BEACON PRIMARY ACADEMY

Use of Mobile Phones Policy

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This policy reflects the Department for Education statutory guidance "Mobile phones in schools", updated 29 June 2026, which schools should follow from 1 September 2026.

1. Purpose and Policy Statement

Beacon Primary Academy is committed to providing a calm, safe and supportive environment in which pupils can learn, play and develop without the distraction or risks associated with unrestricted access to personal mobile technology.

The Academy is a mobile phone-free environment by default. Pupils must not access or use mobile phones or other smart personal communication devices at any point during the Academy Day, including lessons, transitions, assemblies, breaktimes and lunchtimes. Any departure from this rule will be by exception only and must be authorized by the senior leadership team at the academy.

This policy is a standalone document. It should be read alongside the Academy Behaviour Policy and relevant safeguarding, online safety, SEND, medical needs and staff conduct policies.

2. Statutory and Legal Framework

This policy has been prepared with regard to the Department for Education (DfE) statutory guidance "Mobile phones in schools", updated 29 June 2026. The guidance became statutory on 29 June 2026 and states that schools should begin following it from 1 September 2026. It expects schools to prohibit pupil access to mobile phones throughout the Academy Day and to be mobile phone-free by default.

Statutory guidance should be considered alongside Behaviour in Schools and Keeping Children Safe in Education. In applying this policy, the Academy will also comply with its duties under relevant equality, SEND, safeguarding and medical-needs legislation and guidance, including the Equality Act 2010 and Children and Families Act 2014.

3. Scope and Definitions

This policy applies to all pupils at Beacon Primary Academy and, where relevant, to parents/carers, staff, volunteers, visitors and contractors.

For this policy, "mobile phone or smart technology" includes personal devices with similar communication or recording functionality, for example:

- mobile phones and smartphones;
- smartwatches capable of sending or receiving calls, messages or notifications;

- devices capable of accessing mobile networks independently;
- personal devices capable of recording audio, photographs or video; and
- other personal interactive communication technology designated by the school.

School-owned or school-provided devices used for teaching, learning, accessibility or administration are managed under the school's ICT/acceptable use arrangements and are not treated as pupils' personal mobile phones.

4. Core Rule for Pupils

Pupils should not bring a mobile phone or covered smart device to Academy unless there is a genuine need, for example because an older primary-aged pupil travels to or from Academy independently or an authorised individual arrangement applies.

Where a device is brought to school, the following procedure applies:

1. The device must be switched off before the pupil enters the Academy building/site.
2. On arrival, the device must be handed to the allocated staff member (can be visually seen with the Mobile Phone box) for secure storage.
3. The pupil must not access the device during the Academy Day unless a specifically authorised exception applies.
4. The device will be returned at the end of the Academy Day in accordance with the academy's collection arrangements.
5. The device must not be used on the Academy site after collection unless a member of staff has authorised its use.

The Academy does not expect pupils to use personal mobile phones as learning devices. Where technology is required for education, the Academy will normally provide or approve appropriate equipment.

5. Smartwatches and wearable technology

Smartwatches and other wearables with messaging, calling, internet, notification, camera or recording functions are covered by this policy. Such devices must be switched off and handed in with mobile phones.

Ordinary watches without smart communication or recording functions are not restricted by this policy.

6. Contact between home and Academy

Parents and carers must not contact pupils directly on a mobile phone or smartwatch during the Academy Day. Urgent or important messages should be directed at the Academy office, which will relay the message or facilitate contact where appropriate.

If a pupil needs to contact home during the Academy Day, a member of staff will make appropriate arrangements using the school's communication systems. This ensures that staff are aware of welfare concerns and that pupils do not need unrestricted access to personal devices.

7. Reasonable adjustments, medical needs and exceptional circumstances

The Academy recognises that some pupils may require limited access to a mobile phone or smart device because of disability, medical need, safeguarding considerations, caring responsibilities or other exceptional individual circumstances.

The Academy will consider each case with its individual merits and will make reasonable adjustments where required by law. For example, a pupil with diabetes may need a phone linked to continuous glucose monitoring technology.

An authorised exception does not create unrestricted access. A written or recorded individual arrangement should specify, as appropriate:

- the reason for the adjustment or exception;
- the specific purpose for which the device may be used;
- when and where it may be accessed;
- whether adult supervision is needed;
- how it will be stored at other times; and
- how and when the arrangement will be reviewed.

Requests should be made to the Principal or Deputy Principal.

Relevant information will be shared with staff on a need-to-know basis so the arrangement can be implemented consistently and safely.

8. Safeguarding and online safety

Safeguarding takes priority over disciplinary consequences. If a device-related incident suggests that a pupil is suffering, or may be at risk of, harm, staff must follow the Academy Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and report the concern to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or deputy without delay.

This includes concerns involving bullying or cyberbullying, harmful contact, inappropriate images or recordings, threats, harassment, exploitation, online abuse or other indicators of harm.

A pupil who needs to show staff evidence of an online concern will be supported to do so safely. Staff should preserve relevant evidence appropriately and follow safeguarding and data-protection procedures.

9. Consequences of breaching this policy

Breaches will be dealt with calmly, consistently and proportionately in line with the Academy Behaviour Policy. The response will take account of the pupil's age, understanding, SEND, disability, medical needs, individual circumstances, safeguarding considerations and the seriousness or frequency of the behaviour.

The Academy may confiscate a mobile phone or similar device as a disciplinary penalty where the policy has been breached, provided the action is lawful and proportionate. The Headteacher will determine local arrangements for the length of confiscation and return of devices.

Where confiscation and other school-based consequences have been unsuccessful in changing a pupil's behaviour, or where there are repeated, persistent or serious breaches of this policy, the Academy may consider further sanctions in accordance with the school's Behaviour Policy. This may include suspension from Academy where this is considered a reasonable and proportionate response to the individual circumstances. Any decision to suspend will be made by the Headteacher in accordance with the school's Behaviour Policy and current statutory guidance, taking account of the seriousness and frequency of the behaviour, the pupil's individual circumstances, including SEND or disability, any relevant reasonable adjustments, and any safeguarding concerns. Suspension will not be used automatically for possession or use of a mobile phone but may be considered where there is persistent defiance of the policy, repeated failure to comply with reasonable instructions, or where the use of a device forms part of more serious misconduct.

9.1 Confiscation and return

Confiscated devices will be kept securely. This will be in the main office locked behind a secure maglock door. The Academy may require a parent/carer to collect a device where this is considered a proportionate response, particularly for repeated or serious breaches. The purpose and duration of confiscation should be proportionate to the behaviour and the pupil's circumstances.

Staff should consider whether a breach indicates that a pupil may be at risk of harm. Where it does, safeguarding procedures must take priority and the DSL or deputy must be consulted.

10. Searching for devices

The Academy identifies mobile phones and covers smart devices within its Academy rules as items that may be searched for where the legal requirements for a search are met. Only the Headteacher or a member of staff authorised by the Headteacher may exercise statutory searching powers.

Any search will be conducted in accordance with current law and the DfE guidance on searching, screening and confiscation. Staff must not undertake informal or ad hoc searches outside those arrangements.

11. Staff Expectations

All staff are expected to apply this policy consistently and to model appropriate use of technology. Staff should not use their own mobile phones for personal reasons in front of pupils during the Academy Day.

There may be legitimate professional reasons for staff to use or carry a mobile phone or similar device, for example multi-factor authentication, authorised Academy communication, administrative tasks, rewards/sanctions systems or emergencies. Such use must comply with the Academy Staff Code of Conduct safeguarding requirements, acceptable use rules and data-protection obligations.

12. Roles and Responsibilities

12.1 Headteacher and senior leaders

- ensure the policy is implemented consistently and remains aligned with statutory guidance;
- determine secure storage, confiscation and return arrangements;
- ensure staff understand searching and safeguarding procedures;

- decide or delegate decisions on individual exceptions and reasonable adjustments; and
- monitor breaches and review whether implementation is effective and equitable.

12.2 Staff

- model the policy and enforce it consistently;
- respond to breaches calmly and proportionately;
- secure confiscated devices in accordance with Academy procedures;
- record/report incidents as required; and
- refer safeguarding concerns immediately to the DSL or deputy.

12.3 Pupils

- follow the mobile phone-free rule;
- hand in/store devices as required;
- never use a personal device to record another person at Academy without authorisation;
- follow any individual arrangement that applies to them; and
- tell a trusted adult if online content, contact or behaviour worries them.

12.4 Parents and Carers

- support and discuss the policy with their child;
- avoid contacting their child directly on a personal device during the Academy Day;
- use the Academy office for urgent messages;
- ensure any device brought to Academy is brought only where needed;
- inform the Academy of medical, disability or exceptional circumstances that may require an adjustment; and
- support Academy consequences where the policy has been breached.

12.5 Trust and Trust Board

- provide appropriate oversight of the policy and its review;
- ensure the approach is consistent with safeguarding, equality and behaviour duties; and
- support leaders in maintaining a calm, safe and mobile phone-free Academy environment.

13. Education about safe and responsible technology use

The Academy will teach pupils, in an age-appropriate way, about the risks associated with mobile phones and online activity and the benefits of a mobile phone-free Academy environment. Relevant learning will be supported through the curriculum, relationships/health education, computing, online-safety education, assemblies and pastoral work as appropriate.

Pupils will be reminded of this policy, including consequences for breaches, at the beginning of each Academy year and at suitable intervals thereafter.

14. Educational Visits, residentials and activities outside the Academy day

The Academy will decide mobile phone arrangements for educational visits, residentials, sporting events and activities outside the normal Academy Day on a case-by-case basis, taking account of safeguarding, supervision, communication, the purpose of the visit and pupils' ages. Arrangements will be communicated to families before the activity where they differ from this policy.

The Academy may prohibit or restrict phones on trips to protect the educational experience and pupil welfare. Any agreed medical or disability-related adjustment will continue to be considered.

15. Travel to and from Academy

The Academy recognises that some older primary pupils may carry a phone for reassurance or safety when travelling independently. The Academy will work with parents to balance those concerns with the requirement for a phone-free Academy Day. A pupil permitted to bring a phone for travel must follow the hand-in/storage procedure in section 4.

16. Communication, publication and implementation

This policy will be published on the Academy website for families and communicated to staff and pupils. New families and staff will be made aware of their expectations upon

admission. The Academy will clearly explain both the rules and the reasons for it, including how parents can contact children during the day.

Leaders will seek consistent implementation across all classes and year groups. Where recurring issues emerge, the Academy may provide additional communication, pupil education, staff guidance or individual pastoral support.

17. Monitoring and review

The Headteacher and Senior Leadership Team is responsible for day-to-day implementation. The policy will be reviewed at least annually, and sooner if statutory guidance or legislation changes, technology develops, significant incidents occur or monitoring identifies a need for revision.

Monitoring may include the number and type of breaches, repeated incidents, the use of reasonable adjustments, safeguarding concerns and feedback from staff, pupils and families, while respecting confidentiality and data-protection requirements.

18. Related Academy Policies

- Behaviour Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Online Safety Policy
- Acceptable Use / ICT Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- SEND Policy
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy
- Educational Visits Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Data Protection and Privacy Policies

19. References

- Department for Education, Mobile phones in schools, statutory guidance, updated 29 June 2026 (applies to England). https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/mobile-phones-in-schools/mobile-phones-in-schools

- Department for Education, Mobile phones in schools collection/publication page, last updated 29 June 2026. https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/mobile-phones-in-schools

- Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act 2026, section 36, inserting section 550C into the Education Act 1996. https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2026/21/section/36/2026-06-01/data.html

Appendix A: Quick guide for pupils and families

Our simple rule:

- Our Academy is mobile phone-free during the Academy Day.
- Only bring a phone or covered smart device if there is a genuine reason.
- If you bring one, switch it off and hand it in/store it exactly as the Academy directs.
- Do not use it during lessons, transitions, breaktime or lunchtime.
- Parents should contact the Academy office if they need to get a message to a child.
- Medical, disability-related and other exceptional arrangements can be agreed individually.
- If the rule is broken, the device may be confiscated, and further consequences may follow under the Behaviour Policy.
- If a phone incident raises a safeguarding concern, keeping the child safe comes first.