

Supporting Learning, Wellbeing and Safety: Mobile Phones in School

Dear Parents and Carers,

Over recent years, Outcomes First Group schools have been moving progressively towards phone-free learning environments. This reflects both our experience of supporting children and young people and the growing evidence around the impact of smartphones and other smart devices on learning, wellbeing and safeguarding.

This direction is now reinforced by national guidance. The Department for Education's statutory guidance on mobile phones in schools, which came into force in June 2026 and is expected to be implemented by schools from September 2026, makes clear that schools should be "mobile phone-free environments by default" and that pupils should not have access to mobile phones throughout the school day, including during lessons, breaktimes and lunchtime. The guidance also recognises that any exceptions should be considered carefully and on an individual basis.

At OFG, this is not a new direction. We have been working towards this approach for some time as part of our commitment to creating calm, safe and supportive learning environments where children and young people can focus on learning, build positive relationships and develop the skills they need to thrive.

We understand that technology plays an important role in modern life. Mobile phones can support communication, organisation and, for some young people, emotional wellbeing outside of school. However, research and safeguarding evidence also highlight significant risks associated with unrestricted phone use, including distraction from learning, cyberbullying, exposure to harmful online content, unauthorised recording of others, breaches of privacy, increased anxiety and vulnerability to online exploitation. Young people who are vulnerable offline can often be vulnerable online too.

Our aim is not simply to remove phones. It is to create space for children and young people to engage fully in school life, develop face-to-face friendships, strengthen communication skills, enjoy social opportunities and experience a break from the pressures that can accompany constant online connection.

For this reason, OFG schools operate a phone-free environment during the school day. We encourage families, wherever possible, to leave mobile phones and other smart devices at



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home. Where a device is brought into school, it will be stored securely in line with the school's procedures and returned at the end of the day.

We also recognise that a small number of children and young people may require access to personal devices as part of agreed medical, disability, wellbeing, safeguarding or risk-management arrangements. This may include, for example, the use of phone-linked medical monitoring technology. Any such arrangements will be considered on an individual basis and recorded through an appropriate healthcare, safeguarding or risk-management plan, ensuring that the needs of the child or young person are balanced with the school's responsibility to maintain a safe, supportive and distraction-free learning environment.

Where children and young people need to contact parents or carers during the school day, schools will ordinarily support this through established school communication systems. Access to a personal device during the school day would only be considered in exceptional circumstances and where this forms part of an agreed individual plan.

Parents and carers play an important role in helping children and young people understand and prepare for this approach. We ask families to talk with their child about the reasons for a phone-free school day, support them to leave devices at home wherever possible, and help them feel reassured about how they can communicate with home through school if needed. If you have any questions or feel your child may need additional support with this change, please speak with your school so this can be discussed together.

We appreciate that changes relating to technology can feel challenging at times. However, by working together, we can support children and young people to develop healthy habits around technology, strengthen relationships, reduce risks and create the best possible conditions for learning, wellbeing and belonging.

Thank you for your continued support.

Yours sincerely,

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Child-Friendly Version: Mobile Phones in School

Why we are having a phone-free school day?

At school, we want everyone to feel safe, calm and ready to learn.

Mobile phones and smart devices can be helpful outside of school, but during the school day they can sometimes make it harder to concentrate, join in, talk to friends face-to-face and feel settled.

That is why our school is a phone-free school during the day.

What this means:

- Please try to leave your phone or smart device at home if you can.
- If you need to bring a phone to school, it will be looked after safely during the day.
- You will get it back at the end of the school day.
- Phones should not be used in lessons, at breaktime, at lunchtime or when moving around school.

Why this helps:

A phone-free school day can help us to:

- focus on learning;
- feel calmer and less distracted;
- build friendships and talk to people in person;
- stay safer online;
- have a break from messages, notifications and social media;
- make school feel more positive and supportive for everyone.

If you need help or need to contact home:

If you are worried, upset or need to speak to someone at home, you can talk to a trusted adult in school. School staff can help you contact your parent or carer in the right way.

Some children and young people may need a phone or device for a special reason, such as a medical need, disability, wellbeing need or safety plan. If this applies to you, adults will talk together and agree a plan that supports you.

What we ask from you:

- Leave your phone at home if possible.



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- If you bring a phone in, hand it in or store it safely as your school asks.
- Speak to an adult if you are worried about not having your phone during the day.
- Remember that adults in school are here to help you.