Mobile Phones and Smart Devices Policy for Marlfields Primary School 2026-2027

The Mobile Phone and Smart Devices Policy 2026-2027 has been ratified by the Children First Learning Partnership Directors Board after consultation with the Link Safeguarding Governor of the Reginald Mitchell Primary School LAB.	
Chair of Board:	*Mrs N. Chell*
Responsible Officer:	*CEO – Mrs A Rourke*
Agreed and ratified by the Directors Board on:	*March 2026*
To be reviewed:	*March 2027 or earlier if required*

1. Purpose

Children First Learning Partnership is committed to calm, safe and supportive school environments that maximise learning and wellbeing. To minimise distraction, reduce safeguarding risks and promote positive social interaction, CFLP schools operate as phone-free environments by default throughout the school day, including lessons, transitions, assemblies, breaktimes and lunchtimes.

This policy sets expectations for pupils, staff, volunteers, contractors and visitors, and covers device possession, use, storage, confiscation/searching, data protection and communications with parents/carers.

A variety of other policies support the operational online safety of our schools, such as the Positive Behaviour Policy, Staff Code of Conduct, Social Media Policy, Information Security & Acceptable Use Policy (Link to CFLP Information Security & Acceptable Use Policy) - Info-Security-policy-and-AUP-policy.pdf

2. Rationale

Government guidance sets the expectation that all schools should be mobile phone-free by default, with exceptions only where necessary. Ofsted considers the policy, how it is communicated, how consistently it is applied, and its impact on learning, behaviour and wellbeing during inspections.

3. Definitions

- Mobile phone: any device capable of connecting to mobile networks, messaging or capturing image/audio/video.
- Smart device: wearables or tablets with phone-like functionality (messaging/notifications/camera/recording).

4. Policy statement

- Pupils should not bring mobile phones or smart devices to school. Where an agreed exception applies (see Section 5 below), devices must be switched off before entering the site and stored/surrendered on arrival as directed by the Headteacher. At Marlfields Primary School any devices brought to school by pupils are safely stored in a locked cupboard in the main school office.
- Pupil device use is prohibited at all times during the school day, including lessons, transitions, break/lunch, assemblies and clubs on site before/after school, and on school visits during learning time (unless an agreed exception by the Headteacher applies).
- Pupils must not take photos/videos or make audio recordings on site. School-managed photography is governed by data protection and safeguarding protocols (Section 9).
- Staff mobile phones are to be kept on their person or stored safely away. They must be password protected/face recognition protected and never used to capture pupil images or communicate with pupils on personal numbers.
- Visitors to the school must keep personal devices on silent and out of sight; no photographing/recording pupils without prior authorisation.

5. Reasonable adjustments and agreed exceptions

The CFLP recognises the need for case-by-case flexibility under the Equality Act 2010. Schools may authorise exceptions where proportionate and necessary, for example:

- Medical monitoring (e.g., diabetes technology integrated with a phone/watch).
- SEND/disability related needs and assistive technology.
- Safeguarding/welfare reasons such as a young carer or specific travel arrangements (Year 5 and Year 6 pupils who walk to and from school alone).

Where approved, the device must remain off and stored away securely in the school office unless in accordance with a bespoke written plan agreed with the Headteacher (considering non-phone alternatives first).

6. Breaches and sanctions

Breaches are addressed and managed by a Senior Leader in line with the School Behaviour Policy and other relevant policies as deemed necessary e.g. Safeguarding policy, Child on Child Abuse policy. Serious misuse (e.g., bullying/harassment, inappropriate content, image sharing) triggers safeguarding procedures and may involve police advice.

Confiscation and searches follow national guidance. Authorised staff may search and/or confiscate items in line with published procedures, particularly where electronic devices and data are involved.

7. Journeys to/from school and off-site activity

The policy applies from gate to gate. Misconduct off-site (including online) that impacts the school may be sanctioned where reasonable. On trips/visits/residentials, leaders set trip-specific rules consistent with this policy and safeguarding.

8. Communication and induction

- Policy published on the school website and in admissions/handbooks.
- Annual staff and pupil induction; assemblies and classroom routines reinforce expectations.
- Clear signage (“Phone-free school”).
- Parent/carer communication uses DfE toolkit materials and school channels (letters, website, socials).

9. Photography, video and data protection

- School-managed photos/videos follow UK GDPR/Data Protection Act 2018 and school privacy notices. Image permissions are recorded and checked.
- Parents/visitors may take personal/household photos at events unless the school advises restrictions for safeguarding or copyright reasons. Avoid posting identifiable images of other children publicly without consent.
- Staff must never use personal devices to capture or store pupil images.

10. Staff and adult conduct

- Personal phones are used only in staff areas/out of pupil view or for operational necessities (e.g. emergency contact - lockdown).
- No personal device photography/video of pupils; follow school systems for images and communication.
- Contractors/volunteers follow site rules; no unauthorised images or recordings.

11. Safeguarding, online behaviour and curriculum

- Online safety (e.g., image sharing, cyberbullying, privacy) is taught through the curriculum and reinforced with information shared with parents via the website and newsletters, socials.
- Device-related safeguarding concerns are managed by the DSL; decisions about viewing, copying or deleting content follow national search/confiscation guidance, and may involve police advice and/or Cheshire East Safeguarding Children Partnership (CESCP) advice.

12. Roles and responsibilities

- Trust Board: approves policy; seeks assurance on consistent implementation across schools.
- Headteachers /Local Advisory Board: implement and monitor; align behaviour/safeguarding policies; report patterns/incidents to the Trust via link safeguarding meetings.
- Staff: apply policy consistently; confiscate/search only if authorised and trained; record incidents promptly.
- Pupils: follow expectations; never use devices on site.
- Parents/carers: support policy; avoid contacting pupils directly during the school day; use the office for urgent messages.

13. Monitoring, evaluation and review

Schools evaluate impact each term via link safeguarding meetings with the school's allocated link safeguarding governor via behaviour incidents analysis, related safeguarding records and this is reported to the Trust. This policy is reviewed annually or on guidance changes.

Appendix A: Parent/carer summary (shared on safeguarding tab of website/newsletters/admissions paperwork)

Our school is a phone-free environment. Please do not allow your child to bring a mobile phone or smart device to school. If an agreed exception is in place (e.g. travel arrangements, walking to and from school alone), the device must be off and given in to the office on arrival where it is locked away safely in the school office and returned at home time. If seen or heard, it will be confiscated and parents/carers will be informed.

Appendix B: Request for exception

Pupil name/Class: _____

Reason (medical/SEND/safeguarding/travel): _____

Evidence (if applicable) attached: _____

Agreed controls (e.g., device type, storage, off and unseen, no camera/notifications):

_____

Review date: _____

Staff lead: _____

Appendix C: Confiscation/search record (minimum fields)

Date/Time/Location: _____

Staff (authorised): _____

Grounds for confiscation/search & whether consent obtained: _____

Actions taken with electronic device/data (view/copy/delete/not viewed) in line with guidance:

_____

DSL informed? Yes/No Parent informed? Yes/No

Outcome/sanction/support: _____

Appendix D: Staff quick guide

- Keep personal phone on person, ensure password protected/face recognition protected, never use it to capture pupil images.
- If a device is seen/heard: confiscate, inform SLT, log, follow staged response.
- For suspected harmful/illegal content: secure device; inform DSL; follow search/confiscation guidance; consider police advice/ CESCP advice and record decisions.

References:

1. Department for Education (2026). Mobile phones in schools.
https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/mobile-phones-in-schools

2. Ofsted (23 Jan 2026). What the government's updated guidance on mobile phones means for school inspections. https://educationinspection.blog.gov.uk/2026/01/23/what-the-governments-updated-guidance-on-mobile-phones-means-for-school-inspections/

3. Department for Education (Feb 2024). Behaviour in schools: Advice for headteachers and school staff. https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/behaviour-in-schools--2

4. Department for Education (July 2022). Searching, screening and confiscation: guidance for schools. https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/searching-screening-and-confiscation

5. Information Commissioner's Office. Taking photos in schools. https://ico.org.uk/for-the-public/schools/photos

6. Department for Education (2026). Communicating your policy to parents (toolkit). https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/mobile-phones-in-schools/communicating-your-policy-for-prohibiting-the-use-of-mobile-phones-in-schools-to-parents

7. House of Commons Library (22 Jan 2026). Mobile phones in schools (England). https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cbp-10241/