# Mobile Phone Policy

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| DATE APPROVED: | November 2026 |
| APPROVED BY: | Principal |
| NEXT REVIEW DATE: | November 2027 |

## Introduction and Aims

At Gothic Mede Academy, the welfare and well-being of our pupils is paramount. The aim of the Mobile Phone Policy is to allow users to benefit from modern communication technologies, whilst promoting safe and appropriate practice through establishing clear and robust acceptable mobile user guidelines. This is achieved through balancing protection against potential misuse with the recognition that mobile phones are effective communication tools. It is recognised that it is the enhanced functions of many mobile phones that cause the most concern, offering distractions and disruption to the working day, and which are most susceptible to misuse - including the taking and distribution of indecent images, exploitation and bullying. However, effective guidance is in place to avoid the use of mobile, smart phone and smart watches causing unnecessary disruptions and distractions within the workplace, and to ensure effective safeguarding practice is promoted against potential misuse. As it is difficult to detect specific usage, this policy refers to ALL mobile communication devices.

## Scope

This policy applies to all individuals who have access to personal mobile phones on site. This includes staff, volunteers, committee members, children, young people, parents, carers, visitors and contractors. This list is not exhaustive. This policy should also be read in relation to our Child Protection policy.

## Code of conduct

A code of conduct is promoted with the aim of creating a cooperative workforce, where staff work as a team, have high values and respect each other; thus creating a strong morale and sense of commitment leading to increased productivity.

## Our aim is therefore that all practitioners:

• have a clear understanding of what constitutes misuse.

• know how to minimise risk.

• avoid putting themselves into compromising situations which could be misinterpreted and lead to possible allegations.

• understand the need for professional boundaries and clear guidance regarding acceptable use.

• are responsible for self-moderation of their own behaviours.

• are aware of the importance of reporting concerns promptly. It is fully recognised that imposing rigid regulations on the actions of others can be counterproductive. An

agreement of trust is therefore promoted regarding the carrying and use of mobile phones within the setting, which is agreed to by all users:

## Personal Mobiles – Pupils

We recognise that mobile phones are part of everyday life for many children and that they can play an important role in helping pupils to feel safe and secure. However, we also recognise that they can prove a distraction in school and can provide a means of bullying or intimidating others. Therefore:

• Pupils are not permitted to use mobile phones/ Smart watches at school or on trips.

• Mobile phones/Smartwatches brought to school without permission will be confiscated and returned at the end of the day.

## Personal Mobiles - Staff

• Staff are not permitted to make/receive calls/texts during contact time with children. Emergency contact should be made via the school office.

• Staff should have their phones on silent or switched off and out of sight (e.g. in a drawer, handbag or pocket) during class time.

• Mobile phones should not be used in a space where children are present (e.g. classroom, playground).

• Use of phones (inc. receiving/sending texts and emails) should be limited to non-contact time when no children are present e.g. in office areas, staff room, empty classrooms.

• It is also advised that staff security protect access to functions of their phone.

• Should there be exceptional circumstances (e.g. acutely sick relative), then staff should make the Principal aware of this and can have their phone in case of having to receive an emergency call.

• Staff are not at any time permitted to use recording equipment on their mobile phones, for example: to take recordings of children, or sharing images. Legitimate recordings and photographs should be captured using school equipment such as cameras or tablets.

• Staff should report any usage of mobile devices that causes them concern to the head Teacher.

## Mobile Phones for work related purposes

We recognise that mobile phones provide a useful means of communication on off-site activities. However, staff should ensure that:

• Mobile use on these occasions is appropriate and professional (and will never include taking photographs of children).

• Mobile phones should not be used to make contact with parents during school trips – all communications should be made via the school office or with the SLT member of staff phone.

• Where parents are accompanying trip's, they are informed not to make contact with other parents (via calls, text, email or social networking) during the trip or use their phone to take photographs of children.

## Volunteers, Visitors, Governors and Contractors

• All Volunteers, Visitors, Governors and Contractors are expected to follow our mobile phone policy as it relates to staff whilst on the premises. On arrival, such visitors will be informed of our expectations around the use of mobile phones.

## Dissemination

The mobile phone policy will be shared with staff and volunteers as part of their induction. It will also be available to parents via the school office and website