



Stebbing Primary School

Mobile Phone & Communication Policy

Created/updated:	March 2026
Due for review:	March 2028

1. Statement of Intent

Stebbing Primary School aims to maintain a mobile-free learning environment for pupils during the school day to promote focus, wellbeing and positive social interaction

This policy sets out clear guidance regarding the use of mobile phones and smart devices to:

- Protect children from harm
- Safeguard staff from allegations
- Reduce disruption to learning
- Prevent misuse of technology
- Ensure compliance with statutory safeguarding and data protection duties

This policy must be read alongside:

- Safeguarding Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Behaviour Policy
- E-Safety Policy
- Data Protection Policy

2. Scope

This policy applies to:

- All Staff
- Governors
- Volunteers
- Students on placement
- Contractors
- Visitors
- Parents and carers
- Pupils

The term “mobile device” includes mobile phones, smartphones, tablets and any device capable of recording, storing or transmitting images or data.

3. Safeguarding Principles

Under statutory safeguarding guidance, schools must ensure:

- Clear professional boundaries
- Appropriate use of technology
- Prompt reporting of concerns
- Safe handling of indecent images
- Effective filtering and monitoring systems

Any safeguarding concern arising from mobile phone use must be reported immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or Deputy DSL.

4. Staff Use of Personal Mobile Devices

4.1 General Expectations

Staff must:

- Keep personal devices switched off or on silent during contact time
- Keep devices out of sight when children are present
- Use devices only during non-contact time and in areas where pupils are not present

Staff must not:

- Use personal devices to photograph, film or record pupils
- Communicate with pupils via personal numbers, social media or messaging apps
- Store pupil personal data on personal devices
- Share confidential school information via personal messaging platforms

All school-related communication must take place via approved school systems.

4.2 Exceptional Circumstances

The Headteacher may authorise limited use of a personal device during contact time for:

- Emergency family situations
- Medical appointments
- Critical medical needs
- 2-factor authentication for secure systems
- Any other emergencies

4.3 Communication Platforms

Approved communication systems:

- School email
- Google Chat via school-managed devices during school hours (08:30-15:10)
- Stebbing Staff Whatsapp outside of school hours

If WhatsApp is used for operational messaging, it must:

- Not contain pupil personal data
- Not be used for safeguarding concerns
- Not replace official school communication systems

Safeguarding concerns must never be shared via WhatsApp.

4.4 Educational Visits

- **Photography:**
 - Use school-issued iPads to take photos. Personal mobile phones can only be used to take photos of students if no school devices are available.
 - Before departure, the Trip Leader must cross-reference the group list with the School Image Consent Register. Ensure students with "No Photo" status are not included in any shots.
 - Photos must be transferred to the school's secure drive immediately upon return. Images must then be deleted from the portable device.
- **Emergency Communications:**
 - The Trip Phone: The Lead Teacher must carry a fully charged mobile phone at all times. This is the primary point of contact for the School Office.
 - Incoming Emergency Calls: If a parent needs to reach their child, they will call the School Office (or the designated SLT Out-of-Hours contact). They will then relay the message to the Trip Phone.
 - Outgoing Student Calls: If a student or member of staff needs to contact home they may only use a staff members' mobile phone under direct staff supervision.
 - Personal Staff Use: Staff should lead by example. Avoid using personal phones for non-urgent matters in front of students to reinforce the school's "unplugged" policy.
- **Volunteers:**
 - Personal phones to be kept on silent and out of view. If they must take a call, they should notify a staff member and step away from the student group.
 - Volunteers are not permitted to take photos of any students (including their own

children) on personal devices.

- Any emergencies or behavioral issues must be reported directly to a staff member rather than the parent calling the school or other parents themselves.

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5. Data Protection & Confidentiality

All staff must comply with:

- Data Protection Act 2018
- UK GDPR

Staff must not:

- Download, store or share pupil data on personal devices
- Use personal cloud storage for school documents
- Photograph safeguarding records

Any data breach must be reported immediately to the Headteacher.

6. Use of School Devices

Photographs and recordings of pupils must only be taken using school-owned devices.

- Images must be:
 - Transferred securely to school systems
 - Deleted from devices once uploaded

6.1. Exceptional Use of Personal Devices for Photography

Staff may only use a personal device to take photographs of pupils in exceptional circumstances where:

- No school device is available, and
- Authorisation has been given by the Headteacher.

In such circumstances:

- Images must be transferred immediately to a secure school system.
- Images must be permanently deleted from the personal device straight away.
- Cloud backup must be disabled.
- Images must not be shared via personal messaging services.
- A record of authorisation must be made.

Under no circumstances may personal devices be used to take images of:

- Intimate care situations
- Pupils in a state of undress
- Safeguarding incidents

Failure to follow this procedure may result in disciplinary action.

7. Pupils' Mobile Phones

7.1 Bringing Phones to School

Pupils may bring a mobile phone only if:

- They walk to or from school independently
- Parental permission has been provided

On arrival:

- Phones must be switched off
- Phones must be handed to the school office

- Devices will be stored securely

While reasonable care will be taken, the school cannot guarantee against loss or damage.

7.2 Use During the School Day

Pupils must not:

- Use mobile phones on school premises
- Access social media during school hours
- Use recording functions

Phones are not permitted on school trips unless explicitly authorised.

8. Searching and Confiscation

In line with statutory powers under the Education and Inspections Act 2006:

- The Headteacher and authorised staff may search a pupil's device where there is reasonable suspicion of prohibited material.
- Searches will be conducted proportionately and lawfully.

Where there is reason to believe a device contains:

- Indecent images of children
- Evidence of criminal activity
- Material posing a safeguarding risk

The device will be:

- Secured immediately
- Not viewed unless absolutely necessary
- Referred to the DSL
- Potentially handed to the police

Staff will follow national guidance on handling such incidents.

9. Cyberbullying & Off-Site Behaviour

The school may apply disciplinary measures for off-site behaviour involving mobile phones where it:

- Poses a threat to another pupil
- Affects school discipline
- Damages the reputation of the school

Serious incidents may involve the police or external agencies.

10. Volunteers, Visitors & Contractors

All visitors must:

- Keep mobile phones on silent
- Not photograph or record pupils
- Follow safeguarding signage and visitor guidance
- Keep devices out of sight when children are present

Failure to comply may result in removal from the site.

11. Parents and Carers

Parents are asked to:

- Use mobile phones courteously on site
- Refrain from video calling while on school premises

- Only photograph or film during designated events

Parents must not:

- Publish images of children other than their own
- Record staff without permission

The school cannot control how parents share images externally but will set clear expectations at events

12. Low-Level Concerns

Any concern about adult conduct involving mobile phone use must be reported to:

- The Headteacher or Assistant Headteachers
- The Chair of Governors (if concerning the Headteacher)

Reports will be handled in line with safeguarding procedures.

13. Breaches of This Policy

Breaches by:

- Staff → Managed under disciplinary procedures
- Pupils → Managed under Behaviour Policy
- Visitors → May result in removal from site

Serious breaches may result in referral to external agencies.

14. Monitoring and Review

This policy will be:

- Reviewed annually by governors
- Updated in line with statutory changes
- Communicated to all staff
- Published on the school website