

Barford St. Peter's C.E. (V.A.) Primary School

Together we love; together we learn



Use of Mobile Phones Policy

Date approved: July 2025

Review date: July 2026

Barford St. Peter's Primary School Mobile Phone Policy

Purpose

This policy outlines the school's position on the use of ALL mobile phones (including smart phones) to ensure a safe, respectful, and focused learning environment for all pupils and staff.

Scope

This policy applies to all pupils, parents, carers, staff, and visitors on the school premises.

Policy Statement

Mobile **phones (including smart phones) are not permitted on the school site** for pupils under any circumstances.

Rationale

There is an increasing wealth of evidence around the use of smart phones which clearly outlines the damage that they have on children and young people's mental health. Children are at risk of seriously harmful content online through mobile phones. We are seeking to ensure that our children have safe and happy childhoods without mobile phones during their time at primary school.

Mobile phones pose safeguarding and privacy risks. Multiple studies from across the world have found a correlation between teen depression, anxiety and suicide, and excessive smartphone use.

Key evidence:

- (US) The younger someone gets a mobile phone, the worse their mental health in later life ([Sapien Labs](#)).
- (UK) The Millennium Cohort Study [states](#) that 'greater social media use relates to poor sleep, low self-esteem and poor body image'
- (Intl) The world-renowned PISA study has documented the [rise of loneliness amongst school children](#) which doubled between 2012-2018. Analysis of the data demonstrates that school loneliness was high when smartphone access and internet use were high.
- (Switzerland) Excessive smartphone use is associated with [psychiatric, cognitive, emotional, medical and brain changes](#) in adolescents that should be considered by health and education professionals.
- (Norway) After smartphone bans in [400+ middle schools](#), girls had fewer mental health issues, better grades, and both girls and boys were less likely to be bullied.
- (US) Mental health researchers Jonathan Haidt and Jean Twenge have [observed](#) that symptoms of depression and suicide rates among teens increased sharply in 2012, coinciding with the acceleration of smartphone ownership particularly among those younger generations. For a digestible run down of Haidt's data and evidence on the mental health crisis in adolescents, watch the Smartphone Free Childhood [webinar](#) with him.
- (UK) In the last three years, the likelihood of a young person having a mental health issue [has increased by 50%](#) and emergency referrals to youth mental healthcare services have risen [by 53%](#). This has been strongly correlated with smartphone use. Through their smartphones, UK children are exposed to: violent and sexual imagery; grooming via sexual predators; cyberbullying and sexting.
- (UK) In recent [studies](#), 55% of UK teens reported seeing real life acts of violence on social media in the last 12 months. 24% had seen children carrying, promoting, or using weapons.

- (UK) Children’s Commissioner [report](#), Rachel De Souza: “In a room of 15 and 16-year-olds, three quarters had been sent a video of a beheading. I conducted a nationally representative survey of 2,005 children and their parents to understand families’ perspectives on online safety. My survey found that children are frequently exposed to a wide range of inappropriate and harmful content online, included sexualised and violent imagery, anonymous trolling, and material promoting suicide, self-harm and eating disorders.”
- (UK) Social media algorithms [amplify](#) misogynistic content.
- (UK) Social media has been [proven](#) to increase self-harm and suicidal tendencies amongst adolescents. [ONS report](#): 1 in 5 children between the ages of 10 and 15 had experienced some form of cyberbullying within the last year.
- Smartphones have a negative impact on learning, academic achievement and the kind of cognitive functioning needed for success at school. They are designed to distract children’s attention and increase dependency on them. Schools which ban mobile phones have higher exam results.
- (UK) Children from schools that have an outright ban on smartphones achieve GCSE results [one to two grades higher](#) compared with those at schools with laxer policies. Those schools are also twice as likely to be rated Outstanding by Ofsted.
- (UK) BMJ / University of Birmingham [evidence paper](#) on the impact of school policies restricting daytime smartphone use. Evidence suggests that whole school policies related to health and well-being can: (1) reduce overall screen time; (2) positively influence mental well-being; and (3) improve physical activity, sleep, educational attainment and reduce disruptive classroom behaviour.
- (US) [Research paper](#) - smartphone addiction has negative impacts on student learning and overall academic performance.
- (Intl) [Multiple studies](#) have identified evidence of comorbidities between excessive smartphone use and psychiatric diagnoses including ADHD and OCD.
- (Intl) [‘Put learners first’: Unesco calls for global ban on smartphones in schools](#)
- (US) Smartphones are leading to decline in test scores. [It Sure Looks Like Phones Are Making Students Dumber](#)

Pupils

- Pupils must not bring any type of mobile phone onto the school site at any time.
- If a pupil is found with a mobile phone, it will be confiscated and returned only to a parent or carer.
- Repeated breaches may result in further disciplinary action.

Parents and Carers

- Parents and carers are asked to support this policy by ensuring their children do not bring phones to school.
- In case of emergency, parents should contact the school office directly.

Staff and Visitors

- Staff may use mobile phones only in designated areas (e.g., staff room, offices) and never in the presence of pupils.
- Staff and visitors must keep phones on silent and refrain from using them in pupil areas.

Exceptions

- Any exceptions (e.g., for medical reasons) must be approved in writing by the Headteacher.

Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Governing Body.