



Dame Alice Owen's School
The Dame Alice Owen Foundation - 1613

MOBILE PHONE POLICY

Agreed by the Governing Body Curriculum Committee
To be reviewed
(*reviewed every 2 years*)

Summer 2026
Summer 2028

To be monitored by Deputy Head Pastoral, the Pastoral Team and the Senior Leadership Team (SLT)

This Mobile Phone Policy has been introduced to create a focused, respectful, and productive learning environment for all students. The Department for Education (DfE) expects schools to implement a policy whereby students do not have access to their mobile phone throughout the school day including during lessons, the time between lessons, breaktimes and lunchtime. While mobile phones can be useful tools for communication and learning, their misuse can lead to distractions, disruption of lessons, and concerns regarding online safety and wellbeing.

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1. Introduction and aims

At Dame Alice Owen's 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 students, staff, parents/carers, visitors and volunteers
- Support the school's other policies, especially those related to child protection and behaviour for learning

This policy also aims to address some of the challenges posed by mobile phones in school, such as:

- Risks to child protection
- Data protection issues
- Risk of theft, loss, or damage
- Appropriate use of technology for learning purposes

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 (DfE)'s [mobile phone guidance](#) and [behaviour guidance](#). Further guidance that should be considered alongside this policy is [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#).

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 Deputy Headteacher-Pastoral is responsible for monitoring the policy and reviewing it every 2 years, and holding staff and students 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.

4. Use of mobile phones by staff

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, in the main school, in view of students, during the school day, unless it is being used for work purposes, for example taking a register on Edulink or responding to a call out. Staff are permitted to use a mobile phone in the staffroom and staff offices where students are not present.

There may be circumstances in which it is 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 Headteacher will decide on a case-by-basis whether to allow for special arrangements.

If special arrangements are not deemed necessary, school staff can use the school office number as a point of emergency contact.

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 Gemini).

For more information please see our [Data Protection Policy](#).

4.3 Safeguarding

Staff must not give their personal contact details to parents/carers or students, 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 students.

Photographs or video footage of students should only be taken using school equipment, for purposes authorised by the School. With the express permission of the Headteacher, staff may use their personal digital equipment such as mobile phones and cameras to record images of pupils, this includes when on field trips. In such cases, staff are permitted to take photographs of students for whom we have appropriate parental consent, using their own personal devices. These photos

must be downloaded, to an appropriate folder on the shared area/ Google Drive, and deleted from the personal device, as soon as reasonably possible.

4.4 Using personal mobiles for work purposes

In some circumstances, it may be appropriate for staff to use personal mobile phones or a similar device during the school day in front of students for work. Such circumstances may include, but are not limited to:

- Issuing homework, rewards or sanctions
- Use of multi-factor authentication
- Emergency evacuations situations
- Supervising off-site trips
- Supervising residential visits
- Taking the register
- Checking a student/ staff timetable
- Responding to a SLT call out

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 students, their work, or anything else that could identify a student
- Refrain from using their phones to contact parents/carers. If necessary, contact must be made via the school office or through the use of a school trip phone.

4.5 Work phones

Some members of staff are 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 school 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. See the school's [staff disciplinary procedure policy](#) for more information.

5. Use of mobile phones by students

The DfE's mobile phone guidance says that the use of mobile phones by students is prohibited throughout the school day. Sixth Form students are only permitted to use mobile phones in the following locations for work purposes:

- SALC
- Common Room
- Sixth Form Cafe

The decision to provide a child with a mobile phone is entirely a matter for parents/carers. A mobile phone is **not** required for a student to attend Dame Alice Owen's School, and students can fully participate in all aspects of school life without one. As a mobile phone is an optional personal item rather than an essential part of a student's education, the school is entitled to require that any phone brought onto the school site is secured in a school-issued **Nukase**, which must be purchased from the school at a cost of **£14.95 using Wisepay**. Parents/carers who choose for their child to bring a mobile phone to school therefore accept responsibility for purchasing the required Nukase. Students will not be permitted to bring a mobile phone onto the school site unless it is secured in a school-issued Nukase in accordance with this policy.

Students (Y7-11) must not use their mobile phones during the school day, including during lessons, in the time between lessons, at breaktimes and at lunchtimes, unless explicitly authorised by a member of staff (for example, for a specific medical reason). Phones must be placed in their lockable case at the first bell at 08:40 and not taken out until the last bell at 15:45.

Form tutors will check students have locked their phone in their case in the morning and these must then be stored in the students school bag or locker until the end of the day. SLT will be able to unlock phone cases if needed, for example in the case of an emergency.

Students with specific medical needs (for example, for diabetic students who use continuous glucose monitoring systems that connect to a smart device) will have access to their phone as and when needed.

Students will be taught the risks that are associated with the use of mobile phones, both in school and more broadly, to ensure they understand the decision to prohibit the use of mobile phones throughout the school day. These risks can include a loss of focus in lessons, classroom disruption and an increase in bullying. Students will be encouraged to see a mobile-phone free environment as desirable and valuable.

Students may bring mobile phones on educational visits and school trips where permitted by the school. However, during the normal hours of the school working day, mobile phones must remain switched off and out of sight unless a member of staff has authorised their use for a specific educational, safety, or communication purpose. The school's expectations for mobile phone use on trips mirror those in place during the regular school day, ensuring that students remain engaged in learning activities, maintain appropriate behaviour, and safeguard the privacy and wellbeing of others. Any permitted use outside normal school hours will be communicated by trip leaders and must be in accordance with the school's behaviour and safeguarding policies.

5.1 Use of smartwatches by students

The DfE's [mobile phones guidance](#) includes in the term 'mobile phones' all devices with communications and smart technology that the school chooses to include in their policy.

Smartwatches are wristwatches with smart technology in them. **Smart watches are banned for students in Y7-Y11.** Smart watches can be used by Sixth Form students and staff in accordance with the guidelines set out for mobile phones above.

5.2 Exceptions for special circumstances and Sixth Form Students

The school may permit students to use a mobile phone in school, due to exceptional circumstances. Permission will only be granted where there is a documented safeguarding or medical necessity. To request such permission, students or parents/carers should contact the child's Pastoral Director.

Any students who are given permission must then adhere to the school's code of conduct for mobile phone use (see appendix 1).

For instance:

- Young carers who need to be contactable
- Students with diabetes who use their phones to monitor their blood glucose levels
- Sixth-form students

Sixth-form students are permitted to access their mobile phones during the school day to reflect their increased independence and responsibility. However, they must not undermine or compromise the school's mobile phone policy for younger students.

Therefore, sixth-form students may only use their mobile phones or smart devices out of sight of younger students and only within the **SALC, Common Room, and Sixth Form Café**. Misuse of mobile phones or other devices by sixth-form students will result in sanctions in accordance with the school's Behaviour Policy.

Sixth-form students may be authorised to use their mobile phones for teaching and learning purposes within a classroom, but only under the direct supervision of a member of staff. Such use must not be visible to younger students.

5.3 Sanctions

If a student is found in possession of a mobile phone that is not in a locked case during the school day, the mobile phone will be confiscated for a period of 5 consecutive school days. (Schools are permitted to confiscate phones from students under [sections 91](#) and [94](#) of the Education and Inspections Act 2006).

If a mobile phone is confiscated, students can collect it at the end of the fifth school day. Where a mobile phone is confiscated, the parent or carer will receive a phone call to inform them and communicate the return date. All confiscated phones will be stored in a locked safe.

If a member of staff believes that a student (Y7-Y11) is in possession of a mobile phone that is not in a locked case, the student will be searched in accordance with our [Behaviour for Learning and Anti-Bullying Policy](#).

If a student is found in possession of a mobile phone that is not in a locked case, the following action will be taken:

- The mobile phone will be confiscated and returned to the student **after 5 consecutive school days**. Depending on the day of confiscation, this could mean that a phone is withheld over a weekend.
- The incident will be logged on the student's behaviour record and the action taken will be recorded as 'phone confiscated'
- If a student is caught a second time, the phone would again be confiscated for 5 consecutive school days and the student would have to hand their phone in at reception for half a term. Once the phone is reinstated, the student would then be subject to random check / search by SLT
- Any further incidents, the student must hand their phone in for the remainder of the academic year and a meeting would be scheduled for parents and the student to attend.
- Sixth-form students are only allowed phones out in designated areas - SALC, Common Room, Cafe. Any student in breach of this rule would have their phone confiscated and returned after 5 consecutive school days with repeat breaches of this policy being dealt with as above.

In each case, the sanction given must be reasonable and proportionate. The school will also consider whether:

- There are any relevant special circumstances (for example, age, religious requirements, special educational needs (SEN), disability)
- The student's behaviour may indicate they may be suffering, or at risk of, harm. If this is suspected, staff will follow the appropriate procedure set out in [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#). This will include speaking with the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) or deputy, who will consider if pastoral support, an early intervention, or a referral to children's social care, is appropriate

Certain types of conduct seen online/ on phones such as 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 of 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

6. Use of mobile phones by parents/carers, volunteers and visitors

Parents are encouraged to reinforce and discuss this policy at home as appropriate, including the risks associated with mobile phone use and the benefits of a mobile phone-free environment.

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 recordings of students, unless it's at a public event (such as a school fair), 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 around the site, in lessons, when working with students or while children are present unless this is specifically for work purposes.

Parents/carers, visitors and volunteers will be informed of the rules for mobile phone use when they sign in at reception or attend a public event at school. Please refer to the safeguarding leaflet given to all visitors at reception.

Parents/carers or volunteers supervising school trips or residential visits must not:

- Use their phone to make contact with other parents/carers
- Take photos or recordings of students, their work, or anything else that could identify a student

Parents/carers or volunteers supervising trips are also responsible for enforcing the school's policy for students using their phones, as set out in section 5 above, but must refer any sanctions to a member of staff, as they do not have the power to search or confiscate devices.

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.

7. Loss, theft or damage

Students bringing mobile phones to school must ensure that their phones are appropriately labelled, and switched off, ready to be stored away securely in the students' Nukase lockable case when not in use during the school day. Each case has a space for students to write their name.

Students must secure their mobile phones as much as possible, including using passwords or pin codes to protect access to the phone's functions. Staff must also secure their personal phones, as well as any work phone provided to them. Failure by staff to do so could result in data breaches.

- 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 students are travelling to and from school.
- Confiscated phones will be stored in the school office in a locked safe.

Lost phones should be returned to the main school office. The school will then attempt to contact the owner.

8. Monitoring and review

The school is committed to ensuring that this policy has a positive impact on students' education, behaviour and welfare. When reviewing the policy, the school will take into account:

- Feedback from parents/carers and students
- Feedback from staff
- Records of behaviour and safeguarding incidents

- Relevant advice from the Department for Education, the local authority and any other relevant organisations

If there are any concerns regarding this policy, these should be brought to the attention of the Deputy Headteacher (pastoral) in a timely manner.

9. Appendix 1: [Code of conduct / acceptable use agreement] for students allowed to bring their phones to school due to exceptional circumstances

Student Code of Conduct for mobile phones

You must obey the following rules if you bring your mobile phone to school:

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.
2. Phones must be switched off (not just put on 'silent') and put into your lockable Nukcase.
3. You may not use your mobile phone in the toilets or changing rooms. This is to protect the privacy and welfare of other students.
4. You cannot take photos or recordings (either video or audio) of school staff or other students.
5. Avoid sharing your contact details with people you do not know, and do not share other people's contact details without their consent.
6. Do not share your phone's password(s) or access code(s) with anyone else.
7. Do not 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 students or staff via:
 1. Email
 2. Text/messaging app
 3. Social media
8. Do not use your phone to send or receive anything that may be a criminal offence. For instance, by 'sexting'.
9. Rules on bullying, harassment and intimidation apply to how you use your mobile phone even when you aren't in school.
10. Do not 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. Do not 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.

10. Appendix 2: Permission form allowing a student have an adjustment to their phone access at school

A copy of this form can be requested as a google form for you to complete. Please contact Admin@damealiceowens.herts.sch.uk to request a form.

Student details	
Student name:	
Year group/class:	
Parent/carer(s) name(s):	

The school has agreed to allow [student name] to access their mobile phone at school because they:

- Are a young carer
- Need the phone to support their medical needs
- Any other reason deemed by the school to be exceptional circumstances

Students who have an adjustment in relation to mobile phone at school must abide by the school's policy on the use of mobile phones, and its code of conduct.

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

Parent/carer signature: _____

Student signature: _____

For school use only	
Authorised by:	
Date:	

11. Appendix 3: Mobile phone information slip for visitors

Use of mobile phones and similar devices in our school

Our school is a mobile phone-free environment.

- Please keep your mobile phone on silent/vibrate while on the school grounds
- Please do not use phones where students are present. If you must use your phone, you may go to
- Do not take photos or recordings of students (unless it is your own child), or staff
- Do not use your phone in lessons, when working with students or while children are present

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.

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- Please keep your mobile phone on silent/vibrate while on the school grounds
- Please do not use phones where students are present. If you must use your phone, you may go to the staff room
- Do not take photos or recordings of students (unless it is your own child), or staff
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