Mobile Phone Policy

Serenity School

Approved by:	Chief Operating Officer	**Date:** 01/09/2026
Last reviewed on:	01/09/2026	
Next review due by:	31/08/2027	

1. Introduction and Aims

At Serenity School, we recognise that mobile phones and similar devices, including smartphones and cameras, are an integral part of modern life for our pupils, parents/carers, and staff. However, we also understand the potential for misuse and the importance of maintaining a focused and safe learning environment.

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 pupils, staff, parents/carers, visitors and volunteers
- Support the school's other policies, especially those related to child protection and behaviour

This policy also addresses challenges posed by mobile phones in school, such as:

- Risks to child protection
- Data protection issues
- Potential for lesson disruption
- Risk of theft, loss, or damage
- Appropriate use of technology in the classroom

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 Staff

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 Headteacher is responsible for monitoring the policy and reviewing it annually, and holding staff and pupils 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.

3.2 The Proprietary Board

The proprietary board may be involved in monitoring or reviewing this policy as required and will approve any updates in the policy.

4. Use of Mobile Phones by Staff

4.1 Personal Mobile Phones

Staff (including volunteers, contractors, and anyone else engaged by the school) are not permitted to use their personal mobile phones while children are present. Use of personal mobile phones must be restricted to non-contact time and to areas of the school where pupils are not present (such as the staffroom).

For the purposes of this section, personal devices include mobile phones, smartwatches with camera capabilities, tablets, cameras and any other personal electronic device with imaging, recording or sharing capabilities.

4.2 Data Protection

Staff must not use their personal mobile phones to process personal data, or any other confidential school information, including entering such data into generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools such as chatbots (e.g. ChatGPT and Google Gemini).

4.3 Safeguarding

Staff must not give their personal contact details to parents/carers or pupils, including connecting through social media and messaging apps.

Staff must avoid publicising their contact details on any social media platform or website, to avoid unwanted contact by parents/carers or pupils.

Staff must not use their personal mobile phones to take photographs or recordings of pupils, their work, or anything else that could identify a pupil. If it's necessary to take photos or recordings as part of a lesson / school trip / activity, this must be done using school equipment.

4.4 Using Personal Mobiles for Work Purposes

Staff must not use personal mobile phones to take photographs or videos of children. Any photos or videos must be taken using school equipment and stored in accordance with the school's data protection policy.

In some circumstances, it may be appropriate for staff to use personal mobile phones for work, such as:

- Using multi-factor authentication
- Emergency evacuations
- Supervising off-site trips or residential visits

In these cases, staff must use their phones in an appropriate and professional manner, not use them to take photographs or recordings of pupils, and refrain from contacting parents/carers directly.

4.5 Work Phones

If the school provides mobile phones to staff, these should be used only for work purposes, and access to the phone must be restricted to authorised personnel.

4.6 Sanctions

Staff failing to adhere to this policy may face disciplinary action.

5. Use of Mobile Phones by Pupils

Pupils are not allowed to use mobile phones during the school day, under any circumstances. This also applies during any activity which constitutes school activity

including those that take place off site such as PE, college attendance, etc. Upon arrival to school, pupils must hand their phones over to designated staff, who will securely store them for the day. Phones will be returned at the end of the school day. Pupils who refuse to hand in their phones will not be permitted entry to the school.

5.1 Use of smartwatches by pupils

The DfE's mobile phones guidance includes in the term 'mobile phones' all devices with communications and smart technology.

Smartwatches are wristwatches with smart technology in them. They can be used to tell the time, send and receive text and voice messages, make calls and listen to music. Some smartwatches have wellness and health-related features.

Pupils are not allowed to use smartwatches during the school day, under any circumstances. This also applies during any activity which constitutes school activity including those that take place off site such as PE, college attendance, etc. Upon arrival to school, pupils must hand their smartwatches over to designated staff, who will securely store them for the day. Smartwatches will be returned at the end of the school day. Pupils who refuse to hand in their smartwatches will not be permitted entry to the school.

5.2 Exceptions for Special Circumstances

The school may permit pupils to use a mobile phone in school due to exceptional circumstances, such as medical needs. Permission must be requested and granted by the Headteacher on a case-by-case basis.

5.3 Sanctions

If a pupil is found with a mobile phone during school hours, the phone will be confiscated and returned at the end of the term. Parents will be notified and requested to collect the SIM card from the school. See DfE's guidance on searching, screening and confiscation

5.4 Parent Involvement

Parents are encouraged to support the school's policy and ensure their child understands the importance of compliance. In cases of confiscation, parents must arrange to collect the SIM card and discuss the matter with school staff.

6. Use of Mobile Phones and other photography devices by Parents/Carers, Volunteers, and Visitors

Parents are encouraged to reinforce and discuss this policy at home as appropriate, including the risks associated with mobile phone use and the benefits of a mobile phone-free environment.

Parents/carers, visitors and volunteers (including the proprietary board and contractors) must adhere to this policy.

This means:

6.1. Not taking pictures or recordings of pupils, using phones only in designated areas, and not using mobile phones in lessons or when working with pupils.

6.2. Switching off mobile phones if they are coming into the early years setting and leaving the setting if they need to use their mobile

6.3. Parents and carers must not take photographs or recordings within the early years setting unless the Headteacher has expressly permitted this for a specific event. Where permission is given, the school will explain the conditions applying, including that images containing other children must not be published, posted on social media or otherwise shared

6.4 Staff must seek parental permission to take photographs of the children, which must be linked to teaching the curriculum and that they use school equipment only for this purpose

6.5. Staff should not bring personal mobile phones into the early years setting. They may use them in the staff room during lunch and breaks or during non-contact time after school with pupils.

7. Loss, Theft, or Damage

Pupils bringing mobile phones to school must ensure that their phones are appropriately labelled, ready to be stored away securely when not in use during the school day. Pupils must secure their mobile phones as much as possible, including using passwords or pin codes to protect access to the phone's functions. Staff must also secure their personal phones, as well as any work phone provided to them. Failure by staff to do so could result in data breaches.

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 pupils are travelling to and from school. Confiscated phones will be securely stored, and lost phones should be returned to the school office.

8. Monitoring and Review

The policy will be reviewed annually, taking into account feedback from parents/carers, pupils, and staff, as well as records of behaviour and safeguarding incidents.

9. Exceptional Circumstances

Any exceptions to this policy (e.g., medical reasons) must be discussed with and approved by the school administration in advance.

This policy is designed to ensure a safe, focused, and supportive learning environment at Serenity School. Compliance from all members of the school community is crucial for its successful implementation.

For more information, please refer to the Department for Education's guidance on mobile phones in schools. Mobile phone guidance