

Downham Market Academy

Mobile phone policy

September 2026

Approved by Head Teacher	5 th July 2026
Review cycle	
Next Review	

Mobile Phone Policy

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Document Control

New Version Number	Key changes from previous version	Date of ratification

1. Introduction and aims

At Downham Market Academy, our 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 students, 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](#)
- 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

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 Deputy Headteacher, Lewis Swatman, is responsible for monitoring the policy and reviewing it every year and holding staff and students accountable for its implementation.

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

4. Use of mobile phones by students

The DfE's mobile phone guidance states that the use of mobile phones is prohibited throughout the school day.

Students must not use their mobile phones at any point whilst on the school premises, this includes all times during the school day: before and after school, during lessons and between lessons, at breaktimes and at lunchtimes, unless explicitly authorised by a member of staff (for example, for a specific medical reason).

Our preference is that students do not bring a mobile phone onto the school premises, however if they do bring a phone:

- It must be turned off and secured within their school bag before they enter the school site. Mobiles phones should be turned off and secured within school bags before entering on foot via the front gate - the phone must be secured in the pupil's bag before they enter the premises at the start of the path along the edge of the car park. If entering by bus, this must be done before they exit the bus on the school premises.

Students will be taught the risks that are associated with the use of mobile phones, both in school and more broadly, to ensure 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. Students will be encouraged to see a mobile-phone free environment as desirable and valuable.

4.1 Use of smartwatches by students

The DfE's [mobile phones guidance](#) includes in the term 'mobile phones' all devices with communications and smart technology that the school chooses to include in their policy.

Smartwatches are wristwatches with smart technology in them. They link to mobile phones and can be used to tell the time, send and receive text and voice messages, make calls and listen to music. For this reason, smartwatches will not be permitted in school.

4.2 Exceptions for special circumstances and for sixth-form students

Some students will be permitted to possess, or use, their mobile phone in school due to exceptional circumstances. For instance:

- Students with diabetes who use their phones to monitor their blood glucose levels
- Young carers who need to be contactable
- Sixth-form students, restricted to certain areas such as the sixth-form common room

Permission will only be granted where there is a documented safeguarding or medical necessity. To request such permission, students or parents/carers should contact Lewis Swatman, lswatman@dma.tela.org.uk. Any students who are given permission must then adhere to the school's code of conduct/acceptable use agreement for mobile phone use (see appendix 1).

Sixth-form students are allowed access to their mobile phones during the school day, to reflect their increased independence and responsibility, but must not compromise our policy on the use of mobile phones for other students.

Therefore, they are only permitted to use their mobile phones or smart devices out of sight of younger students within their common room. Misuse of mobile phones or other devices by students in the sixth form will lead to sanctions according to our behaviour policy.

5. Sanctions

Our policy is clear that our school is a mobile phone free environment. If a student is in breach of this policy the following sanctions will apply:

Behaviour	Action	Consequence
First Incident: A student is seen with their mobile device. This can include the student using their device or the device being seen on their person	The member of staff will immediately confiscate the device and hand this into reception. If this is during a lesson the staff member should email SLT on-call to come and collect the device Reception will secure the device and keep it until the end of the school day (note – reception closes at 4pm). The student can collect their device at the end of the school day Parent notified via Edulink when the detention is issued	Device confiscated Afterschool behaviour detention issued
Second Incident:	All actions listed above The pupil will be required to hand their device in at reception every morning for the remainder of the half term The pupil's Head of Year will contact home to explain the consequences	Device confiscated Internal exclusion issued Device must be handed in at reception for the remainder of the half term

Further Incident:	All actions listed above Reception will secure the device. Parent/carers contacted to come and collect the device. The device <u>will not</u> be given back to the student A formal meeting will be arranged with the student and parent/carers Device <u>banned</u> from being brought onto the school premises (duration to be confirmed during the formal meeting)	Device confiscated Internal exclusion issued Formal meeting with parents/carers Device banned from site Further incidents will be classed as repeated failure to meet expected standards and may result in severe sanctions: • Suspension • Respite placement at another trust school • Off-site direction • Internal or alternative provision • Permanent exclusion in extreme cases
Refusal to hand in device	Student will be sent to the behaviour hub and SLT called to follow up the incident	Internal exclusion or suspension Subsequent incidents, depending on the severity and frequency may result in severe sanctions: • Suspension and PSP • Respite placement at another trust school • Off-site direction • Internal or alternative provision • Permanent exclusion in extreme cases

In each case, the sanction given will 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 student'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 if pastoral support, an early intervention, or a referral to children's social care, is appropriate

Note:

*Schools are permitted to confiscate phones from students under [sections 91](#) and [94](#) of the Education and Inspections Act 2006.

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](#)).

As set out in the [DfE's guidance on searching, screening and confiscation](#), authorised staff have the power to search students' phones in specific circumstances, such as having reason to believe the phone is being/has been used to commit an offence or cause harm to another person. Incidents will be followed up in accordance with the school's behaviour and safeguarding policies.

Certain types of conduct, bullying or harassment can be classified as criminal conduct. The school takes such conduct extremely seriously and will involve the police or other agencies as appropriate.

Such conduct includes, but is not limited to:

- Sexting (consensual and non-consensual sharing nude or semi-nude images or videos)
- 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. Loss, theft or damage

The school accepts no responsibility for mobile phones that are lost, damaged or stolen on school premises or transport, during school visits or trips, or while students are travelling to and from school.

Confiscated phones will be taken to reception and secured in a bespoke mobile phone storage locker. The locker will remain locked throughout the day.

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

If it is suspected that a phone has been stolen then the incident should be reported to the police straight away, by the owner of the phone, as the police may be able to trace the phone.

7. Monitoring and review

The school is committed to ensuring that this policy has a positive impact on students' education, 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

If there are any concerns regarding this policy, these should be brought to the attention of Lewis Swatman, Deputy Headteacher, in a timely manner.

8. Appendix 1: Code of conduct/acceptable use agreement

Student Code of Conduct / Acceptable Use Agreement:

For students allowed to bring their mobile phones to school due to exceptional circumstances

You must obey the following rules if you bring your mobile phone to school:

1. You may not use your mobile phone throughout the school day, including before and after school when on the school site, lesson times, in between lessons, breaktime and lunchtime, unless a teacher specifically allows you to.
2. You may not use your mobile phone in the toilets or changing rooms. This is to protect the privacy and welfare of other students.
3. You cannot take photos or recordings (either video or audio) of school staff or other students.
4. Avoid sharing your contact details with people you don't know, and don't share other people's contact details without their consent.
5. Don't share your phone's password(s) or access code(s) with anyone else.
6. Don't use your mobile phone to bully, intimidate or harass anyone or otherwise to act in breach of the school's behaviour policy. This includes bullying, harassing or intimidating students or staff via:
 - a. Email
 - b. Text/messaging app
 - c. Social media
7. Don't use your phone to send or receive anything that may be a criminal offence. For instance, by 'sexting'.
8. Rules on bullying, harassment and intimidation apply to how you use your mobile phone even when you aren't in school.
9. Don't use vulgar, obscene or derogatory language while on the phone or when using social media. This language is not permitted under the school's behaviour policy.
10. Don't use your phone to view or share pornography or other harmful content.
11. You must comply with a request by a member of staff to switch off, or hand over, a phone. Refusal to comply is a breach of the school's behaviour policy and will be dealt with accordingly.
12. Mobile phones are not permitted in any internal or external exam or test environment. If you have a mobile phone, you will be asked to store it appropriately, or turn it over to an exam invigilator, before entering the test room. Bringing a phone into the test room can result in your exam being declared invalid.

Parent/carer signature: _____

Pupil signature: _____

Date: _____

FOR SCHOOL USE ONLY	
Authorised by:	
Date:	