory guidance Mobile phones in schools (DfE, published June 2026). This guidance became statutory on 29 June 2026 and schools should begin following it from 1 September 2026.

This policy should be read alongside the school's Behaviour Policy and Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026. It applies to all pupils, staff, governors and visitors on school premises and during school-organised activities.

At the time of publishing the following roles were held:

Headteacher	NAME
Chair of Governors	NAME
Governor with responsibility for Behaviour	NAME

Version History

Version	Version Description	Date of Revision / Review
1.0	Initial policy — based on DfE statutory guidance Mobile phones in schools (June 2026)	September 2026

1. Aims and Purpose

The Good Shepherd Trust exists so that all who belong to our family of church schools may experience 'life in all its fullness' (John 10:10). This policy sets out our commitment to providing a safe, calm and focused learning environment by prohibiting the use of mobile phones throughout the school day.

This policy aims to:

- reduce distraction and disruption to teaching and learning
- protect pupils from the risks associated with mobile phone use, including online bullying and exposure to harmful content
- support positive behaviour and the school's culture
- meet the requirements of the DfE's statutory guidance Mobile phones in schools (June 2026)

2. Scope

This policy applies to all pupils, all members of staff (teaching and non-teaching), governors and visitors on school premises or during school-organised activities, including trips and residential visits. References to mobile phones also include smartwatches, earphones and other smart technology capable of sending and/or receiving notifications or messages, or recording audio and/or video.

3. Our Approach — A Mobile Phone-Free School Day

All schools within The Good Shepherd Trust are mobile phone-free environments during the school day. The school day is defined as the period from the start of registration or the first lesson until the end of the last timetabled session, including lessons, time between lessons, break times and lunchtime.

Pupils must not use a mobile phone during the school day. Schools may implement this in one of the following ways:

- Phones are stored in a designated locker or secure storage facility at the start of the school day and collected at the end.
- Phones are handed to a member of staff at the start of the school day and returned at the end.
- Phones are kept in bags and must not be visible, used or heard at any point during the school day.

The headteacher will determine the most appropriate approach for their school context, consistent with the principles in this policy. Where a school operates a Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) scheme for laptops or tablets, mobile phones are explicitly excluded from that scheme.

4. Sixth-Form Pupils

Schools should consider whether students in the sixth form may be permitted limited access to their mobile phone at certain times and in certain locations, reflecting this period of education as one of increased independence and responsibility. Any such arrangement must not compromise the school's policy for other pupils. Sixth-form students must not use mobile phones in front of younger pupils; for example, use should be restricted to a dedicated sixth-form area. Sixth-form students remain subject to the behaviour policy and misuse of a phone may lead to sanctions.

5. Communicating the Policy

The headteacher will ensure that all members of the school community are familiar with this policy, its rationale and any sanctions for breach. Specifically:

- The policy will be published on the school website and included in the school prospectus.
- Pupils will be reminded of the policy and its consequences at the start of each school year and at regular intervals throughout the year.
- Parents will be informed of the policy before their child joins the school and reminded of it at the start of each academic year.
- Staff will receive training and clear guidance on how to enforce the policy consistently.

6. The Role of Staff

All staff are expected to enforce this policy consistently and fairly. Staff must not use their own mobile phone for personal reasons in front of pupils during the school day. This models the behaviour expected of pupils and supports staff in challenging mobile phone use effectively.

There may be occasions where it is appropriate for a member of staff to use a mobile phone or similar device during the school day — for example, to issue homework, record rewards and sanctions, or use multi-factor authentication for

school systems. Senior leaders will be clear with staff about when and how such use is permitted.

7. Expectations for Pupils

All pupils are expected to:

- comply with the school's mobile phone policy at all times during the school day
- hand in or store their mobile phone in accordance with the school's chosen approach
- understand the reasons for the policy, including the risks associated with mobile phone use and the benefits of a phone-free environment

Pupils will be taught about the risks associated with mobile phones, including loss of focus in lessons, classroom disruption and an increase in bullying. They will also be taught about online safety, including how their information can be shared and the effects of online actions, in line with the school's relationships and sex education (RSE) and health education curriculum.

8. The Role of Parents

Parents have an important role in supporting this policy. The school will:

- clearly explain the policy to parents, including the reasons behind it and the school's expectations
- encourage parents to reinforce and discuss the policy at home
- direct parents who need to contact their child during the school day to the school office

Where parents have questions or concerns about the policy, staff will address these promptly and clearly explain the reasons for the prohibition. The school will consult with parents when developing or reviewing this policy, particularly where the policy may have an impact on pupils' journeys to and from school.

9. Sanctions

Any pupil found using or in possession of a visible mobile phone during the school day — for example, a phone seen in a lesson or heard ringing in a bag — will be subject to sanctions in line with the school's behaviour policy. Sanctions may include:

- confiscation of the device
- detention
- contact with parents

Headteachers are supported by the DfE to confiscate mobile phones and similar devices where this is a proportionate response. Confiscation may be for whatever length of time the headteacher deems proportionate. The law protects staff from liability for loss or damage to a confiscated item, provided they have acted lawfully.

When considering sanctions, staff should take into account the pupil's individual circumstances, including age and any special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). Staff should also consider whether a pupil's behaviour gives cause for concern that they may be suffering, or at risk of, harm. Where this is the case, staff should follow the school's child protection policy and speak to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).

10. Searching Pupils

Headteachers and staff authorised by them have a statutory power to search a pupil or their possessions where they have reasonable grounds to suspect that the pupil is in possession of a prohibited item, or any item identified in the school rules as something that may be searched for. Mobile phones and similar devices are identified in this policy as items that may be searched for.

Staff must refer to the DfE's Searching, Screening and Confiscation in Schools guidance when conducting any search. Searches must be conducted lawfully and proportionately.

11. Adaptations and Reasonable Adjustments

Whilst all pupils are expected to comply with this policy, the school recognises that there may be circumstances where flexibility is needed:

Pupils with disabilities

The school has a duty under the Equality Act 2010 to make reasonable adjustments where necessary to avoid substantial disadvantage to a disabled pupil. Where a pupil's disability means that they need access to a mobile phone during the school day — for example, to manage a medical condition such as diabetes through continuous glucose monitoring — the school will consider this a reasonable adjustment. A failure to make such an adjustment may constitute a breach of the school's equality duty.

Pupils with medical conditions

Under the Children and Families Act 2014, schools have a duty to support pupils with medical conditions. Where the management of a medical condition requires the use of a mobile phone or connected device, the school will make appropriate arrangements, consistent with the pupil's individual healthcare plan.

Other individual circumstances

Beyond these specific duties, the school will consider individual circumstances on a case-by-case basis, including where a pupil has caring responsibilities or other needs that make access to a mobile phone important. Any adaptations will be carefully managed and, where possible, will enable the pupil to use their phone for a specific purpose, at a specific time and in a specific location (for example, in the Head of Year's office). Exceptions for individuals do not amount to an exemption from all restrictions on mobile phone use.

12. Mobile Phones Outside the School Day

Schools should determine how they wish to manage mobile phone use by pupils on residential trips or during activities outside the normal school day. The school will ensure that pupils' educational experience on any school trip is not disrupted by mobile phones and will consider prohibiting or restricting their use.

When designing the school's approach, the headteacher will consider the impact on pupils travelling to and from school and will consult with parents to develop appropriate arrangements and mitigate specific concerns.

Schools will remain vigilant to online safety risks. Pupils should be able to access their mobile phone where necessary to raise concerns with teachers about issues which have occurred online, particularly in residential settings.

For further information on online behaviour incidents, staff should refer to:

- Behaviour in schools (DfE)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026
- Teaching online safety in schools (DfE)

13. Boarding and Residential Schools

Where a school within the Trust has boarding or residential provision, mobile phones will be prohibited throughout the teaching day. Appropriate arrangements will be made for the use of mobile phones during the rest of pupils' time at school, in accordance with the Boarding Schools National Minimum

Standards and/or Residential Special Schools National Minimum Standards, ensuring that boarders are able to contact their parents and families in private at suitable times.

14. Filtering and Monitoring

Governing bodies and proprietors will ensure that appropriate filtering and monitoring systems are in place and regularly reviewed annually, in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026, to prevent access to harmful or inappropriate content via any device used in school.

15. Review

This policy will be reviewed annually, or earlier if significant changes are made to relevant legislation or statutory guidance. The governing body is responsible for approving this policy. The headteacher is responsible for its day-to-day implementation and enforcement.