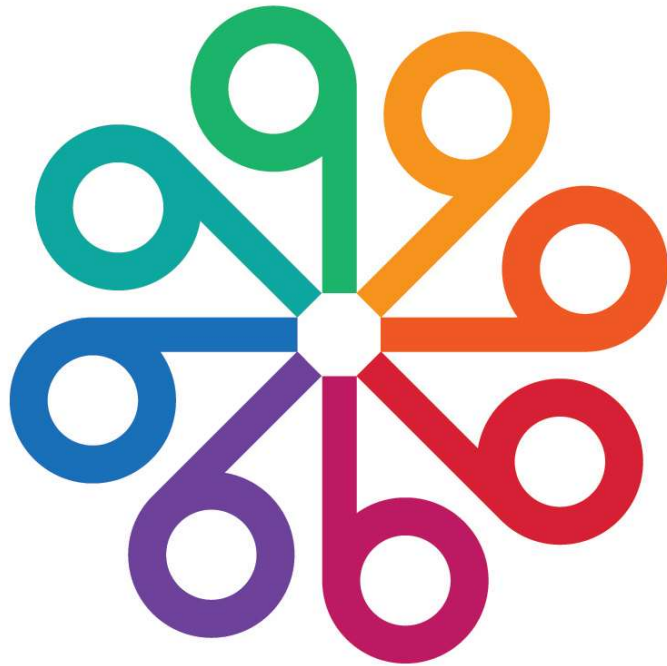


Mobile Phone Policy



Burnham on Crouch Primary School

Connected to our world

Staff consulted: Autumn 2026

Ratified by the Governing Body: Autumn 2026

Review date: Autumn 2027

1. Introduction

At Burnham-on-Crouch Primary School, the safety and wellbeing of our children is our highest priority.

We recognise that mobile phones can be useful for communication outside school. However, primary-aged children do not normally need access to a mobile phone during the school day.

Our school is therefore a **mobile phone-free school**.

Children must not use or have access to a mobile phone or other personal communication device during the school day unless an individual exception has been agreed by the Headteacher.

This approach helps us to:

- keep children safe;
- reduce online safeguarding risks;
- prevent distraction from learning;
- encourage children to talk, play and socialise with each other;
- prevent inappropriate photographs or recordings;
- reduce opportunities for online bullying and unkind behaviour;
- ensure that communication between home and children during the school day takes place through the school.

2. National guidance

This policy has been written with regard to current legislation and national guidance, including:

- Department for Education **Mobile phones in schools: statutory guidance**, 2026;
- **Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026**;
- **Behaviour in Schools**;
- **Searching, Screening and Confiscation**;
- DfE guidance and standards relating to online safety, filtering and monitoring;
- Equality Act 2010;
- Children and Families Act 2014;
- Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR;
- statutory guidance relating to supporting pupils with medical conditions.

The DfE expects schools to provide a mobile phone-free environment throughout the school day.

This policy should be read alongside the school's:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy;
- Behaviour Policy;
- Online Safety Policy;
- SEND Policy;
- Staff Code of Conduct (Incs Acceptable Use policy)

3. Our expectations

As a primary school, our starting position is simple:

Children should not normally bring a mobile phone to school.

We recognise that there may be circumstances where a parent feels that their child needs to bring a phone to school.

This is most likely to apply to older KS2 pupils who travel to or from school independently.

Where a child needs to bring a phone to school, the arrangements set out below must be followed.

4. Children bringing a phone to school

A child may be permitted to bring a phone where, for example:

- they walk to or from school independently;
- they travel independently to meet a parent or carer;
- they attend an activity immediately before or after school;
- there is an agreed medical, SEND or safeguarding need; or
- the Headteacher agrees that there is another reasonable need.

Permission to bring a phone to school does **not** give a child permission to use it during the school day.

5. What happens to phones during the school day?

Any mobile phone brought to school must be **switched off before the start of the school day**.

The phone must then be handed in or stored in the secure place identified by the school.

Phones will be kept securely and returned at the end of the school day.

Children must not keep a phone:

- in their pocket;
- in their tray;
- in their desk;
- in their coat;
- in their school bag; or
- anywhere else where they can access it during the school day, unless an individual arrangement has specifically been agreed by the Headteacher.

The school will take reasonable care of phones that have been handed in but cannot accept responsibility for loss or damage except where legally required.

We strongly recommend that children do not bring expensive smartphones to school.

6. Smart watches/Smart glasses

We recognise that smart watches/glasses are increasingly common amongst primary-aged children.

Children may wear an ordinary watch or glasses.

However, children must not use a smart watch/glass during the school day to:

- make or receive calls;
- send or receive messages;
- access the internet;
- take photographs;
- make video or audio recordings;
- receive social media or other online notifications; or
- communicate with parents or anybody else.

Where a smart watch has these functions, parents should place the device into an appropriate **school mode** which prevents communication during school hours.

Where this cannot be done, the school may require the device to be handed in alongside mobile phones.

7. Contacting your child during the school day

Parents should **not call, message or contact their child directly on a mobile phone or smart watch during the school day.**

If you need to get an urgent message to your child, please contact the school office.

We will always ensure that an important message reaches your child.

Likewise, if a child needs to contact home during the school day, a member of staff will arrange this through the school office.

This is particularly important in a primary school because children can become worried or upset by messages received from home and may need appropriate adult support.

8. Medical, SEND and safeguarding exceptions

There may be a small number of children for whom access to a phone or smart device is necessary.

This may include children who:

- use a device to manage a medical condition;
- use assistive technology;
- have particular SEND or disability-related needs;
- have an individual safeguarding need; or
- have exceptional personal circumstances.

The Headteacher will consider these situations individually.

Where appropriate, the school will make reasonable adjustments.

An individual agreement may set out:

- what device can be used;
- why it is required;

- when it can be accessed;
- which functions may be used;
- where it will be stored; and
- which staff need to be aware of the arrangement.

A medical or SEND exception will never be removed as a punishment where doing so would place a child at risk or prevent them from accessing an agreed reasonable adjustment.

9. If a child uses a phone without permission

If a child is found using or accessing a mobile phone or smart device without permission, a member of staff will normally confiscate it.

The device will be stored securely.

Depending upon the circumstances, it may:

- be returned to the child at the end of the school day; or
- need to be collected by a parent.

Parents will be informed where appropriate.

Repeated breaches will be dealt with in accordance with the school's Behaviour Policy.

When responding to an incident, staff will take account of:

- the child's age;
- SEND or disability;
- the reason the child had the device;
- whether this is a repeated incident; and
- whether there are any safeguarding concerns.

Our response will always be reasonable and proportionate.

10. Photography and recording

Children must never use a personal device to photograph, video or audio-record another child or adult at school.

This includes photographs or recordings made:

- in classrooms;
- on the playground;
- in toilets or changing areas;
- during clubs;
- on school trips; or
- anywhere else where the child is under the school's supervision.

Taking an unauthorised photograph or recording will be treated seriously.

Where the incident may involve bullying, inappropriate images, harassment or another safeguarding concern, it will be referred immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).

11. Safeguarding concerns involving phones

Sometimes the use of a phone may indicate a safeguarding concern rather than simply poor behaviour.

Examples could include:

- online bullying;
- threatening or abusive messages;
- inappropriate contact from another person;
- grooming;
- inappropriate or sexual content;
- sharing photographs without permission;
- nude or semi-nude images;
- harmful online challenges;
- exploitation;
- coercion;
- inappropriate social media use; or
- a child being frightened or distressed by something they have seen or received online.

Where staff have a safeguarding concern, they will follow the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and report the concern to the DSL or Deputy DSL without delay.

Safeguarding will always take priority over a behaviour sanction.

A child who reports something that has happened on their phone or online will be listened to and supported, even where they have broken the school's rules by using the device.

12. Looking at content on a child's phone

Staff will not routinely search through children's phones, messages, photographs or online accounts.

If there is reason to believe that a phone contains material relating to a safeguarding concern, staff will seek advice from the DSL or Headteacher.

Particular care will be taken where there is concern about nude or semi-nude images of a child.

Staff must not unnecessarily view, copy, forward or share such images.

The DSL will follow current safeguarding guidance and seek advice from other agencies, including children's social care or the police, where appropriate.

13. Searching and confiscation

Where appropriate, authorised members of staff may confiscate a mobile phone or other device where its possession or use breaches this policy or the school's Behaviour Policy.

The Headteacher and appropriately authorised staff may also search for a device where permitted by law and in accordance with current DfE guidance.

Any search or confiscation will be reasonable, proportionate and appropriate to the child's age and individual circumstances.

Where an incident raises a safeguarding concern, the DSL will be informed.

14. Online behaviour outside school

Parents have primary responsibility for children's use of personal devices outside school.

However, online behaviour outside school can sometimes affect children when they return to school.

The school may therefore become involved where online behaviour:

- involves pupils from the school;
- constitutes bullying;
- threatens or intimidates another child;
- creates a safeguarding concern;
- significantly affects a child's wellbeing;
- causes disruption within school; or
- affects the safe and orderly running of the school.

We will work with parents to resolve concerns and safeguard the children involved.

Serious safeguarding concerns will be managed in accordance with the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

15. School trips

For normal school-day educational visits, children should not bring mobile phones unless the school has specifically stated otherwise.

There is normally no need for primary-aged children to carry a phone on a school trip because school staff have appropriate methods of communication.

Separate arrangements may be made for residential visits.

Before a residential visit, parents will be clearly informed whether:

- phones are not permitted;
- phones may be brought but will be stored by staff; or
- phones may be used at agreed times.

Any arrangements will prioritise children's safety, wellbeing and enjoyment of the visit.

16. Before- and after-school clubs

Where a child attends a school-run before- or after-school club, the school's mobile phone expectations continue to apply.

A phone brought to school for travelling purposes should remain switched off and stored securely until the child leaves the school's care.

Different arrangements may apply to activities run by external organisations hiring the school premises. Parents should refer to the provider's own arrangements.

17. Staff mobile phones

Adults are important role models for children.

Staff should therefore avoid using personal mobile phones for personal purposes in front of pupils during the school day.

Personal phones should normally be kept securely away while staff are working with children.

There may be legitimate reasons for staff to access a personal phone, including:

- an emergency;
- multi-factor authentication;
- school-related communication;
- an educational visit;
- health and safety;
- an agreed personal circumstance; or
- another authorised professional purpose.

Staff must never use a personal device to photograph or record pupils unless specifically authorised in accordance with school procedures.

Staff must not communicate privately with pupils using personal telephone numbers, messaging applications or social media accounts.

Concerns regarding a member of staff's use of technology will be managed through the school's safeguarding procedures and Staff Code of Conduct.

18. Parents and visitors

We ask parents and visitors to support our mobile phone-free culture.

Parents and visitors should not photograph or record children on school premises unless the school has specifically permitted this.

At events such as performances, assemblies or sports days, the school will explain the arrangements for photography and recording.

Visitors working directly with children must follow the school's safeguarding expectations regarding personal devices.

19. Teaching children to stay safe online

Being a mobile phone-free primary school does not mean ignoring mobile phones or the online world.

An important part of primary education is preparing children to use technology safely and responsibly as they grow older.

Through Computing, RSHE/PSHE, assemblies and other curriculum opportunities, children will learn about age-appropriate topics including:

- keeping personal information private;
- appropriate online behaviour;
- online friendships;
- cyberbullying;
- asking an adult for help;
- inappropriate content;
- photographs and consent;
- scams and misleading information;
- age restrictions;
- healthy use of technology;
- digital footprints;
- gaming and communication;
- social media;
- AI-generated content; and
- what to do if something online makes them uncomfortable or worried.

Our message to children is simple:

If something happens online that worries you, tell an adult you trust.

20. Responsibilities

The Headteacher will:

- ensure the school maintains a mobile phone-free environment;
- ensure expectations are clearly communicated;
- make decisions about individual exceptions;
- ensure the policy is applied fairly and consistently; and
- ensure staff understand their responsibilities.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead will:

- provide advice about safeguarding concerns involving devices;
- ensure relevant online safety issues are addressed;
- monitor patterns in online safeguarding incidents;
- ensure staff know how to report concerns; and
- ensure appropriate safeguarding action is taken.

Staff will:

- apply the policy consistently;
- model appropriate use of technology;
- report safeguarding concerns immediately;
- support children who raise online concerns; and
- ensure confiscated devices are stored securely.

Parents will:

- avoid sending their child to school with a phone unless there is a genuine need;
- ensure their child understands the school's expectations;
- ensure smart watches are placed into an appropriate school mode;
- contact the school office rather than their child's personal device during the school day;

- tell the school about any medical, SEND or safeguarding need requiring an exception; and
- work with the school where concerns arise about their child's online behaviour.

Pupils will:

- not bring a phone to school unless they have permission;
- switch off and hand in/store their phone as instructed;
- not use a phone or smart device during the school day;
- never photograph or record somebody without permission; and
- tell an adult if something happens online that worries them.

21. Equality and reasonable adjustments

The school will apply this policy fairly and sensitively.

We recognise that some children with SEND, disabilities or medical conditions may require different arrangements.

Reasonable adjustments will be considered on an individual basis in accordance with the Equality Act 2010 and other relevant legislation.

22. Monitoring

The Headteacher and DSL will monitor the effectiveness of this policy.

This may include considering:

- incidents involving phones;
- repeated breaches;
- online safeguarding incidents;
- feedback from pupils, parents and staff;
- SEND and medical exceptions; and
- emerging technology and online risks.

Significant patterns or concerns will be reported to governors through the school's existing safeguarding and behaviour monitoring arrangements.

23. Review

This policy will be reviewed annually or earlier if:

- national guidance changes;
 - legislation changes;
 - a safeguarding review identifies a need for change; or
 - new technology creates additional risks.
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Appendix 1 – Our Rules for Children

Mobile Phones at Our School

Our school is a **mobile phone-free school**.

Remember:

1. You should not normally bring a phone to school.
2. If you need to bring one, it must be switched off and handed in/stored in the agreed place.
3. You cannot use your phone during the school day.
4. Smart watches must not be used for calling, messaging, taking photographs or going online.
5. Never take a photograph or video of somebody without permission.
6. If you need to speak to somebody at home, tell an adult.
7. If something happens online that makes you worried, upset or uncomfortable, **tell an adult you trust**.

You can always tell us if something has gone wrong online. We will listen and help.

Appendix 2 – Parent Summary

Mobile Phones at Burnham-on-Crouch Primary School

We are a **mobile phone-free primary school**.

Children should not normally bring mobile phones to school.

We recognise that some older children may need a phone because they walk to or from school independently.

If your child needs to bring a phone:

Before school → Switch it off → Hand it in/store it securely → Collect it when leaving school.

Children cannot access their phones during lessons, breaktime or lunchtime.

Please do not contact your child directly on a phone or smart watch during the school day. Contact the school office and we will ensure that your child receives any important message.

Smart watches may be worn where permitted, but communication, internet, camera and recording functions must not be accessible during the school day.

Individual arrangements will be made where a child needs access to technology because of a **medical condition, SEND, disability or safeguarding need**.

Our aim is simple:

Children come to school to learn, play, talk and build relationships in a safe environment without the distraction of mobile phones.