

Mobile Phone Policy

1. Introduction

At Open Box Education Centre we aim 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 students and staff
- Support the school's other policies, especially those related to child protection, relationships and behaviour

Note: throughout this policy, 'mobile phones' refers to mobile phones and similar connected devices, such as smart watches and tablets.

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 is [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#).

3. Roles and Responsibilities

3.1. The Principal

The Principal will address any questions or concerns from parents/carers quickly, and clearly communicate the reasons for restricting the use of mobile phones. The Principal is responsible for monitoring this policy and reviewing it every two years, and holding staff and students accountable for its implementation.

3.2 Staff

All staff (including teachers, learning mentors, support staff, visiting tutors and supply staff) are required to actively enforce this policy and challenge any breach of mobile phone restrictions immediately and consistently.

Members of staff are expected to model the behaviour expected of students regarding the use of their mobile phones to provide a consistent, distraction-free culture and to allow for engaged, attentive and responsive adult support throughout the school day.

In order to do this, all staff (including teachers, learning mentors, support staff, visiting tutors and supply staff) are responsible for adhering to the expectations below (point 5) regarding the use of mobile phones by staff during the school day.

3.3 Parents and Carers

Parents and carers are responsible for supporting the school in upholding this policy and ensuring that their child understands and adheres to these expectations.

3.4 Responsibility for Loss or Damage

Mobile phones and personally-owned mobile devices brought into school are the responsibility of the device owner. Open Box Education Centre will take all reasonable steps in their duty of care for mobile phones stored in the school office, but accepts no responsibility for the loss, theft or damage of personally-owned mobile phones or mobile devices in the event of circumstances beyond our control.

4. Use of Mobile Phones by Students

- 4.1.** Students do not require a mobile phone in school for a normal school day, and it is the expectation of the school that students will not bring a mobile phone to school. Parents and carers can contact the school office throughout the day in case of emergency to speak to their child, if appropriate, or to ask for a message to be passed to their child.
- 4.2.** The decision that a student should carry a mobile phone on their journey to and from school remains with the parent or carer, however any student arriving at school with a mobile phone in their possession will be required to hand their mobile phone, and any other device with connectivity, into the school office on arrival in school, whatever time of day that is, before entering the inner doors of the school entrance. Their phone will be kept in a named bag in a secure locker in the main school office and will be returned to them on leaving at the end of the school day. In line with new government legislation that deems the use of smart phones and devices during the school day inappropriate, damaging and unsafe, we regard this as a safeguarding matter, and refusal to comply with school expectations to hand in devices before entering the school will mean that staff will respond to this in line with our 'Relationships & Behaviour Policy', and the Principal will consider the use of suspension as part of the response, to protect all students and staff.
- 4.3.** Students must not be in possession of, or use, their mobile phones, smart watches or other mobile devices during the school day, including during lessons, in the time between lessons, at breaktimes and at lunchtimes, or on offsite timetabled activities, unless explicitly authorised by the Principal (for example, for a specific medical reason).
- 4.4.** The school may permit students to use a mobile phone in school in exceptional circumstances (for example for a specific medical reason) or a smart watch may be permitted for exceptional reasons if all internet capability is disabled. In these cases, such use must be authorised in advance by the Principal, at the Principal's discretion, and agreed in writing with the parent or carer.
- 4.5.** A student may be authorised to view or use their mobile phone in exceptional circumstances during the school day in the school office while supervised by staff, for emergency purposes or exceptional circumstances, at the Principal's discretion.

- 4.6. The school may permit the use of mobile phones during off-timetable school trips for the purposes of effective communication, safety and entertainment on long journeys.

5. Use of Mobile Phones by Staff

- 5.1 Staff members should refrain from using mobile phones for anything other than vigilance around *Staff Link* messages and emergency information, or for research that supports student learning and understanding, during all student-facing times of the day, including teaching, supporting, supervising, undertaking break and lunch duties and travelling with students. It is not acceptable for staff to be using their mobile phones for personal use while undertaking student-facing responsibilities during the school day.
- 5.2 If a member of staff needs to make or accept a personal call/text then this should be done during break or lunchtime in a separate room away from students, if that member of staff is not on duty.
- 5.3 If an emergency requires that a member of staff answer their phone immediately, this should be done outside the learning environment or school communal areas, and well away from students, for example in an empty classroom or an office. In this instance the member of staff should always prioritise the safety and supervision of students in their care and ensure another member of staff can support.
- 5.4 Some members of staff are provided with a mobile phone by the school for work purposes. Only authorised staff are permitted to use school mobile phones, and access to the phone must not be provided to anyone without authorisation. Staff must only use school phone functions for work purposes, including making/receiving calls, sending/receiving emails or other communications, using the internet to access work files and work-related information, conducting work meetings, communicating with parents, carers and outside agencies or using *Staff Link*. These members of staff must ensure that communication and conduct linked to their work device is appropriate and professional at all times, in line with our staff Code of Conduct.

6. Use of the *Staff Link* WhatsApp Group

It is expected that staff will need to remain vigilant of their *Staff Link* messages throughout the day, to ensure student wellbeing and safety, and for timely and effective responses to critical incidents or emergencies. Members of staff do not have permission to contact other members of staff on a personal basis for anything other than work related issues using phone numbers available through *Staff Link*, without prior consent.

6.1 *Staff Link* for **day-to-day** communication

Day-to-day use of the *Staff Link* WhatsApp group should be limited to short, relevant messages to support the practical management of the school day and to respond to student needs. It should not be used to share personal information about students, or sensitive issues of a safeguarding nature other than to support urgent safety and wellbeing. Full student names should never be used. Initials can be used to identify students needing support.

6.2 *Staff Link* for **emergency** communication

Staff Link also provides life-saving communication in the event that an emergency response is required to protect staff and students during a critical incident. Staff should prioritise effective communication of essential information on this platform, and should make themselves aware of the emergency response codes (see Critical Incident Policy).

7. Sanctions

Should a student fail to adhere to this policy, parents or carers will be contacted and required to work in partnership with the Principal to agree strategies for supporting the student to understand and comply with this policy, in line with our normal procedures for supporting relationships and behaviour (see our Relationships & Behaviour Policy). This may include denying entry to a student who refuses to hand in their mobile device, with the expectation that a parent or carer attends school to collect their child from the front office, in the event that an agreement cannot be reached, and a suspension is issued.

Should a member of staff fail to adhere to this policy, this will be addressed by the Principal through discussion in the first instance. If a breach of this policy continues, this will be dealt with according to our staff disciplinary procedures. (See the school's Staff Disciplinary Policy)

8. Monitoring and review

The school is committed to ensuring that this policy has a positive impact on students' education, relationships, behaviour and welfare. When reviewing the policy, the school will take into account:

- Feedback from parents/carers and students
- Feedback from staff
- Records of behaviour and safeguarding incidents
- Relevant advice from the Department for Education, the local authority and any other relevant organisations

9. Links to other policies and procedures:

Relationships & Behaviour Policy
Staff Code of Conduct
Staff Disciplinary Policy
Child Protection Policy

Approved by: (Principal)..... (date)

Authorised by:..... (Chair of Governors) (date)

To be reviewed every: 2 Years

Next review date: June 2028

Date of Review	Reviewed by	Ratified by Governors	Date of next review
Jun 2028 – version 1.0	A Dolan	30-06-26	June 2028