Pupils' Personal Electronic Devices Policy

Date adopted: September 2026

Review Period: 1 year

Next review: September 2027

History of most recent policy reviews

Date	Review	Who is Responsible?
September 2024	Updated with new statutory guidance	DSL
September 2025	Updated to include Smartphone ban	DSL
September 2026	Updated new statutory	DSL

	guidance	

Contents:

Statement of intent

1. Legal framework
2. Roles and responsibilities
3. Ownership and responsibility
4. Acceptable use
5. Unacceptable use
6. Cyberbullying
7. Searching pupils
8. Accessing and storing data
9. Sanctions
10. Monitoring and review

Appendices

A. Personal electronic devices agreement

Statement of intent

Mobile phones, tablets and other personal electronic devices have become widely available and accessible to pupils. This policy is designed to prohibit the use of mobile phones and similar smart technology throughout the school day, including break and lunch times.

Air Balloon Hill Primary School accepts that personal mobile phones and tablets are often given to pupils by their parents to ensure their safety and personal security but understands that such devices pose inherent risks and may jeopardise the learning environment. The school also recognises the safeguarding risks associated with pupils having unlimited and unrestricted access to the internet via mobile networks during the school day.

As a school, we must strike a balance between personal safety and a suitable educational setting. We understand that parents may wish for their child to carry a mobile phone for their personal safety, whilst pupils may wish to bring additional devices to school for other reasons. This policy establishes how personal electronic devices should be used by pupils in school to ensure both personal safety and an appropriate learning environment.

Personal electronic devices include, but are not limited to the following items:

- Mobile phone
- Smart watches
- Handheld entertainment systems, e.g. video game consoles, iPods
- Portable internet devices, e.g. tablets, laptops
- Wireless handheld technologies or portable information technology systems, e.g. devices used for word processing, wireless internet access, image capture and/or recording, sound recording, and information transmitting, receiving and/or storing.

1. Legal framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory and good practice guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- DfE (2024) 'Mobile phones in schools'
- DfE 'Communicating your policy for prohibiting the use of mobile phones in schools to parents'
- DfE (2024) 'Behaviour in Schools'
- DfE (2026) 'Keeping children safe in education
- DfE (2023) 'Searching, screening and confiscation at school'
- The Data Protection Act 2018
- The UK General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)
- Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act 2026
- The Voyeurism (Offences) Act 2019
- Protection of Children Act 1978
- Sexual Offences Act 2003
- DfE (2014) 'Cyberbullying: Advice for headteachers and school staff'
- Online Safety Act 2023

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Anti-bullying Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Online Safety and Social Media Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Complaints Procedures Policy
- Online Safety and Social Media Policy Behaviour Policy
- Staff Personal Electronic Devices Policy
- Code of Conduct Policy

2. Roles and responsibilities

The governing body will be responsible for:

- Ensuring that this policy is effective and complies with relevant laws and statutory guidance.
- Evaluating the effectiveness of the policy and procedures.
- Ensuring that the policy, as written, does not discriminate on any grounds.
- Reviewing the policy annually.

The headteacher will be responsible for:

- Handling complaints regarding this policy as outlined in the school's Complaints Procedures Policy.
- The day-to-day implementation and management of the policy.
- Informing parents and pupils of the Personal Electronic Devices Agreement.

- Communicating this policy to the relevant staff members and the wider school community.
- Communicating what devices can be brought to school and when they can and cannot be used.
- Deciding how best to achieve a mobile phone-free school environment.

Staff members will be responsible for:

- Negotiating incidents of cyberbullying in conjunction with the headteacher, in line with the Anti-bullying Policy and the Behaviour Policy.
- Applying this policy consistently and proportionately, including confiscating devices where appropriate.
- Reporting any safeguarding concerns to the DSL, where misuse indicates risk of harm.
- Avoiding use of their mobile phones in front of pupils.
- Teaching pupils about the risks associated with mobile phones, smart technology, social media and online activity in accordance with the school's Online Safety Policy.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) will be responsible for:

- Liaising with and reporting the relevant information to children's social care and/or the police, when it is necessary to do so.
- Initiating and managing responses to incidents such as upskirting with relevant staff members and in line with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

Pupils are responsible for adhering to the provisions outlined in this policy.

3. Ownership and responsibility

Pupils are responsible for their own belongings. The school accepts no responsibility for replacing property that is lost, stolen or damaged either on school premises or travelling to and from school, and at school events.

Staff will be protected against liability in any proceedings brought against them for any loss or damage to personal devices that have been confiscated as an appropriate sanction, provided that they have acted lawfully.

Pupils are responsible for replacing school property they lose, damage or steal, including electronic devices.

Pupils and staff should enable a personal PIN or passcode on all the devices they bring to school to protect their personal data, images and videos in the event that the device is lost, stolen or accessed by an unauthorised person.

4. Acceptable use

Pupils are not permitted to bring internet enabled smartphones onto the school site. Pupils who walk to or from school alone may bring a non-internet enabled phone (a basic phone without internet or apps). These phones must be switched off and handed in each morning and will be stored in the school office.

Where pupils bring a non-internet enabled phone into school, they will be expected to make their parents aware of this. The school will not accept responsibility for loss, theft or damage.

The school will make reasonable adjustments for pupils to use a smartphone in specific circumstances, e.g. to monitor a medical condition via an app. The school will make reasonable adjustments for pupils to use a smartphone or other electronic device in specific circumstances, for example to support a medical condition or accessibility need. Any exception will be authorised by the Headteacher (or delegated senior leader) in consultation with relevant professionals and parents/carers, recorded in the pupil's individual healthcare plan or SEND plan as appropriate, shared with relevant staff, and reviewed at least annually or sooner if needs change

5. Unacceptable use

Internet-Enabled Mobile Phones & Smart Devices (Total Ban)

Internet-enabled mobile phones (smartphones) are strictly prohibited on school premises. Pupils must not bring internet-enabled mobile phones to school.

Basic / Non-Internet-Enabled Mobile Phones (Restricted Access)

Pupils traveling to and from school without an adult are permitted to bring a basic, non-internet-enabled mobile phone for safety during their journey, subject to the following rules:

- **Hand-In Requirement:** Any basic mobile phone brought onto school premises must be handed in immediately upon arrival and stored securely in the school office until the end of the school day.
- **Possession on Person:** It is strictly unacceptable for a pupil to keep a mobile phone on their person, in their bag, or in their tray during the school day.
- **Prohibited Activities:** Under no circumstances may a pupil use a personal mobile device during the school day to:
    - Make or receive phone calls or text messages.
    - Play games, watch videos, or listen to audio.
    - Take photographs, record video, or record audio.
    - Access any other application during lessons, break times, or pastoral activities.

Other personal electronic devices, such as smart watches, are also prohibited if they have the ability to:

- Send and receive notifications or messages via mobile phone networks
- Record audio, images or video

Personal electronic devices must never be used in any manner or location that disrupts the normal routine, learning environment, or safety of the school.

Any unauthorized device found in a pupil's possession during the school day will be confiscated in line with the school's Behaviour Policy (following Searching, Screening, and Confiscation guidance) and held in the school office until collected by a parent or carer.

The school will comply with its legal duty to make reasonable adjustments with regard to this policy where necessary, for example, for pupils with Type 1 Diabetes.

Staff and pupils will adhere to the Online Safety and Social Media Policy at all times.

Staff will not give out their personal contact details to pupils. If correspondence is needed between staff members and pupils for homework or exams, staff should provide their school contact details.

Under the Voyeurism (Offences) Act 2019, the act known as "upskirting" is an offence. Any incidents will not be tolerated by the school. Despite the name, anyone (including both pupils and staff) of any gender, can be a victim of upskirting.

A "specified purpose" is namely:

- Obtaining sexual gratification (either for themselves or for the person they are enabling to view the victim's genitals, buttocks or underwear)
- To humiliate, distress or alarm the victim

Any incidents of upskirting will be reported to the DSL and handled in accordance with the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

6. Cyberbullying

All personal electronic devices will be used in line with our Online Safety and Social Media Policy.

Incidents of cyberbullying will be dealt with and reported in line with the Anti-bullying Policy and the Behaviour Policy.

As part of the school's ongoing commitment to the prevention of cyberbullying, regular teaching and discussion about online safety will take place as part of PSHE lessons, the online safety curriculum and the school's Safe Kind and Respectful (SKR) weeks

7. Searching pupils

School pupils have a right for their private life to be respected under article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR). This right is not absolute, and the school can interfere

with this right as long as it is justified, proportionate, and aligns with the powers to search in the Education Act 1996.

All searches will be conducted in line with the school's Searching, Screening and Confiscation Policy.

The headteacher, and other authorised staff members, will have the power to search a pupil or their possessions where they have reasonable grounds to suspect that a pupil is in possession of a prohibited item. Mobile phones and similar devices will be deemed as prohibited items that may be searched for in line with the Behaviour Policy.

In all cases the authorised member of staff will always:

- Seek the co-operation of the pupil before conducting a search.
- Ensure the pupil understands the reason for the search and how it will be conducted.
- Give the pupil the opportunity to ask any questions so that their agreement is informed.
- Have due regard to the DfE's 'Searching, screening and confiscation' guidance.

In accordance with the DfE Searching, Screening and Confiscation guidance, authorised staff may search a pupil's outer clothing, desk, or bag without consent where there are reasonable grounds to suspect the pupil is in possession of a prohibited item, including mobile phones and personal electronic devices as designated in the school's Behaviour Policy

A staff member may ask a pupil to show them what they are doing on their mobile phone or tablet if they reasonably believe that the pupil is using the device to cause harm. If it is judged reasonable, the staff member may inspect the files or data on a pupil's electronic device and delete them if necessary, including from any cloud data base in use. Staff members will ensure they have a good reason to examine and delete data on a pupil's electronic device. When determining a good reason to examine data, staff members will ensure they reasonably suspect that the data has been, or could be, used to cause harm, undermine the safe environment of the school and disrupt teaching, or be used to commit an offence.

When determining a good reason to delete data, staff members will consider whether the material found may constitute evidence relating to a suspected offence and if so, choose not to delete the data. The data may be deleted if it is found likely to cause harm to any person.

If a search uncovers a device that is being used to cause harm, or which contains prohibited material such as pornography, a staff member can confiscate the device.

If a search or disclosure indicates that an electronic device contains indecent images or videos of a child (nude or semi-nude images), staff must not view, copy, save, print, or share the images. The device must be confiscated immediately, switched off or put in flight mode, kept in a secure place, and handed to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). The DSL will manage the response in line with UKCIS guidance and contact the police or children's social care where necessary.

Where staff find stolen items like mobile devices, they must be given to the police as soon as reasonably practicable.

The staff member conducting the search must be the same sex as the pupil being searched. A witness to the search must be present; this should also be a staff member of the same sex as the pupil being searched.

Pupils are required to comply with any request to check their electronic device.

Pupils are required to comply with any request to disable the screen lock function of their electronic device and show any staff member what they are doing. If a pupil refuses to comply with these requests, this will be responded to in line with the Behaviour Policy.

8. Accessing and storing data

Downloading and accessing inappropriate websites and data on school-owned electronic devices is strictly prohibited.

Storing and using the personal data of any pupil or member of staff for non-work-related activity is strictly prohibited.

All data access requests will be handled in line with the school's Data Protection Policy.

9. Sanctions

The school will apply sanctions for breaches of this policy in a consistent and proportionate manner, in line with the school's Behaviour Policy.

Where this policy is clearly breached, for example where a device is used, seen, or heard ringing, or where an internet enabled smart phone is brought into school, staff will feel confident to confiscate mobile phones or similar devices as a disciplinary penalty. Confiscated devices may be retained for a proportionate length of time, as determined by the Headteacher and in consideration of the circumstances, including the pupil's age, SEND, and any agreed exceptions or reasonable adjustments. Additional sanctions may include detentions or other disciplinary measures in accordance with the Behaviour Policy.

Where a breach gives cause to suspect a pupil may be suffering, or may be at risk of, harm, staff will follow the school's safeguarding procedures and report concerns to the DSL.

Confiscated personal electronic devices will be locked away securely in the headteacher's office.

Confiscated personal electronic devices will be collected by the pupil's parent/carer.

Bullying via personal electronic devices will be dealt with in line with the school's Anti-bullying Policy.

10. Monitoring and review

This policy is reviewed annually by the DSL.

Any changes to this policy will be communicated to members of staff, parents and pupils by the headteacher.

The scheduled review date for this policy is September 2027.

Personal electronic devices agreement

If your child will be bringing their mobile phone to school, we ask that you complete the following form and return it to the office.

I understand that:

- My phone must be handed into my class teacher, school office or the Headteacher first thing in the morning to be locked away.
- My phone remains my responsibility and is left at my own risk.
- If I use my mobile phone on the school site, it will be confiscated and my parent or carer will have to collect it from the Headteacher.
- I understand that the online contents of my mobile phone may be searched by the school in line with the school's behaviour policy.
- I must not take or share images of anyone without their permission on the school site.
- That bringing a personal electronic device to school is a privilege that may be taken away if I abuse it.

I agree to abide by the policy and understand the consequences if I fail to do so.

Pupil:	**Date:**
Parent/carer:	**Date:**