

THE MOUNT SCHOOL

MOBILE PHONE POLICY

2026–2027

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Policy writer	Euan Burton-Smith
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Approval	Approved by Chris Sellers – Director / Proprietor

This policy is part of The Mount School's wider safeguarding arrangements and applies across the School. The separate Use of Mobile Devices in EYFS Policy contains additional, stricter controls for the nursery and EYFS provision.

1. Purpose and principles

The Mount School recognises that mobile phones and connected devices are part of everyday life. The School's approach is designed to protect children, reduce distraction and disruption, prevent covert or inappropriate recording, support positive behaviour and create a calm environment in which pupils can learn.

From 1 September 2026, the School follows the statutory DfE expectation that schools are mobile phone-free environments by default and that pupils should not have access to mobile phones throughout the school day, including lessons, transitions, breaktimes and lunchtime.

References to mobile phones in this policy include other communications and smart technology where the School determines that the device has similar functionality, including the ability to send or receive notifications/messages or record audio, photographs or video.

The policy applies to pupils, staff, parents/carers, visitors, volunteers, students, contractors and other adults on site, with expectations appropriate to their role.

2. Statutory and policy framework

- DfE statutory guidance Mobile phones in schools, updated 29 June 2026 and to be followed from 1 September 2026;
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026;
- the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, including safeguarding and behaviour requirements;
- the Equality Act 2010 and the duty to make reasonable adjustments;
- current DfE searching, screening and confiscation guidance;
- the School's Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy, Online Safety Policy, Behaviour Policy, Staff Code of Conduct and EYFS Mobile Devices Policy.

3. The Mount rule for pupils

Pupils must not use or have access to a personal mobile phone or other prohibited smart communication device during the school day. The School day for this purpose covers arrival on the School site until the pupil leaves the School's care at the end of the day, including lessons, movement around School, break, lunch, clubs or supervised activities that form part of the School day.

The Mount is a primary school. The default expectation is therefore that pupils do not bring personal internet-capable phones or equivalent smart devices to School.

If a pupil needs to bring a phone for a genuine journey-to/from-School safety reason, this must be agreed with the Headteacher in advance wherever possible. The device must be switched off and handed to the School office or other designated member of staff on arrival. It will be returned when the pupil leaves School.

A phone kept in a bag, pocket or locker but accessible to the pupil does not meet the School's normal mobile phone-free expectation unless an individual exception has been expressly agreed.

4. Smart watches and other connected technology

The School may include smart watches, connected wearables, communication-enabled watches, tablets or other devices within this policy where they provide functionality similar to a mobile phone, such as messaging, notifications, calls, internet access, audio/video recording or photography.

Pupils must not use such functionality during the School day. Where a watch is permitted purely as a timepiece, communication, recording and internet-connected functions must be disabled or inaccessible. The School may require a device to be removed or stored if this cannot be assured.

5. Exceptions, SEND, medical needs and individual circumstances

The School will consider individual exceptions and reasonable adjustments. A blanket rule will not override the School's legal duties or a child's genuine safeguarding, disability or medical needs.

- a disabled pupil needs a phone or connected device as a reasonable adjustment;
- a pupil needs a device to manage a medical condition, for example where a phone receives information from a continuous glucose monitor;
- a pupil has an identified SEND need for which access is necessary;
- a young carer or pupil with exceptional home circumstances has a specific communication need; or
- there is another exceptional safeguarding or welfare reason agreed by the Headteacher.

An exception will normally specify the purpose, times, locations, storage arrangements and functions that may be used. An exception does not create unrestricted permission to use the device.

6. Communication between home and pupils

Parents/carers who need to contact a child during the School day should contact the School office. Staff will relay urgent or necessary messages and facilitate appropriate contact. Pupils who need to contact home should speak to a member of staff rather than using a personal phone.

This arrangement allows pupils to remain contactable without having access to a personal device throughout the School day.

7. Staff mobile-phone use

The original Mount expectation is retained: staff may have personal mobile phones on site, but personal use must be restricted to breaks and areas away from pupils unless an agreed exceptional circumstance applies.

In line with the 2026 statutory guidance, staff should not use their personal mobile phone for personal reasons in front of pupils during the School day. Consistent adult modelling is important if staff are to enforce the pupil prohibition credibly.

There may be legitimate professional reasons to use a phone or similar device, for example multi-factor authentication or an authorised School process. Such use must be brief, purposeful, professionally appropriate and must not involve photographing or recording pupils on a personal device.

Where an exceptional personal circumstance requires a member of staff to remain contactable, the Headteacher may agree an arrangement. This may include keeping the phone audible or accessible, but use should normally take place away from pupils.

Staff must never use a personal mobile phone or personal camera to photograph, film or audio-record a pupil. Staff must not use personal devices to store pupil images, safeguarding information or other confidential School information.

8. Cameras, photographs and recordings

The Mount uses authorised School devices, including School iPads and phones, to record pupils' activities and achievements where this is educationally or operationally appropriate and where the School has an appropriate lawful basis and applicable parental permissions.

Staff, visitors, volunteers and students must not use their own mobile phones or personal cameras to photograph or record children.

Authorised images must be stored on approved, password-protected School systems and managed in accordance with the School's data-protection, retention, safeguarding and image-consent arrangements. The previous wording allowing each form teacher alone to decide when images are deleted is replaced by School-wide retention and data-protection controls.

Images used for training, qualifications, publicity or marketing must be authorised and appropriate to the stated purpose. Staff should ensure that image selection reflects the diversity of the School community and does not repeatedly favour particular children.

9. Mobile/camera-free safeguarding areas

To protect privacy and dignity, toilets, changing areas and other designated intimate-care/private areas are mobile phone and camera-free areas.

Staff must not take personal image-capable devices into such areas where doing so would breach the School's safeguarding arrangements. Any unavoidable emergency or medical-device exception must be expressly risk assessed and controlled.

Parents, visitors, students and contractors must not use phones, cameras or recording functions in these areas.

10. Parents, carers and visitors

Parents, carers and visitors are expected to support the School's mobile phone-free culture. Personal phone use should not disrupt pupils, supervision, events or safeguarding.

No visitor may photograph, film or audio-record children other than under an expressly authorised School arrangement. The School may restrict photography at performances, sports events or other activities where safeguarding, privacy or consent considerations require this.

Where a call is necessary, visitors should use a location directed by staff and away from children where practicable.

11. Expectations, education and communication

The policy will be published and communicated to pupils, parents and staff. Pupils will be reminded of the rule and consequences at the start of each academic year and thereafter as appropriate.

Pupils will be taught why the School is mobile phone-free, including the benefits for concentration, relationships, play, learning and reduced bullying/distraction, as well as wider online-safety risks.

Parents will be encouraged to reinforce the policy at home and to use the School office for communication during the day.

12. Breaches, confiscation and sanctions

A pupil who brings or uses a phone or prohibited smart device contrary to this policy may have the device confiscated. Sanctions will be consistent with the Behaviour Policy and will be reasonable and proportionate.

Where a device has simply been brought in accidentally and there is no aggravating misuse, the School will normally secure it, inform the parent/carer where appropriate and return it to the parent/carer or pupil at an appropriate time. Repeated or deliberate breaches may result in escalating sanctions.

The length of confiscation will be proportionate to the circumstances, the pupil's age, SEND and other relevant individual circumstances, and the disciplinary purpose of the sanction.

If a breach indicates that the pupil may be at risk of harm, the matter will be treated as a safeguarding concern and referred to the DSL/DDSL rather than being managed solely as misconduct.

13. Searching pupils and devices

The Headteacher and staff authorised by the Headteacher may exercise lawful searching powers in accordance with current DfE searching, screening and confiscation guidance and the Behaviour Policy. Mobile phones and similar devices are identified by the School rules as items that may be searched for where the legal conditions are met.

A search of a physical device is not the same as unrestricted authority to search through its digital content. Staff must follow current legal/guidance requirements and involve the DSL where content may be safeguarding evidence.

Staff must not casually view, copy, forward or delete intimate imagery or potentially illegal material. The Safeguarding & Child Protection and Online Safety policies govern the response.

14. Online safeguarding and misuse

Mobile-phone misuse may involve cyber-bullying, harassment, discriminatory abuse, sexual harassment, intimate-image sharing, AI-generated/deepfake imagery, grooming, exploitation, recording without consent or other online harm. Such matters may require safeguarding action even when the original activity occurred outside School.

A pupil must be able to report online harm without fear that the existence of a phone will prevent them seeking help. Where necessary for a safeguarding report, the DSL may arrange safe access to relevant information on a device in accordance with current guidance.

15. Educational visits and activity outside the normal School day

The School will decide in advance whether pupils may bring or use phones on residential trips, educational visits or activities outside the normal School day. The educational and safeguarding purpose of the activity will take priority over routine phone access.

Any permitted use will be defined in the trip information/risk assessment. The School may prohibit or restrict phones and will ensure parents know how to contact staff in an emergency.

16. EYFS

The EYFS has additional safeguarding controls because of the age and vulnerability of children and the nature of intimate care. The separate Use of Mobile Devices in EYFS Policy must be followed by all adults working in or visiting the EYFS.

In particular, personal phones, cameras and image-capable connected/wearable technology are subject to stricter controls in EYFS areas. The separate EYFS policy will be reviewed alongside this policy so that the two documents are consistent.

17. Safeguarding concerns about adult device use

Any concern that an adult has used a phone, camera or connected device in a way that breaches professional boundaries or may pose a risk to a child must be reported immediately under the School's allegations/low-level concerns procedure.

Staff must not investigate the adult's device themselves. The Headteacher/DSL will determine the safeguarding route, including LADO consultation where the harm threshold may be met.

18. Monitoring, review and responsibilities

- The Headteacher is responsible for consistent implementation across the School.
- All staff are responsible for modelling and enforcing the pupil rule consistently.
- The DSL considers safeguarding concerns arising from mobile-phone or smart-device use.
- The Director/Proprietor provides oversight of the policy as part of safeguarding and behaviour assurance.
- The policy will be reviewed at least annually and sooner where statutory guidance, technology, safeguarding incidents or School practice changes.
- The School will consider pupil, staff and parent feedback and patterns of breaches when reviewing effectiveness.

19. Related policies

- Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy
- Online Safety Policy
- Use of Mobile Devices in EYFS Policy
- Behaviour and Anti-Bullying Policies
- Staff Code of Conduct / Disciplinary Policy
- Acceptable Use and BYOD arrangements
- Data Protection Policy and privacy notices
- Educational Visits procedures

Appendix A – Quick guide for staff

Situation	Required response
Pupil using a phone during the day	Apply the policy consistently; confiscate where appropriate; record/escalate repeated or serious breaches.
Phone brought accidentally	Secure it; follow School arrangements; normally return at the end of the day / to parent as appropriate.
Pupil says phone is needed for medical/SEND reason	Do not simply refuse. Refer to the agreed adjustment or Headteacher/DSL for an individual decision.
Phone contains possible safeguarding evidence	Do not investigate casually. Preserve safety and inform DSL/DDSL.
Intimate image/deepfake reported	Do not ask to view/copy/forward. Report immediately to DSL/DDSL.
Adult uses personal phone to photograph pupil	Report immediately under adult concern/low-level concern procedure.
Parent needs to contact child	Direct contact through School office.
Staff need phone for MFA/authorised task	Brief, professional use is permitted where genuinely necessary; no pupil images on personal device.