MK Sapphire Federation

Mobile Phone Policy

1. Introduction and aims

At the MK Sapphire Federation, our Mobile Phone policy aims to:

- Ensure our environment is mobile phone-free by default
- Ensure the safe, responsible and lawful use of mobile phones, where applicable
- Provide clear guidelines for the use of mobile phones for pupils, staff, parents/carers, visitors and volunteers
- Support the school's other policies, especially those related to child protection and behaviour

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

- Risks to child protection
- Data protection issues
- Risk of theft, loss or damage
- Appropriate use of technology for learning purposes

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

2. Relevant guidance

This policy meets the requirements of section 36 of the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act 2026, and the Department for Education (DfE)'s mobile phone guidance and behaviour guidance. Further guidance that should be considered alongside this policy includes Keeping Children Safe in Education, which sets out the expectation that all schools should be mobile phone-free environments by default.

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 Staff

All staff (including teachers, support staff and supply staff) are required to actively enforce this policy and challenge any breach of mobile phone restrictions immediately and consistently. 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 Executive Headteacher is responsible for monitoring the policy and reviewing it every two years and holding staff and pupils accountable for its implementation.

Staff will address any questions or concerns from parents/carers quickly and clearly and communicate the reasons for prohibiting the use of mobile phones.

4. Use of mobile phones by staff

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 during the school day, while pupils are present. Use of personal mobile phones must be restricted to non-contact time, and to areas of the school where pupils 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. The Executive Headteacher will decide on a case-by-basis whether to allow for special arrangements.

If special arrangements are not deemed necessary, school staff can use the school office numbers as a point of emergency contact at either 01908 312912 (Pepper Hill) or 01908 221242 (Stanton).

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 Gemini).

For more detailed guidance on data protection please see the Federation's Data Protection on the school websites.

4.3 Safeguarding

Staff must not give their personal contact details to parents/carers or pupils, including by 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 pupils.

For more detailed guidance on the MK Sapphire Federation's Online Safety policy or the Parent Code of Conduct please see the school websites.

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

4.4 Using personal mobiles for work purposes

In some circumstances, it may be appropriate for staff to use personal mobile phones or a similar device during the school day in front of pupils for work. Such circumstances may include, but are not limited to:

- Use of multi-factor authentication
- Emergency evacuations
- Supervising off-site visits
- 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 pupils, their work, or anything else that could identify a pupil
- Refrain from using their phones to contact parents/carers. If necessary, contact must be made via the school office

Please see the MK Sapphire Federation's Educational Visits policy on the school websites.

4.5 Sanctions

Staff that fail to adhere to this policy may face disciplinary action. Please see the Federation's staff disciplinary policy for more information.

5. Use of mobile phones by pupils

Pupils must not use their mobile phones during the school day, including during lessons, in the time between lessons, at breaktimes and at lunchtimes, unless explicitly authorised by a member of staff (for example, for a specific medical reason).

Pupils will be taught the risks that are associated with the use of mobile phones, both in school and more broadly, to make sure they understand the decision to prohibit the use of mobile phones throughout the school day. These risks can include a loss of focus in lessons, classroom disruption and an increase in bullying. Pupils will be encouraged to see a mobile-phone free environment as desirable and valuable.

5.1 The school may permit pupils to use a mobile phone in school, due to exceptional circumstances.

- Some pupils are allowed to bring a mobile phone to be used on their journey to and from school. For example, pupils travelling to school by themselves
- Some pupils will be permitted to possess, or use, a mobile phone/smart device in school
- Young carers who need to be contactable
- Pupils with diabetes who use their phones to monitor their blood glucose levels

In the case of permission due to exceptional circumstances, permission will only be granted where there is a documented safeguarding or medical necessity. To request such permission, pupils or parents/carers should speak to the school office.

Any pupils who are given permission must then adhere to the school's Mobile Phone Permission form (appendix 1).

5.2 Use of smartwatches by pupils

The DfE's statutory mobile phones guidance includes in the term 'mobile phones' all devices with communications and smart technology that the school chooses to include in its policy.

Smartwatches are wristwatches with smart technology in them. They can be used to tell the time, send and receive text and voice messages, make calls and listen to music. Some smartwatches have wellness and health-related features.

The MK Sapphire Federation does not allow pupils to have smartwatches on the school premises and, if brought onto site, these will be confiscated under sections 91 and 94 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006)

5.3 Sanctions

- Any mobile phone or smartwatch which is brought onto the school premises will be confiscated under sections 91 and 94 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006
- Any phones/smartwatches which have been confiscated, must be collected by the parent/carer at the end of the school day by coming to the school office. Headteachers

can confiscate mobile phones and similar devices for the length of time they deem proportionate, according to the DfE's guidance on mobile phones in schools

Staff have the power to search pupils' phones in specific circumstances, as set out in the DfE's guidance on searching, screening and confiscation. The DfE guidance allows staff to search a pupil's phone if there is a good reason to do so (such as having reason to believe the phone contains pornographic images, or if it is being / has been used to commit an offence or cause harm to another person).

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 (SEN), disability)
- The pupil'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 Keeping Children Safe in Education. This will include speaking with the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) or deputy, who will consider whether pastoral support, an early intervention, or a referral to children's social care is appropriate

Such conduct includes, but is not limited to:

- Making of or sharing nudes and semi-nudes including images that are digitally altered or wholly generated using AI (such as 'deepfakes' or 'deep nudes')
- Upskirting
- Threats of violence or assault
- Abusive calls, emails, social media posts or texts directed at someone on the basis of someone's ethnicity, religious beliefs or sexual orientation

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

Parents and carers are encouraged to reinforce and discuss this policy at home as appropriate, including the risks associated with mobile phone use and the benefits of a mobile phone-free environment.

Parents/carers, visitors and volunteers (including governors 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 pupils, 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, when working with pupils or while children are present

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 or volunteers supervising school visits or residential visits must not:

- Use their phone to make contact with other parents/carers
- Take photos or recordings of pupils, their work, or anything else that could identify a pupil

Parents/carers or volunteers supervising visits are also responsible for enforcing the school's policy for pupils using their phones, but must refer any proposed sanctions to a member of staff, as they do not have the power to search or confiscate devices.

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

Pupils bringing mobile phones to school must make sure that their phones are appropriately labelled, ready to be stored away securely in the front office when not in use during the school day.

Pupils 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 visits, or while pupils are travelling to or from school.

We will make sure pupils and parents/carers are aware of the disclaimer above by;

- Puttiing signs up in the school entrance or office
- Including a disclaimer in the permission forms for bringing a phone to school
- Including a disclaimer in the home-school agreement (if you have one)
- Providing a copy of this policy and disclaimer to new pupils and parents/carers

Confiscated phones will be stored in the school office in a secure locked cabinet.

Lost phones should be returned to the school office. The school will then attempt to contact the owner.

10. Appendix 1: Permission form allowing a pupil to bring their phone to school

Mobile Phone Permission

Pupil name:	
Year group/class:	

Parent/Carer Declaration
I give permission for my child to bring a mobile phone to school because they walk to and/or from school independently.

I understand and agree that:

- My child may only bring a mobile phone to school if this permission form has been completed and approved.
- The mobile phone must be switched off before entering the school site.
- On arrival, my child must hand the phone to the school office, where it will be stored securely during the school day.
- My child must collect the phone from the school office at the end of the school day before leaving the school site.
- The phone remains the responsibility of my child and our family.
- The phone must not be used anywhere on the school site unless authorised by a member of staff.
- Failure to follow these expectations may result in permission being withdrawn.

Reason for requesting permission:

	Travel to and from school independently
	Are a young carer
	Need the phone to support their medical needs

Pupils who bring a mobile phone to school must abide by the school's policy on the use of mobile phones, and its acceptable use agreement.

The school reserves the right to revoke permission if a pupil does not abide by the policy.

Parent/Carer Details

Name	
Signature	
Date	

School Use Only

Permission Approved	Yes		No	
Date Approved				
Member of Staff				
Signature				