



Mobile Phone and Digital Device Policy

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1. Introduction and aims

Swanlea School is a mobile phone free environment from gate to gate for all pupils in Years 7 to 13, including Sixth Form. This policy explains the rule, the limited circumstances in which an individual arrangement may be made, and what happens when a device is seen, heard or accessed.

Removing unnecessary digital distraction supports learning, concentration, positive social interaction, safeguarding and wellbeing. The policy should be read alongside the Behaviour Policy, Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Acceptable Use of Technology Policy.

Pupils will be taught, through induction and pastoral or personal development education, about distraction, online safety and bullying, and the benefits of learning and socialising without phones. These expectations will be reinforced during the year.

For this policy, mobile phones and digital devices include phones, smartwatches and other wearables with communication or internet capability, wireless earbuds and headphones, and personal devices capable of messaging, recording or photography. Authorised educational laptops are addressed in section 5.3.

2. Relevant guidance

Section 36 of the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act 2026 made the Department for Education guidance Mobile phones in schools statutory on 29 June 2026; schools should follow it from 1 September 2026. This policy also takes account of the DfE guidance Behaviour in schools and searching, screening and confiscation in schools, and Keeping Children Safe in Education. It should be read alongside Swanlea's Behaviour Policy, Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Acceptable Use of Technology Policy.

3. Roles and responsibilities

The Executive Headteacher, Head of School and Deputy Headteacher oversee this policy and authorise individual exceptions. Heads of Year and senior leaders manage repeated breaches and collection arrangements. The designated safeguarding lead (DSL) or a deputy advises where a device raises a safeguarding concern. School leaders will explain the policy to pupils, families and staff at induction and the start of each school year, reinforce it regularly, and publish it on the school website.

All staff, including cover and duty staff, must challenge breaches consistently, record incidents on SIMS and pass on safeguarding concerns through the school's normal systems. Volunteers, contractors and other adults working on site should alert a member of staff if they witness a breach. Parents and carers should contact Reception when they need to reach a pupil during the day; staff will address questions about the policy promptly.

4. Use of mobile phones by staff

Staff must model responsible use and must not use personal phones for personal reasons in front of pupils during the school day. Personal use should take place during non-contact time in areas where pupils are not present. Staff must apply the pupil rules consistently in lessons, on duty and during cover. The Executive Headteacher or Head of School may agree to an individual arrangement for an urgent personal matter.

Staff may use a personal phone discreetly for an authorised work purpose, such as multi-factor authentication, recording homework, rewards or sanctions, an emergency evacuation or supervising an educational visit. Staff must follow the Staff Code of Conduct, Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Acceptable Use of Technology Policy. Parents and pupils should be contacted through approved school channels; on trips, staff should use a school trip phone where available. School-issued phones may be used only by authorised staff for professional purposes.

For planned visits, staff should request a school trip phone from the Deputy Business Manager at least two school days before departure where practicable. Staff must use school channels for communication with families.

Staff must not give pupils or parents their personal phone number or connect with them through personal messaging or social media. Staff must not use personal phones to take photographs or recordings of pupils, their work or anything that identifies a pupil. Approved school equipment and procedures must be used for school photographs and recordings. Classroom applications should be accessed through school equipment unless a work use has been authorised.

Staff must not store or process confidential pupil or school information on a personal phone or enter it into an unapproved app or generative AI service. Staff must keep all personal and school-issued devices secure and follow the school's Data Protection Policy, Privacy Notice and Acceptable Use of Technology Policy. Breaches by staff will be addressed under the relevant staff procedures.

5. Use of mobile phones by pupils

5.1 Gate to gate expectations

From entering the school site until leaving it, pupils must not access or use a mobile phone or digital device, and it must not be seen or heard. This applies in lessons, between lessons, at break and lunchtime, to Years 7 to 13 alike. Any phone brought to school must be switched off before entry and kept out of sight in the pupil's bag until they leave the site. It must not be used as a clock, calculator, camera or music player.

Wireless earbuds, headphones and similar personal devices must be switched off and kept away throughout the school day. Smartwatches and other connected wearables with communication, recording or internet functions must not be worn or used on site and must be kept switched off in a bag. An ordinary watch without those functions is permitted. Any authorised exception is governed by section 5.3.

Pupils must not use personal devices in toilets or changing rooms, or take photographs, audio or video recordings of pupils or staff without school authorisation. Phones, smartwatches and other unauthorised communication devices must not enter an internal or external examination room. Pupils must follow the examination team's instructions before entry; possession in an examination room may jeopardise the examination under awarding body rules.

5.2 Contact, appointments and off-site activities

Parents and carers who need to contact a pupil during the school day should contact the school office. Messages will be triaged and passed on as appropriate. Pupils needing to contact home should speak to their Head of Year, the Pastoral Team or Reception.

For medical or other external appointments, a parent or carer must provide evidence in advance by email or present it directly to Reception. Pupils must not access a personal device during the school day to show appointment evidence.

During school-led educational visits and off-site activities, pupils must not access, use or have visible mobile phones or digital devices. In exceptional circumstances, the senior leader responsible for the visit may authorise limited use case by case where it supports the aims of the visit, pupil welfare, travel arrangements or operational requirements. Arrangements for residential visits or activities outside the normal school day will be communicated in advance.

Pupils are expected to uphold Swanlea's behaviour expectations when travelling to and from school and when representing the school. The Behaviour Policy governs harmful online behaviour affecting the school community. Pupils should report online concerns to a member of staff or the safeguarding team, who will arrange access to any evidence if needed.

5.3 Reasonable adjustments and authorised technology

The school will make reasonable adjustments for disability, SEND, medical and accessibility needs, and consider exceptional safeguarding or family circumstances, including young carers. A phone linked to continuous glucose monitoring is an example where access may be necessary. Parents, carers or pupils should contact the Head of Year or Inclusion Team. The Executive Headteacher, Head of School or Deputy Headteacher will authorise and

record the permitted device, purpose, time, place and review date, with relevant staff and family involvement. Permission to have a device does not allow general use; see appendix 1.

Pupils may use school issued laptops in lessons and other authorised learning activities. Sixth Form pupils may use personal laptops in classrooms, study areas and designated independent learning spaces when authorised. These devices must be used solely for educational purposes under the Acceptable Use of Technology Policy; this permission does not extend to personal mobile phones.

5.4 Breaches, confiscation and collection

A mobile phone or digital device that is accessed, seen or heard during the school day will be confiscated immediately, subject to an authorised exception and consideration of relevant individual circumstances. The incident will be recorded on SIMS; the device will be passed to the designated receiving office and a parent or carer will be informed. A parent or carer must collect it on Friday between 4.00 pm and 5.00 pm. If Friday is not a school day or collection is missed, Reception will arrange the next available collection time. A senior leader may vary an arrangement where necessary and proportionate, taking account of age, SEND, medical needs, safeguarding and the pupil's circumstances.

Repeated breaches will be reviewed by the Head of Year or senior leader and escalated through the Behaviour Policy. This may include a meeting with parents or carers, proportionate further sanctions, daily hand-in arrangements, a report card or a behaviour support plan. Any additional period of confiscation will be decided individually. Refusal to hand over a device is a serious behaviour incident and will be handled through the Behaviour Policy.

If a pupil refuses to hand over a device, staff should request On Call support through SIMS in line with the published Behaviour Policy. A senior leader will investigate, record the outcome and determine the response, with a safeguarding review where appropriate. Staff should not attempt to resolve a refusal by searching a pupil outside the school's authorised search procedures.

The receiving office will label the device with the pupil's name, year group, date and member of staff who confiscated it, record its receipt, and store it in the Finance Office safe or another designated secure store. Receipts and releases will be logged. The device will be released to a parent or carer, or as a senior leader has otherwise authorised. Staff will handle it with appropriate care, and families will be told how to contact school while a device is retained.

5.5 Safeguarding and searching

Where a device raises a safeguarding concern, staff will follow the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, Keeping Children Safe in Education, the Behaviour Policy and DfE searching, screening and confiscation guidance. Confiscation for a policy breach does not itself authorise inspection of a device's contents. Only a member of staff authorised under the school's search procedures may search a pupil or examine a device where the legal conditions are met. Staff must involve the DSL or deputy as appropriate, preserve evidence safely and record action on the relevant safeguarding and behaviour systems. The Behaviour Policy should identify phones and similar devices as items for which an authorised search may be undertaken in accordance with the law.

Suspected cyberbullying, harassment, threats, voyeuristic recording, or sharing of nude or semi-nude images must be referred promptly to the DSL or a deputy. Staff must not routinely view, copy or forward such material; the safeguarding team will determine the lawful and safe response, including whether to involve other agencies.

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

Parents and carers should reinforce the school's expectations and use Reception as the first point of contact during the school day. They should not contact pupils directly on their personal devices while pupils are in school.

Visitors and volunteers, including governors, contractors and supply staff, must use phones discreetly on site and must not use them in lessons or while working with pupils. They must not photograph or record pupils, their work or staff without school permission. At public events, any permitted photography must follow school instructions and consent arrangements. Reception will explain the rules at sign-in and make the visitor notice in appendix 2 available. Parents and volunteers accompanying visits must not contact other families through personal phones or photograph pupils; they should refer pupil breaches to a member of staff and must not search or confiscate a pupil's device.

7. Loss, theft or damage

Pupils are responsible for protecting devices they bring to school, including using a PIN or password and keeping them switched off and in their bags. The school does not accept responsibility for pupils' personal devices lost, stolen or damaged on site or on school activities. A confiscated device will be handled with appropriate care and any reported loss or damage investigated under school procedures. Found devices should be handed to Reception. The school will explain these arrangements to pupils and families.

8. Monitoring and review

School leaders will review this policy annually using pupil, parent and staff feedback, behaviour and safeguarding records, and current guidance. It will be published on the school website and explained at induction and at the start of each academic year. Questions about its application should be directed through Reception to a Head of Year or senior leader.

9. Appendix 1 Exceptional use authorisation

Complete this record where a pupil needs an exception for medical, SEND, accessibility, safeguarding or other exceptional circumstances. Approval of carrying a device does not itself authorise use during the school day; record the exact permitted use below. Explain the conditions to the pupil and parent or carer. The pupil must follow the agreed times and locations, must not use the device to photograph, record or contact others unless expressly authorised, and must follow staff instructions and the school's Acceptable Use of Technology Policy.

Pupil name and year group: _____

Reason and supporting information: _____

Device and exact permitted use: _____

Permitted location and time: _____

Safeguarding and supervision arrangements: _____

Authorised by (Executive Headteacher, Head of School or Deputy): _____

Date authorised: _____ Review date: _____

Pupil and parent or carer informed of conditions (date): _____

Pupil acknowledgement: _____

Parent or carer acknowledgement: _____

10. Appendix 2 Visitor information notice

Swanlea School is a mobile phone free environment for pupils throughout the school day. Please keep your phone discreet and do not use it in lessons or while working with pupils. Do not photograph or record pupils or their work without permission from the school. If you need to make a call, please speak to Reception about a suitable location. A full copy of this policy is available from the school office.