

# Bill Quay Primary School



## Mobile Phone and Smart Device Policy

## Purpose of this policy

Bill Quay Primary School is committed to a calm, safe and supportive environment where pupils can learn free from distraction and online harms. In line with the Department for Education's guidance, our school operates as a **mobile phone-free environment by default**, covering **lessons, transitions, break and lunch**.

The DfE document *Mobile phones in schools* (updated **19 January 2026**) is **non-statutory**, but sets a clear expectation that schools prohibit pupil mobile phone use throughout the school day. Schools retain discretion to set and apply a policy with limited, needs-based exceptions.

## Scope and definitions

- Mobile phone: any device capable of calls, messaging or internet access over a mobile network (e.g., smartphones, basic handsets).
- Smart device: any personal device with similar functionality (e.g., smartwatches that send/receive notifications, record audio/video).
- This policy covers pupils during the school day on the school site, on school visits, and in any before/after-school provision on site unless explicitly varied by the Headteacher.

## Principles of this policy

1. Phone-free by default: Pupils must not have access to or use mobile phones/smart devices during the school day. Smartwatches with notifications/camera/microphone are treated as mobile phones and are not permitted.
2. Consistency matters: Staff and pupils must understand the rules and apply them consistently.
3. Proportionate exceptions: Limited, needs-based exceptions may be agreed (e.g., medical, SEND, safeguarding). Decisions will be recorded and reviewed.

## How we implement a phone-free day

To comply with the DfE expectation that pupils must not have access to their mobile phones during the school day, Bill Quay Primary has adopted a daily hand-in system. This is one of the DfE-endorsed methods for ensuring a secure and fully phone-free environment. This applies to those pupils who travel to school on their own and carry their mobile phone for safety reasons.

## Daily Arrival Procedure

- Pupils who bring a phone must hand it in immediately on entering the classroom.
- Phones will be stored in a locked box on the teacher's desk.
- Phones must be switched off before hand-in.

## **End-of-Day Procedure**

- Phones are returned to pupils by staff at their dismissal door/line.
- For safeguarding reasons, the device is handed directly to the pupil.

## **After-School Clubs & Wraparound Care**

- The no-access rule continues until the child leaves the site, including after-school clubs.

## **Exceptions and reasonable adjustments**

In limited circumstances, the Headteacher may authorise exceptions, recorded on the pupil's plan and communicated to relevant staff:

- Medical: where a device is part of a care plan (e.g., monitoring or alerts), usage rules will be risk-assessed.
- SEND/Disability: reasonable adjustments may be agreed where the device supports access or regulation, with clear times/places and staff oversight.

## **Sanctions and responses**

- Using or accessing a device during the day breaches the School Behaviour Policy. Sanctions are consistent, fair and escalating, and parents/carers will be informed for repeated breaches. Confiscated devices are stored securely and returned to a responsible adult where appropriate.
- Searching/Confiscation: The school may confiscate a phone where rules are broken and, where necessary and lawful, search a pupil's belongings for a phone.

## **Staff expectations (modelling)**

- Staff should keep personal phones out of sight during pupil-facing time and not use them in front of pupils, except for explicit professional reasons, in line with the Staff Code of Conduct.

## **Parents/carers, visitors and volunteers**

- Parents, visitors and volunteers should not use mobile phones on site in areas where pupils are present, except with staff permission (e.g., medical needs, essential communication) and must never record pupils. Signage and event-specific briefings will make expectations clear. (Good practice aligned to DfE's communication emphasis.)

## **Communication and induction**

- We will communicate this policy clearly and regularly (website, prospectus, admissions pack, transition meetings, newsletters, assemblies, visual signage) and explain the rationale and benefits (reduced distraction; improved wellbeing; safer culture). Consistency and parent buy-in are key.

## **Trips, clubs and residential**

- The default phone-free expectation applies on school trips, clubs and residential. The visit leader will confirm arrangements in pre-trip briefings and risk assessments, including how parents can contact pupils in an emergency. Any exception must preserve a phone-free learning experience.

## **Safeguarding, online safety and data protection**

- This policy supports our wider safeguarding duties (including online safety) by reducing opportunities for bullying, image-sharing, and exposure to harmful content during the school day. Where issues arise outside school, we will work with families and, where appropriate, agencies.
- Staff must never access pupil devices without lawful basis and authorisation. Any incident involving images or potential harm is handled under our Safeguarding and Online Safety policies and reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.