



Mobile Phone Policy 2025/26

Review		
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Signed	Adele Lord-Laverick	
Signed	Georgina Gowthorpe	

Policy Statement

Lord Gowthorpe's School is committed to providing a safe, secure and purposeful learning environment where pupils are able to engage fully in education without unnecessary distraction or risk. The school recognises that mobile phones and other internet-enabled devices form an important part of modern life; however, they also present safeguarding, wellbeing and behavioural risks if not managed appropriately. As a specialist independent secondary school for pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), we acknowledge that some pupils may require access to mobile technology as part of agreed therapeutic, communication or medical arrangements. Any such use will be carefully risk assessed and agreed with parents or carers and relevant professionals.

This policy aims to ensure that the use of mobile phones and smart devices supports learning, protects the welfare of pupils and staff, and reflects the school's safeguarding responsibilities.

Legislative Framework

This policy has been developed with regard to the Education Act 2002, the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 (as amended), the Equality Act 2010, the Data Protection Act 2018, the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR), the Online Safety Act 2023, Keeping Children Safe in Education (2025), Working Together to Safeguard Children (2026) and the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act 2026.

Definition of Smart Devices

For the purposes of this policy, smart devices include mobile phones, smartphones, smart watches with communication functions, tablets, earbuds capable of internet connectivity, gaming devices with online capability and any other personal electronic device capable of taking photographs, recording audio or video, accessing the internet or communicating electronically.

Pupil Use of Mobile Phones

Currently pupils are discouraged from bringing mobile phones or other personal smart devices into school unless there is a genuine need to do so. Where a pupil brings a mobile phone onto the school site, it must be switched off or placed in flight mode. From September 2026 our new policy will ensure all phones are handed to a designated member of staff on arrival. The device will be securely stored during the school day and returned to the pupil at the end of the school day unless alternative arrangements have been agreed by the Headteacher.

Mobile phones must not be used during lessons, social times or while moving around the school unless specific permission has been granted by a member of the leadership team for educational, medical or safeguarding reasons.

Where pupils require a mobile device as part of an agreed communication strategy, medical plan or therapeutic programme, arrangements will be clearly documented and reviewed regularly.

Smart Watches and Wearable Technology

Smart watches and other wearable technology that can access the internet, send or receive messages, make calls or record images or audio are subject to the same expectations as mobile phones. Unless authorised as part of an agreed individual support plan, such devices should not be used during the school day.

Educational Use of Technology

The school recognises that mobile technology can provide valuable educational opportunities. On occasions where mobile devices are required for planned learning activities, pupils will only use devices under the direct supervision of staff. Wherever possible, school-owned devices will be used in preference to personal equipment.

Safeguarding

The use of personal mobile phones presents significant safeguarding considerations. Pupils must never use personal devices to photograph, film or record other pupils, staff or visitors without explicit permission. The creation, possession or sharing of inappropriate images or videos is strictly prohibited and will be managed in accordance with the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, Behaviour and Physical Intervention Policy and Online Safety Policy.

Any concerns regarding image-based abuse, cyber bullying, online grooming, sextortion or the sharing of indecent images will be treated as safeguarding matters and referred immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead. Where appropriate, external agencies, including Children's Social Care and the Police, will be involved.

Staff Use of Mobile Phones

Staff may bring personal mobile phones into school but are expected to use them responsibly and professionally. Personal devices should not be used while supervising pupils, during lessons or in situations where they may distract from professional responsibilities, except in emergencies or where authorised by the Headteacher.

Staff must never use personal devices to communicate with pupils or former pupils. All communication with pupils and parents must take place through approved school systems. Personal devices must not be used to photograph or record pupils except in exceptional circumstances authorised by the Headteacher or Designated Safeguarding Lead. Wherever possible, school-owned equipment should be used for educational purposes.

Visitors, Volunteers and Contractors

Visitors, volunteers and contractors are expected to follow this policy whilst on the school site. Mobile phones should not be used in classrooms or areas where pupils are present unless authorised by a member of the leadership team. Any photography or filming requires prior permission from the Headteacher.

Storage and Security

The school accepts no responsibility for the loss, theft or damage of personal mobile phones or smart devices brought onto the premises. Pupils and staff are encouraged to minimise the number of valuable items brought into school. Devices handed in by pupils will be stored securely during the school day; however, parents and carers remain responsible for ensuring that devices are appropriately insured.

Sanctions

Failure to comply with this policy may result in a cooling off period, withdrawal of permission to bring devices into school or other proportionate consequences in line with the school's Behaviour and Physical Intervention Policy. Repeated breaches will be discussed with parents or carers, and individual support plans may be developed where appropriate.

Equality and Reasonable Adjustments

The school recognises that some pupils may require access to mobile technology because of disability, communication needs, medical conditions or therapeutic interventions. Reasonable adjustments will be considered on an individual basis in consultation with parents, carers and relevant professionals. Any agreed arrangements will balance accessibility with safeguarding and the smooth running of the school.

Monitoring and Review

The Headteacher and Governing Body will monitor the implementation of this policy through behaviour records, safeguarding reports and feedback from pupils, staff and parents. The policy will be reviewed annually, or sooner if there are changes to legislation or statutory guidance.