Mobile Phone and Personal Communication Devices Policy

1. Policy statement

Regent Farm First School is a **mobile phone-free school**.

We believe that primary-aged children should be able to learn, play and socialise without the distraction, disruption and potential safeguarding risks associated with mobile phones and other personal communication devices.

In line with the Department for Education's statutory guidance *Mobile Phones in Schools* (2026), the school expects pupils **not to bring mobile phones to school**.

Our approach is simple, consistent and designed to ensure that mobile phones do not become part of the school environment.

The school will provide appropriate and effective means of communication between pupils, parents and carers when required.

2. Aims

Our mobile phone-free approach aims to:

- protect pupils from distraction and disruption during the school day;
- support a calm, focused and purposeful learning environment;
- promote positive face-to-face communication and relationships;
- reduce opportunities for inappropriate photography, filming, messaging or social media use;
- reduce the risk of online bullying and conflict impacting on school life;
- protect pupils' privacy and dignity;
- reduce safeguarding risks associated with mobile phones and smart devices;
- support children to develop healthy and appropriate relationships with technology;
- ensure that all pupils experience a consistent and equitable approach.

3. Scope

This policy applies to all pupils attending Regent Farm First School, including pupils in Nursery and Reception through to Year 4.

For the purposes of this policy, references to mobile phones include devices with similar functionality, including smart devices capable of:

- sending or receiving messages or notifications;
- accessing mobile networks or the internet;
- taking photographs or recording audio/video;
- accessing social media or communication applications.

This may include smart watches or other connected communication devices where they provide similar functionality to a mobile phone.

4. Our expectation: pupils do not bring mobile phones to school

Pupils must not bring mobile phones to school.

This applies throughout the school day and on the school premises, including:

- lessons;
- assemblies;
- breaktimes;
- lunchtimes;
- before-school provision;
- after-school provision where operated by the school;
- school trips and visits;
- residential visits.

Parents and carers are asked to support the school's policy by ensuring that children leave mobile phones at home.

We recognise that some children may have access to a mobile phone outside school. However, the school considers that there is no need for pupils to have access to a mobile phone during the school day.

If parents or carers need to contact their child in an emergency, they should contact the school office. Similarly, if the school needs to contact a parent or carer, this will be done through the school's established communication systems.

5. If a pupil brings a mobile phone to school

If a pupil brings a mobile phone to school, the phone must remain switched off and out of sight.

If a member of staff becomes aware that a pupil has brought a mobile phone onto the school premises, the phone will be removed from the pupil by a member of staff.

The phone will then be:

1. switched off where appropriate;
2. placed securely in the designated storage location (usually the school office); and
3. retained securely until collected by a parent or carer.

The pupil will not be permitted to retain the phone or access it during the school day.

The school will speak to the parent or carer and explain that the phone must be collected from the school.

6. Repeated breaches

Bringing a mobile phone to school repeatedly, deliberately refusing to hand over a phone, or attempting to conceal or access a phone will be treated as a breach of the school's Behaviour Policy.

The school may apply an appropriate sanction in accordance with the Behaviour Policy.

The school's response will be proportionate, consistent and appropriate to the age and individual circumstances of the pupil.

7. Searching for mobile phones

Where there is reasonable suspicion that a pupil has a mobile phone or other prohibited device, the school may consider whether a search is appropriate.

Any search will be carried out in accordance with the school's Behaviour Policy and the Department for Education guidance *Searching, Screening and Confiscation in Schools*.

Staff will not routinely search pupils simply because they have been suspected of bringing a phone to school. Searches will be conducted appropriately, proportionately and with due regard to the pupil's dignity and safeguarding.

8. Exceptions and reasonable adjustments

The school recognises that there may be exceptional circumstances where a pupil has an individual need to use or have access to a mobile phone or another communication device.

This may include circumstances relating to:

- a medical condition;
- disability;
- special educational needs;
- assistive technology;
- another specific individual need identified by the school.

Any exception must be agreed in advance by the Headteacher or a member of the Senior Leadership Team.

Where an exception is agreed, the school will establish clear arrangements setting out:

- why the exception is required;

- when the device may be accessed;
- where it will be stored;
- who is responsible for it;
- how its use will be supervised where appropriate.

An exception will not automatically mean that a pupil can use their phone freely throughout the school day.

The school will comply with its legal duties regarding reasonable adjustments and will consider individual circumstances on a case-by-case basis.

9. Smart watches and other devices

Smart watches and other wearable or personal devices must not be used by pupils where they have mobile phone-type functionality, including the ability to send or receive messages, notifications, calls, photographs, audio or video.

Where a child has a watch for timekeeping, the school may require the device to be placed into an appropriate mode or removed if its functionality presents the same risks as a mobile phone.

Any agreed medical or accessibility-related use will be managed on an individual basis.

10. Safeguarding and online safety

The school recognises that mobile phones can provide access to content, communication and social media that may be inappropriate or harmful to children.

A mobile phone-free environment helps the school to:

- reduce opportunities for inappropriate recording or photography;
- reduce online conflict entering the school environment;
- minimise distractions;
- protect pupils' privacy;
- reduce opportunities for cyberbullying;
- support the school's wider safeguarding arrangements.

The school will continue to teach pupils about online safety, responsible use of technology and the potential risks associated with mobile phones and social media through the curriculum and wider pastoral provision.

11. Communication with parents and carers

The school will publish this policy clearly to parents and carers on the school website and discuss it’s content with parents when pupils join the school. Parents will also be reminded that mobile devices cannot be used in school through newsletters.

Parents and carers are expected to support the policy by ensuring that pupils do not bring mobile phones to school.

If a parent or carer has a concern about their child's safety when travelling to or from school, they should discuss this with the school. The school will work with families to identify an appropriate solution that maintains the school's mobile phone-free environment.

12. Staff use of mobile phones

Staff are expected to model the school's expectations around mobile phone use.

Staff should not use personal mobile phones for personal reasons in front of pupils during the school day.

There may be legitimate occasions when staff need to use a mobile phone or similar device for professional purposes, such as:

- contacting parents or carers;
- safeguarding purposes;
- accessing school systems;
- recording attendance or information;
- contacting emergency services;
- educational or professional activities approved by the school.

Such use must be appropriate and consistent with school expectations.

13. Visitors and volunteers

Visitors, volunteers and other adults working in school are expected to use mobile phones appropriately and not in a way that compromises the privacy, safety or safeguarding of pupils.

Personal mobile phone use should not take place in front of pupils unless there is a legitimate reason.

14. School trips and visits

The mobile phone-free expectation applies to school trips and visits unless the Headteacher has agreed an alternative arrangement.

Where a pupil has an exceptional need to carry a device, arrangements will be agreed in advance.

Staff will ensure that appropriate emergency communication arrangements are in place for all educational visits.

15. Lost, damaged or stolen devices

The school strongly advises parents and carers that pupils should not bring mobile phones or other personal communication devices to school.

Where a pupil brings a phone to school contrary to this policy, the school will take reasonable steps to store it securely once removed from the pupil.

However, the school does not accept responsibility for loss or damage to a mobile phone that has been brought onto the school premises contrary to this policy, except where this arises from the school's negligence or failure to take reasonable care.

16. Roles and responsibilities

The Headteacher, Senior Leadership Team and Governors will:

- ensure the policy is implemented consistently;
- ensure staff understand their responsibilities;
- ensure parents, pupils and staff are aware of the policy;
- monitor the effectiveness of the policy;
- consider and approve any exceptional arrangements;
- ensure reasonable adjustments are considered where required.

Staff will:

- consistently reinforce the mobile phone-free expectation;
- respond appropriately when a phone is identified;
- follow the school's procedures for removing and securely storing devices;
- model appropriate mobile phone use.

Pupils will:

- not bring mobile phones to school;
- follow the school's expectations regarding smart watches and other personal communication devices;
- hand over a device if requested by a member of staff;
- respect the privacy and safety of others.

Parents and carers will:

- ensure that their child does not bring a mobile phone to school;
- support the school's mobile phone-free approach;
- collect a device from school when requested;
- discuss any exceptional circumstances with the Headteacher.

17. Review

This policy will be reviewed annually or earlier where there are changes to legislation, statutory guidance or the school's circumstances.

The policy will be implemented alongside the school's Behaviour Policy, Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, Online Safety Policy and relevant DfE guidance.