LITTLE WALTHAM
C.E.V.A. Primary School

Aspiring to inspire others towards excellence, developing as individuals together in a distinctively Christian environment.

1 Corinthians, 12:14 “For the body is not one member, but many”.

Mobile Phone and Smart Device Policy

Little Waltham C.E.V.A. Primary School

Policy owner	Headteacher
Approved by	Autumn 2026
Date approved	Autumn 2026
Last reviewed	New policy
Next review due	Autumn 2027
Review cycle	At least annually, or sooner if guidance or school practice changes

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At a glance: the pupil rules

- Pupils must not bring smartphones to school. The school operates a no-smartphone rule for pupils.
- A pupil who needs a phone for independent travel to or from school may, with prior school permission, bring an approved basic mobile phone.
- For this policy, an approved basic mobile phone is a calls-and-SMS device without internet browsing, social media, an app store, email, messaging apps or other smart functionality.
- Approved phones must be switched off before the pupil enters the school site, handed to the school office on arrival, and collected when the pupil leaves for the day.
- Pupils may not use a phone during the school day. Communication-enabled smartwatches and other connected wearables are not permitted.
- Parents/carers who need to contact a child during the school day must do so through the school office.

1. Introduction and aims

Mobile phones are part of everyday life, but unrestricted access to connected devices during the school day can create safeguarding, privacy, distraction and behaviour risks. As a primary school, Little Waltham C.E.V.A. Primary School seeks to provide a calm, safe and purposeful environment in which pupils can focus on learning, relationships and play.

This policy establishes a clear and consistent approach to mobile phones and smart devices. In particular, it sets out the school's no-smartphone rule for pupils while allowing a tightly controlled, practical arrangement for children who genuinely need a simple phone for the journey to or from school.

The policy aims to:

- protect pupils' safeguarding, privacy and wellbeing;
- reduce distraction and disruption during the school day;
- set clear expectations for pupils, staff, parents/carers, volunteers and visitors;
- support the school's Behaviour Policy, Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, Online Safety Policy, Data Protection arrangements and Staff Code of Conduct; and
- provide a proportionate process for exceptional circumstances.

2. Scope and definitions

This policy applies on the school site and, where relevant, during school-led activities, trips, clubs and visits. Different arrangements may be authorised by the Headteacher for a specific activity where this is necessary and has been communicated in advance.

2.1 Smartphone

A smartphone is a mobile telephone with internet connectivity and/or the ability to run apps or smart services, for example web browsing, social media, email, app-based messaging, games, location-sharing or similar connected functions. Pupil smartphones are not permitted in school.

2.2 Basic mobile phone (non-smart phone)

The school uses the term “basic mobile phone” for a simple handset whose essential functions are voice calls and SMS text messages. Some retailers use the term “feature phone” for non-smartphone handsets; however, because some feature phones include internet or app functions, the school decides suitability by the device’s actual capabilities rather than its marketing label.

For a pupil device to be approved under this policy, it must not provide internet browsing, social media, an app store, email, app-based messaging or other smart/connected functionality. If the handset includes a camera, audio recorder or similar function, it must not be used on the school site.

2.3 Smart device

For this policy, a smart device includes communication-enabled smartwatches, connected wearables and any other personal device capable of calls, messages, internet access, app use, recording or communication with another device.

3. Relevant guidance and linked school policies

This policy has been written with regard to Department for Education guidance on mobile phones in schools and behaviour, and should be read alongside the current edition of Keeping Children Safe in Education. Where a device is searched or confiscated, the school will follow the relevant Department for Education guidance and its own behaviour and safeguarding procedures.

This policy should be read alongside the school’s current:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy;
- Behaviour Policy;
- Online Safety / Acceptable Use Policy;
- Data Protection Policy and privacy arrangements;
- Staff Code of Conduct; and
- Educational Visits procedures, where relevant.

4. Roles and responsibilities

4.1 Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for the implementation and day-to-day oversight of this policy, including decisions about exceptions, reasonable adjustments, sanctions and the suitability of a proposed pupil device.

4.2 Staff

All staff, including supply staff, support staff and adults working on behalf of the school, are expected to apply the policy consistently. Any safeguarding concern involving a phone or smart device must be reported promptly in accordance with the school’s safeguarding procedures.

4.3 Governing Body

The Governing Body provides strategic oversight and will receive the policy for approval or review in line with the school's policy cycle. Governors visiting the school are expected to follow the visitor requirements in section 7.

5. Use of mobile phones by staff

5.1 Personal mobile phones

Staff may bring personal mobile phones to work, but personal use must not interfere with professional duties or model inappropriate phone use to pupils. Personal phones should be kept out of sight and used only during non-contact time in staff-only areas, such as the staffroom.

The Headteacher may agree an individual arrangement where a member of staff needs to remain contactable for an urgent personal reason. Families should normally use the school office as the point of emergency contact during the working day.

5.2 Safeguarding, images and data

- Staff must not use a personal phone to take photographs, video or audio recordings of pupils, pupils' work or material that could identify a pupil. School-approved equipment must be used for this purpose.
- Staff must not use personal mobile phones to store or process confidential school information or personal data, or upload such information to personal accounts, personal cloud services or generative AI tools.
- Staff must not give pupils or parents/carers personal mobile numbers or use personal messaging or social-media accounts to communicate with them, except where a specific school-authorised arrangement exists.

5.3 Authorised work use

There may be limited occasions when the Headteacher authorises personal or school-issued mobile phone use for work purposes, for example multi-factor authentication, emergency arrangements, off-site visits or residential activities. Any such use must remain professional, proportionate and consistent with safeguarding and data protection expectations.

5.4 Breaches by staff

Failure by a member of staff to follow this policy may be addressed under the school's Staff Code of Conduct and, where appropriate, its disciplinary procedures.

6. Use of mobile phones and smart devices by pupils

Core rule

- Pupils are not permitted to bring smartphones to school.
- Pupils must not use a personal mobile phone or smart device during the school day.
- The only routine exception is an approved basic mobile phone for a pupil who needs a means of contact when travelling independently to or from school.

6.1 Smartphones are not permitted

A pupil must not bring a smartphone onto the school site, including in a bag, coat or locker. This applies during the school day and to breakfast club and after-school provision unless the Headteacher has authorised an individual exception in writing for a specific medical, disability or safeguarding reason under section 6.4.

A smartphone must not be brought to school merely because it is the device available at home. Where a pupil needs a phone for the journey to or from school, parents/carers should provide an approved basic mobile phone instead.

6.2 Approved basic mobile phones for independent travel

The school may give prior permission for a pupil to bring a basic mobile phone where the pupil travels to and/or from school independently and the family reasonably needs a simple means of contact for that journey. Permission is not automatic and must be requested using Appendix B or another written process agreed by the school.

Where permission is granted:

- the device must meet the definition of an approved basic mobile phone in section 2.2;
- the phone must be clearly labelled with the pupil's name;
- the phone must be switched off before the pupil enters the school site;
- the pupil must hand the phone to the school office immediately on arrival;
- the school will store the phone in a secure location during the day;
- the phone will be returned when the pupil leaves school or school-run after-school provision for the day;
- the pupil must not use the phone anywhere on the school site unless a member of staff specifically directs them to do so in an emergency; and
- parents/carers remain responsible for ensuring that the phone continues to meet the school's requirements.

The school may inspect the make/model and basic functions of a proposed device before granting permission. A device that includes smart features will not be approved, even if those features are rarely used or have been disabled temporarily.

6.3 Smartwatches and connected wearables

Communication-enabled smartwatches and connected wearables are not permitted for pupils. This includes devices that can make or receive calls, send or receive messages, connect to the internet, take photographs or recordings, or pair with another device for communication. An ordinary watch, or a non-communicating activity tracker, may be worn subject to normal school rules.

6.4 Exceptional medical, disability, SEND or safeguarding circumstances

The school recognises that an individual pupil may have a documented medical, disability, SEND or safeguarding need that requires a different arrangement. The Headteacher will consider such requests case by case, in consultation with parents/carers and relevant professionals where appropriate. Any agreed reasonable adjustment will be recorded clearly, including when, where and how the device may be used and stored.

This provision is not a general exception to the school's no-smartphone rule. Any smart device authorised for an individual need must be used only in accordance with the agreed plan.

6.5 Breaches and sanctions

Responses will be reasonable and proportionate, and will take account of the pupil's age, needs and any relevant safeguarding circumstances. The school's Behaviour Policy will apply.

- If a pupil brings a smartphone or unauthorised smart device to school, a member of staff will take the device for secure storage in the school office. The parent/carer will be informed and will normally be asked to collect it.
- If a pupil with permission for a basic phone fails to hand it in, switches it on or uses it during the school day, the phone may be confiscated and the parent/carer informed. The school may require parent/carer collection.
- Repeated or deliberate breaches may lead to permission to bring a basic mobile phone being withdrawn.
- Any use of a device for bullying, harassment, recording, inappropriate content or another safeguarding concern will be dealt with under the relevant behaviour and safeguarding procedures and may be referred to external agencies where appropriate.

7. Parents/carers, volunteers and visitors

Adults on the school site are expected to model safe and respectful mobile phone use. Parents/carers, visitors, volunteers, governors and contractors must follow staff instructions and the requirements below while pupils are present.

- Keep personal phones on silent or vibrate and avoid using them in pupil-facing areas.
- Do not take photographs, video or audio recordings of pupils or staff unless the school has explicitly permitted this for a particular event or purpose.
- Where photography is permitted at a school event, use images for personal purposes only and do not publish identifiable images of other children without appropriate consent.
- Do not use a phone while working directly with pupils unless specifically authorised by a member of staff.
- Use the school office as the first point of contact if you need to send an urgent message to your child during the school day.
- Adults helping on trips or visits must not use personal phones to photograph pupils or to contact other parents/carers on the school's behalf unless specifically authorised.

Visitors will be informed of these expectations through reception procedures, staff instructions and/or the quick guide in Appendix C.

8. Loss, theft and damage

A permitted basic mobile phone is brought to school at the owner's risk. Parents/carers should ensure that the device is clearly labelled and of modest value. The school will take reasonable care of devices that have been handed in or confiscated and will store them securely in the school office.

The school cannot accept responsibility for loss, theft or damage to a phone while a pupil is travelling to or from school or where the device has not been handed in as required. Any lost phone found on the school site should be given to the school office so that reasonable efforts can be made to identify the owner.

9. Safeguarding concerns involving a device

Where staff have reason to believe that a phone or smart device is connected to a safeguarding concern, harmful content, bullying, harassment, an offence or another serious incident, staff will follow the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and relevant Department for Education guidance. The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and/or Headteacher will determine the appropriate next steps.

Staff will not routinely search the contents of a pupil's device. Any search, examination, confiscation or referral will only take place where there is a lawful and proportionate basis to do so and in accordance with current guidance and school procedures.

10. Monitoring and review

The Headteacher will monitor how effectively this policy is working, including patterns of breaches, safeguarding incidents, practical issues with storage and feedback from staff, pupils and parents/carers. The policy will be reviewed at least annually, or sooner where national guidance, safeguarding practice or the school's circumstances change.

Questions or concerns about this policy should be raised with the Headteacher through the school office.

Appendix A: Pupil and parent/carer agreement

This agreement applies to any pupil who has been given permission to bring an approved basic mobile phone to school for independent travel or another authorised reason.

I understand that:

- I may bring only the basic mobile phone that the school has approved. I must not bring a smartphone.
- The phone is for the journey to or from school, not for use during the school day.
- I will switch the phone off before I enter the school site.
- I will hand the phone to the school office as soon as I arrive.
- I will collect the phone only when I leave school or school-run after-school provision for the day.
- I will not use the phone to take photographs, video or audio recordings on the school site.
- I will follow any instruction from a member of staff about the phone.
- If I do not follow these rules, the phone may be confiscated and my permission to bring it to school may be withdrawn.

Pupil name	_____
Class / year group	_____
Parent/carer name	_____
Pupil signature	_____
Parent/carer signature	_____

Date: _____

Appendix B: Permission request for an approved basic mobile phone

Use this form where a parent/carer asks for a pupil to bring a basic mobile phone to school. Permission must be granted before the device is brought onto the school site.

Pupil name: _____

Class / year group: _____

Parent/carer name: _____

Parent/carer contact number: _____

Reason for request

☐ The pupil travels to and/or from school independently and needs a simple means of contact for the journey.

☐ Another exceptional safeguarding or family circumstance agreed with the Headteacher (please explain below).

Details: _____

_____

Device details

Make / model: _____

Mobile number (if known): _____

Parent/carer declaration

☐ I confirm that the device is not a smartphone.

☐ I confirm that the device does not provide internet browsing, social media, an app store, email, app-based messaging or other smart functionality.

☐ I understand that the phone must be switched off and handed to the school office on arrival each day.

☐ I understand that permission may be withdrawn if the policy is not followed.

Parent/carer signature: _____ Date: _____

For school use only

Permission	☐ Approved ☐ Not approved
Authorised by	_____
Date	_____
Any individual conditions	_____

Appendix C: Visitor quick guide

This page may be displayed at reception or adapted as a visitor information slip.

MOBILE PHONES AND SMART DEVICES IN OUR SCHOOL

Thank you for helping us keep pupils safe and focused.

- Keep your phone on silent or vibrate while on the school site.
- Please avoid using your phone where pupils are present.
- Do not take photographs, video or audio recordings of pupils or staff unless the school has explicitly permitted this for a particular event or purpose.
- Do not use a personal phone while working directly with pupils unless a member of staff has authorised it.
- If you need to make an urgent call, please ask reception where you may do so.
- Parents/carers should contact the school office if they need to send an urgent message to their child during the school day.

A full copy of the policy is available from the school office.