



Wellstead Primary School
Sowing the Seeds of Success

Smartphone and Mobile Device Policy 2026

1. Rationale and Context

Wellstead Primary School is committed to promoting the safety, wellbeing and positive development of all pupils.

There is increasing national discussion regarding children's use of smartphones and social media. While there is currently no UK-wide statutory ban on under-16s using social media, the school has taken a clear and proactive position in response to growing safeguarding and wellbeing concerns.

From September 2026, Wellstead Primary School will operate as a smartphone-free school for pupils.

This policy also sets out expectations for adults on site, including parents, carers, visitors and staff. These expectations are designed to:

- Safeguard children and staff
- Promote a calm, focused school environment
- Encourage a healthy, balanced childhood
- Model appropriate and responsible behaviour

The school is committed to ensuring that expectations are clear, proportionate and practical, and will work with staff to support individual circumstances where required, including where pupils have specific medical needs (for example diabetes) which rely on smartphone or smart device functionality. In such cases, appropriate arrangements and reasonable adjustments will be agreed to ensure both medical needs and safeguarding requirements are met.

2. Key Principles

- Pupils will not use or have access to smartphones during the school day
- Smartphones and similar devices are prohibited items during the school day
- Adults are expected to model responsible and appropriate use of technology
- Safeguarding and privacy take priority over convenience
- Expectations must be realistic and workable within the day-to-day running of the school

For the purposes of this policy, a *smartphone or smart device* refers to any mobile phone, wearable or personal device capable of accessing the internet or communication applications. This includes devices such as smartwatches and other wearable technology that enables the user to send or receive messages, contains a SIM or cellular capability, or is able to record audio, images or video.

For the avoidance of doubt, these expectations apply equally to all smartphones and smart devices, including wearable technology with messaging, connectivity or recording capability.

3. Scope

This policy applies to:

- Pupils
- Parents, carers, visitors and volunteers
- All staff, including teaching and support staff

This policy should be read alongside the school's Behaviour Policy, Safeguarding Policy, Staff Code of Conduct, Acceptable Use Policy and Data Protection Policy.

4. Parents, Carers and Visitors

4.1 Drop-off and Collection Times

Wellstead Primary School is committed to maintaining a safe, calm and respectful environment at the start and end of the school day.

Parents, carers and visitors should:

- Make every reasonable effort to avoid using smartphones while on the school site during drop-off and collection times
- Avoid making or receiving calls, using messaging apps or accessing social media in areas where pupils are present
- Parents, carers and visitors must not:
 - Take photographs, video or audio recordings of pupils or staff (other than their own child) on the school site
 - Share images or recordings taken on the school site on social media or other platforms

The school recognises that brief and unavoidable phone use may be necessary. Staff will take a proportionate approach; however:

- Prolonged or visible use in pupil areas is discouraged
- Any form of recording without permission will be challenged

This approach is intended to:

- Model positive behaviour to pupils
- Protect the privacy and safeguarding of all children and staff
- Support a calm and orderly school environment

4.2 School Performances and Events

At specific, organised school events (e.g. performances, concerts, celebrations), the school may permit photography or recording under controlled conditions.

Where permitted:

- Parents may record their own child(ren) for personal use
- Reasonable care should be taken to avoid capturing other children

This does not permit:

- Routine recording during the school day
- Sharing images containing other children on social media

The school reserves the right to:

- Set conditions for recording
- Withdraw permission if safeguarding or organisation is compromised

The school cannot take responsibility for images shared by parents and expects all families to act in line with safeguarding expectations.

5. Staff Use of Smartphones

5.1 Core Principle

Staff are expected to model professional and responsible behaviour.

Smartphones must not be visible, audible or in use in the presence of pupils, except:

- In a genuine emergency
- Where explicitly authorised for school business

5.2 Permitted Use

Staff may:

- Carry personal smartphones during the school day
- Keep devices silenced and stored out of sight in pupil-facing areas
- Access phones in staff-only areas (e.g. staffroom, offices)

Staff may also use smartphones in classrooms or workspaces during breaktimes, lunchtimes, before school and after school, provided pupils are not present.

5.3 Expectations

Staff must:

- Ensure phones are not visible or used in front of pupils
- Avoid handling phones in classrooms, corridors, playgrounds or other pupil areas when pupils are present
- Keep phones on silent during teaching and supervision

5.4 Prohibited Use

Staff must not:

- Use smartphones during lessons, assemblies or while supervising pupils (unless in an emergency or authorised)
- Use personal devices to take photographs, video or audio recordings of pupils unless specific permission has been sought from the Headteacher.

All pupil-related recording must be carried out using school-approved devices in line with safeguarding procedures.

5.5 Practical and Operational Use

The school recognises that staff may need to use their phones for legitimate reasons, including:

- Emergency contact (e.g. family or own children's school)
- Accessing work systems (e.g. authentication processes)
- Checking essential communication (e.g. email, school platforms)
- Managing workload during breaktimes and lunchtimes

Where possible, this should take place outside pupil-facing time. However:

- Reasonable and proportionate use during non-pupil time is permitted
- Staff are not expected to leave their workspace unnecessarily to access their phone

5.6 Breaktimes, Lunchtimes and After School

Classrooms are considered pupil spaces when pupils are present.

When pupils are not present (e.g. lunchtime, before school and after the school day), staff may use phones appropriately and may remain in classrooms.

5.7 Individual Circumstances

The school recognises that some staff may require access to their phone for specific reasons, including:

- Medical needs
- Family circumstances
- Safeguarding responsibilities

In such cases:

- Staff should speak with a member of the Senior Leadership Team
- Reasonable adjustments and agreed arrangements will be put in place

5.8 Professional Standards

While occasional and necessary use is understood:

- Routine or casual use in pupil-facing contexts is not appropriate
- Concerns will be addressed in line with staff conduct expectations

All staff use of smartphones is subject to the Safeguarding Policy, Staff Code of Conduct and Acceptable Use Policies.

6. Confiscation and Prohibited Items

To maintain a smartphone-free environment for pupils, smartphones and similar devices are prohibited during the school day.

6.1 Pupils

Pupils must not bring smartphones or internet-enabled personal devices onto the school site.

If a pupil is found to have such a device, it will be confiscated by a member of staff. This is with the exception of smartphones that are essential for medical reasons, in this instance an agreement will be in place through the child's Individual Healthcare Plan.

Confiscated devices will be:

- Taken to the school office or a designated secure location
- Logged where appropriate
- Returned to a parent or carer, or managed in line with the Behaviour Policy

The school will take a proportionate and reasonable approach at all times, in line with DfE guidance on searching, screening and confiscation.

6.2 Searching

Where there is reasonable suspicion that a pupil is in possession of a prohibited item:

- Staff may request that the pupil hands over the device
- Authorised staff may carry out a search in line with statutory guidance, where necessary

All searches will:

- Be conducted sensitively and respectfully
- Follow safeguarding procedures
- Be proportionate to the circumstances

6.3 Data and Privacy

Staff will not access, search or delete content on a pupil's device unless:

- There is a safeguarding concern, and
- It is appropriate to do so in line with safeguarding procedures and statutory guidance

Where necessary, devices may be passed to senior leaders for further action.

6.4 Staff and Visitors.

Any inappropriate use of smartphones by staff, parents or visitors will be managed in line with this policy, the Staff Code of Conduct and safeguarding procedures.

7. Implementation and Review

This policy will:

- Be reviewed and formally adopted by Governors
- Be communicated clearly to staff and parents
- Be implemented from September 2026

The school will continue to:

- Seek staff feedback
- Monitor practicality and consistency
- Make adjustments where necessary to ensure the policy remains effective and workable

8. Summary

Wellstead Primary School adopts a clear and consistent approach:

- A smartphone-free environment for pupils

- Clear expectations for adults
- A strong safeguarding focus
- Professional trust and flexibility for staff.

This ensures a policy that is principled, practical and sustainable in everyday school life.

 Respectful  Reflective  Aspirational  Adaptable  Collaborative  Independent 

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