

VOYAGE LEARNING CAMPUS



MOBILE PHONE POLICY

This policy has been adopted by the Management Committee on:

Date adopted:

5 February 2026

Signed:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be a stylized 'A' followed by a flourish.

Next review due:

February 2027

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1. Introduction and aims

At Voyage Learning Campus we recognise that mobile phones and similar devices, including smartphones, are an important part of everyday life for our students, parents/carers and staff, as well as the wider school community.

Our policy aims to:

- Promote safe and responsible phone use
- Set 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, Safeguarding and relationships and behaviour

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

- Risks to child protection
- Protecting students wellbeing on and offline
- Data protection issues
- Potential for lesson disruption
- Risk of theft, loss, or damage
- Appropriate use of technology in the classroom

Note: throughout this policy, 'mobile phones' refers to mobile phones and similar devices.

2. Relevant guidance

This policy meets the requirements of:

- The Department for Education's non-statutory guidance on mobile phones in schools
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2025
- The school's behaviour policy
- The school's child protection and safeguarding policy
- The school's online safety policy

This policy recognises that mobile phones present online safety risks to children, including exposure to misinformation, disinformation (including fake news), and conspiracy theories. Staff should be aware that technology is a significant component in many safeguarding and wellbeing issues, and that children are at risk of abuse and other risks online, as well as face to face.

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 Staff

All staff (including teachers, support staff and supply staff) are responsible for consistently enforcing this policy.

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 Principal is responsible for monitoring the policy every year, reviewing it, 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.

3.2 Management Committee

The Management Committee will ratify the policy annually when it is reviewed.

3.3 Staff Training

All staff will receive training on:

- The safeguarding risks associated with mobile phone use, including online safety risks
- How to identify and respond to concerns about child-on-child abuse involving mobile phones
- The procedures for reporting safeguarding concerns
- Their responsibilities under this policy

This training will be provided at induction and updated regularly as part of the school's safeguarding training programme.

4. Use of mobile phones by staff

The DfE's non-statutory mobile phone guidance says that staff should not use their own mobile phone for personal reasons in front of students throughout the school day.

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 for personal use, while during contact time. Use of personal mobile phones for personal use must be restricted to non-contact time, and to areas of the school where students are not present (such as the staffroom).

There may be circumstances in which it's 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
- Personal medical needs that require access to a mobile device

The Principal will decide on a case-by-basis whether to allow for special arrangements.

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 Bard).

Please see the ICT and Internet Acceptable Use Policy and Artificial Intelligence Usage Policy for further guidance.

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.

Staff must not give their personal phone numbers to parent/carers or students. Staff who use personal mobile phones to call parent/carers must ensure that show caller ID is turned off and must not use SMS or other messaging services as this could expose their personal phone number.

Staff who are provided with mobile phones as equipment for their role must abide by the same rules for ICT acceptable use as set out in section 4 of the ICT and Internet Acceptable Use policy.

Staff must not use their personal mobile phones to take photographs or recordings of students, their work, or anything else that could identify a student. If it's necessary to take photos or recordings as part of a lesson/school trip/activity, this must be done using school equipment.

If staff are required to use their personal mobile phone to communicate via the school Microsoft Teams channels, they should, wherever possible, avoid using their phone in the presence of students. When working in front of students, school-issued computers or laptops should be used instead.

4.3.1 Child-on-child abuse considerations

Staff should be aware that child-on-child abuse can happen both inside and outside of school and online, including through bullying (including cyber-bullying), sexual harassment (including online sexual harassment), and consensual and non-consensual sharing of nude and semi-nude images and/or videos.

Staff must be vigilant to the risks that mobile phones can facilitate such abuse and should:

- Report any concerns about students using phones to bully, harass or harm others immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)
- Be aware that students may use phones to share inappropriate images or content
- Understand that victims may not feel ready to report abuse and should maintain professional curiosity
-

Any concerns about child-on-child abuse involving mobile phones must be handled in line with the school's child protection policy and Part 5 of KCSIE 2025.

4.4 Using personal mobiles for work purposes

In some circumstances, it may be appropriate for staff to use personal mobile phones for work. Such circumstances may include, but are not limited to

:

- Use of multi-factor authentication
- Emergency evacuations such as lockdowns and fire drills
- To log emergency requests for support via Microsoft Teams
- Supervising off-site trips
- Supervising residential visits

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

4.5 Work phones

Some members of staff are provided with a mobile phone by the school for work purposes. 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 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 Disciplinary policy and procedure for more information.

4.7 Filtering and Monitoring

The school recognises its responsibility to ensure appropriate filtering and monitoring systems are in place on school devices and networks.

Where students are permitted to use mobile phones in exceptional circumstances (as outlined in Section 5.2), they must not access the school's Wi-Fi network with personal devices unless explicitly authorised by a member of the Senior Leadership Team.

The school's approach to filtering and monitoring, including how these requirements apply to generative AI tools, is set out in full in our Online Safety policy and ICT Acceptable Use policy.

Students using personal devices must understand that:

- They are responsible for their own online safety when using mobile data
- The school cannot filter or monitor content accessed via mobile data
- Any safeguarding concerns arising from mobile phone use will be addressed in line with our Safeguarding and Child Protection policy

Please see Staff Code of Conduct and Child Protection and Safeguarding policy for further guidance.

5. Use of mobile phones by students

The DfE's non-statutory mobile phone guidance says that students should not use mobile phones throughout the school day.

Students should not use their mobile phones during the school day, including during lessons, in the time between lessons, at breaktimes and at lunchtimes.

Students will hand mobile phones in on arrival to school at the main reception or to the Head of Centre.

If students require to access their mobile phone during the school day for emergency reasons, they will be allowed to access their phone in the reception office, monitored by a member of staff at break or lunchtime only.

5.1 Use of smart technology by students (including smart watches, smart glasses, smart rings)

The DfE's non-statutory mobile phone guidance includes in the term 'mobile phones' all devices with communications and smart technology that the school chooses to include in their policy. This may therefore include smartwatches, smart glasses, smart rings, and similar devices.

Smartwatches are wrist-worn devices that may allow users to:

- Tell the time
- Send and receive text or voice messages
- Make or receive calls
- Listen to music
- Access wellness and health-related features

Other forms of smart technology, such as smart glasses or smart rings, may also have communication, recording, or data-sharing capabilities.

The use of such devices presents specific challenges:

- Students may be able to **communicate via text or voice** using smart technology even when a mobile phone is stored in a bag or pocket.
- Smart devices are often **smaller and less noticeable** than mobile phones and may be easier to conceal or appear similar to standard items.
- Smart technology devices may be **more fragile** than mobile phones; therefore, any confiscation or storage procedures may need to be adapted to ensure items are stored safely and securely.

5.2 Exceptions for special circumstances

There are special considerations when students might need to have their phone accessible. These instances are (and not limited to):

- Students travelling to school by themselves
- Young carers who need to be contactable
- Students with diabetes who use their phones to monitor their blood sugar

5.2.1 Additional considerations for vulnerable pupils

The school recognises that some pupils may be at greater risk of harm, including online harm facilitated by mobile phones. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Children with special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities, who may face additional barriers to recognising abuse and may be disproportionately affected by issues such as bullying
- Children with a social worker
- Looked-after children and previously looked-after children
- Children who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, or gender questioning, who can be targeted by other children

When considering exceptions to this policy or applying sanctions, staff will take into account any additional vulnerabilities and ensure appropriate support is in place. The Designated Safeguarding Lead will be consulted in all cases involving vulnerable pupils.

The school may permit students to use a mobile phone in school, due to exceptional circumstances. This will be considered on a case-by-case basis. To request such permission, students or parents/carers should contact their child's Head of Centre. Any students who are given permission must then adhere to the school's IT and Internet Acceptable Use Policy for mobile phone use (see appendix 1).

Misuse of mobile phones by students will lead to sanctions according to our Relationship and Behaviour policy.

5.3 Sanctions

If a scan detects a device or a phone is seen during the day:

1. We'll calmly invite your child to hand in the item
2. We'll allow up to 5 minutes for them to feel ready—we understand some young people need time to regulate emotions
3. If still difficult, we'll contact you to work together
4. A trusted adult will speak with them to reflect and support the right choice
5. As a last resort, we may suspend them for the remainder of the day to allow time to reset

If a young person uses their phone on site:

1. We'll ask them to hand it in (5-minute window)
2. If struggling, we'll contact you
3. If handed in, we'll work with them to reflect and plan support
4. As a last resort, suspension for the rest of the day

After three suspensions:

We'll invite you for a supportive conversation to understand what's happening and how we can help your child feel safe and successful.

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, 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 Part 1 of Keeping Children Safe in Education

Criminal conduct and serious safeguarding concerns

Certain types of conduct, 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:

- Consensual and non-consensual sharing of nude and semi-nude images and/or videos (also known as 'sexting')
- Upskirting (which typically involves taking a picture under a person's clothes without their permission)
- Threats of violence or assault
- Abusive calls, emails, social media posts or texts directed at someone on the basis of their ethnicity, religious beliefs, sexual orientation or any other protected characteristic
- Child criminal exploitation (CCE) or child sexual exploitation (CSE) facilitated through mobile phones

All staff need to maintain an attitude of 'it could happen here' and there should be a zero-tolerance approach to sexual violence and sexual harassment. All victims should know they'll be taken seriously, be supported and kept safe. They shouldn't be made to feel ashamed for making a report or that they are causing a problem by reporting sexual violence or sexual harassment

In each case, the school will consider whether the student's behaviour may indicate they are suffering, or at risk of, harm. If this is suspected, staff will follow the appropriate procedure set out in Part 1 of Keeping Children Safe in Education and report concerns immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Staff should be aware that mental health problems can be an indicator that a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation. Where a student's difficulty in complying with this policy appears linked to wellbeing concerns, the school will ensure appropriate support is provided."

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

Parents/carers, visitors and volunteers (including members of the management committee 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 in lessons, or when working with students

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.

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 the phones are appropriately labelled and are stored securely when not in use.

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 main reception or locked in the Head of Centre's office in a locked cabinet.

Lost phones should be returned to main reception. 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 Principal in a timely manner.

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

Code of conduct / acceptable use agreement

VLC Phase 2 Mobile Phone Agreement Form

Our goal is to create a safe, consistent and respectful environment where all students can feel secure and supported to succeed.

This agreement outlines our approach to mobile phones at school. This approach aligns with Department for Education guidance on safeguarding and creating calm, focused learning environments.

Why We Have This Policy

Online Safety and Wellbeing

Mobile phones can expose students to online safety risks including misinformation, disinformation, and conspiracy theories. Students are at risk of abuse and other risks online, as well as face to face, including child-on-child abuse through cyber-bullying, sexual harassment, and the sharing of inappropriate images. This policy helps protect all students from these harms while supporting their wellbeing and creating a safe learning environment.

Safeguarding: Current DfE guidance highlights significant risks from unrestricted access to mobile networks. Protecting students' wellbeing—both online and offline—is a responsibility we all share.

Learning Environment: We want to create a calm, focused space where your child can thrive academically and socially.

Support, Not Punishment: Our approach is supportive and puts young people at the heart of all decisions. We understand that sometimes young people push boundaries, and we're committed to helping them make positive choices.

What Items Must Be Handed In

On arrival at school, students must hand in:

- Mobile phones (and other smart devices)

These will be stored safely and can be collected at the end of the school day.

Where Items Are Stored

Items can be handed in at:

- The front office (with charging facilities available)
- The Vice Principal's office

Items cannot be stored in classrooms, with individual staff members, or in upstairs areas. This protects belongings and maintains trust.

Accessing your phone during the day

If necessary, students can access their phones at reception during:

- Break times
- Between lessons

This must be approved by a Senior Leadership Team member.

Our Supportive Approach:

If a scan detects a device or a phone is seen during the day:

1. We'll calmly invite your child to hand in the item
2. We'll allow up to 5 minutes for them to feel ready—we understand some young people need time to regulate emotions
3. If still difficult, we'll contact you to work together
4. A trusted adult will speak with them to reflect and support the right choice
5. As a last resort, we may suspend them for the remainder of the day to allow time to reset

If we have concerns:

- We'll contact you to discuss

Responsibilities

Student Responsibilities

I understand that I must:

- Hand in my mobile phone/ smart devices
- Not use, carry, or display these items during the school day
- Follow staff instructions calmly and respectfully
- Take time to regulate my emotions if I'm finding things difficult
- Ask for help from a trusted adult when I need it
- Respect that this policy is about keeping me and others safe

Parent/Carer Responsibilities

I/We understand that we will:

- Support the school's policy and discuss it with our child

- Ensure our child understands the expectations
- Work with the school if our child finds it difficult to follow the policy
- Respond to school contact if our child needs additional support
- Attend meetings if requested to discuss our child's wellbeing
- Contact the school office if we need to reach our child during the day

School Responsibilities

The school will:

- Treat all students and their belongings with care and respect
- Provide safe, secure storage for items with charging facilities
- Give students time and support to make the right choices
- Contact parents/carers if students need additional support
- Work with families to understand challenges and provide appropriate support
- Apply the policy fairly and consistently
- Ensure trusted adults are available to support students
- Not use suspension as a first response—only as a last resort
- Keep parents/carers informed of any concerns or incidents
- Protect student wellbeing both online and offline

Agreement

By signing below, we confirm that we have read, understood and agree to this policy and the responsibilities outlined above.

Student Name: _____

Student Signature: _____ Date: _____

Parent/Carer Name: _____

Parent/Carer Signature: _____ Date: _____

School Representative: _____ Date: _____

Appendix 2: Template mobile phone information slip for visitors

Use of mobile phones and similar devices in our school

- 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 one of the private offices to take your call.
- Do not take photos or recordings of students (unless it is your own child), or staff
- Do not use your phone in lessons, or when working with students

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 upon request.

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