Gilthill Primary School – Mobile devices and wearable technology policy

Date Approved: September 2026
Review Date: September 2027
Policy Owner: Headteacher

Linked Policies:

- Behaviour Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Online Safety Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- ICT Acceptable Use Policy
- Searching, Screening and Confiscation Procedures
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy

1. Policy Statement

- Gilthill Primary School is committed to providing a safe, positive and productive learning environment where all pupils can thrive.
- In line with Department for Education statutory guidance, the school operates as a mobile phone-free environment. Pupils should not have access to mobile phones, smart watches or other smart technology during the school day. The use of such devices can create unnecessary distractions, increase safeguarding risks and impact positively on pupil wellbeing, relationships and learning.
- The school recognises that some families may wish their child to carry a mobile phone for safety reasons when travelling to and from school. Where permission has been granted for a pupil to bring a device onto the school site, strict arrangements must be followed to ensure the device remains inaccessible throughout the school day.
- Any deviation from this policy will only be considered in exceptional circumstances and with the approval of the Headteacher.

2. Aims

This policy aims to:

- Maintain a mobile phone-free school environment.
- Safeguard pupils from online harms and digital risks.
- Promote positive behaviour and engagement in learning.
- Reduce disruption, distraction and incidents of bullying.
- Protect staff and pupils from inappropriate photography, filming or recording.
- Ensure compliance with safeguarding legislation and statutory guidance.
- Support pupils to develop healthy digital habits and relationships.

3. Scope

This policy applies to:

- Pupils
- Staff
- Governors
- Volunteers
- Contractors
- Visitors

and covers:

- Mobile phones
- Smartphones
- Smart watches
- Tablets with communication capabilities

- Devices capable of internet access
- Devices capable of messaging, calling, photography, filming or audio recording
- Any wearable or smart technology capable of receiving notifications or communicating with others

4. Expectations for Pupils

- Pupils must not use, access, check, charge, wear or otherwise interact with a mobile phone or smart device during the school day.

  The school day includes:
- Arrival on site
- Registration
- Lesson times
- Breaktimes
- Lunchtimes
- Movement around school
- Educational visits
- School activities taking place during normal school hours
- Pupils are expected to comply with staff instructions regarding mobile devices at all times.

5. Bringing a Mobile Phone to School

The school strongly discourages pupils from bringing mobile phones to school unless there is a clear need.

Where a parent believes a mobile phone is necessary:

1. The parent must notify the school.
2. The phone must be switched off before entering school grounds.
3. The phone must be handed to a designated member of staff immediately upon arrival.
4. The device will be stored securely throughout the school day.
5. The device will be returned to the pupil at the end of the school day.

The school accepts no responsibility for devices brought onto site contrary to this policy.

6. Smart Watches and Other Wearable Devices

Smart watches and wearable devices capable of:

- Messaging
- Calling
- Internet access
- Photography
- Audio recording
- Video recording
- Receiving notifications
- are subject to exactly the same restrictions as mobile phones.
- Pupils must not wear or access such devices during the school day.
- Simple fitness trackers without communication functions may be permitted at the discretion of school leaders.

7. Safeguarding and Online Safety

The school recognises that mobile phones and smart devices can increase risks associated with:

- Cyberbullying
- Child-on-child abuse
- Harassment
- Online exploitation
- Grooming
- Exposure to harmful content
- Inappropriate image sharing
- AI-generated images and deepfake content
- Unauthorised photography and recording
- The school's mobile phone-free approach forms part of its wider safeguarding strategy.

- Any safeguarding concern arising from the use of a mobile phone or smart device will be managed in accordance with the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and referred to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) where appropriate.

8. Educational Visits and Residential Visits

- The use of mobile phones on educational visits will be determined through risk assessment and communicated in advance to pupils and parents.
  The school reserves the right to prohibit or restrict mobile phone use during visits where this is necessary to:
- Safeguard pupils
- Promote engagement in activities
- Prevent inappropriate use of technology
- Protect privacy and dignity

9. Photography and Recording

Pupils must not use any personal device to:

- Take photographs
- Record video
- Record audio
- Livestream
- Share images or recordings while in school
- Unauthorised recording of pupils, staff or visitors will be treated as a serious breach of school rules and may result in safeguarding actions being taken.

10. Staff Use of Mobile Phones

Staff should model the expectations set for pupils.
During the school day staff should not use personal mobile phones for personal reasons in the presence of pupils unless:

- There is an emergency.
- The use is authorised by a senior leader.
- The use forms part of an approved educational or operational activity.
  Staff must continue to follow:
- The Staff Code of Conduct
- Safeguarding procedures
- Data protection requirements
- Guidance relating to photography and pupil images

11. Parents and Carers

Parents play an important role in supporting this policy.

- The school will:
- Communicate the policy clearly.
- Publish the policy on the school website.
- Explain the reasons for maintaining a mobile phone-free environment.
- Provide alternative communication routes during the school day.
- Parents who need to contact a child during school hours should do so through the school office.
- Messages will be passed on by staff where necessary.

12. Breaches of the Policy

Breaches of this policy may result in:

- Confiscation of the device
- Meetings with parents
- Restricted access to devices in future
- Safeguarding intervention where appropriate
- Serious breaches involving safeguarding concerns may lead to referrals to external agencies, including children's social care or the police where necessary.

13. Searching, Screening and Confiscation

- Authorised staff may confiscate a mobile phone or smart device where the school's rules have been breached.
  Where there are reasonable grounds to suspect that a device contains evidence relating to:
- A safeguarding concern
- Bullying
- Child-on-child abuse
- Inappropriate images
- Criminal activity
- Serious misconduct
- staff will act in accordance with current legislation and Department for Education guidance on Searching, Screening and Confiscation.
- Where safeguarding concerns are identified, staff must immediately inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

14. Reasonable Adjustments and Medical Needs

The school recognises its duties under:

- The Equality Act 2010
- Children and Families Act 2014
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Statutory Guidance
  Reasonable adjustments may be required where access to a mobile device is necessary because of:
- A disability
- A medical condition
- An Education, Health and Care Plan
- Accessibility requirements
- Other exceptional circumstances
  Examples may include:
- Diabetes monitoring systems linked to a mobile device
- Approved healthcare applications
- Accessibility software used to support a disability
- Individual arrangements will be agreed in partnership with:
- Parents or carers
- Relevant health professionals
- SEND staff
- The Designated Safeguarding Lead where appropriate
- Adjustments will be reviewed regularly to ensure that they remain necessary, proportionate and effective.

15. Monitoring and Review

The Headteacher and Governing Body will monitor implementation of this policy.
The policy will be reviewed annually or sooner if:

- Legislation changes
- Department for Education guidance changes
- Safeguarding requirements change
- Operational issues indicate a review is necessary

Conclusion

- Gilthill Primary School believes that maintaining a mobile phone-free environment supports safeguarding, positive behaviour, wellbeing and high-quality learning. All members of the school community are expected to support and uphold this policy to ensure the safety and success of every child.

- **Approved by:** _____
- **Chair of Governors:** _____
- **Date:** _____