



Greenfield School Mobile Phone Policy

Introduction

At Greenfield School, we are dedicated to creating a safe and nurturing environment for all our students. We acknowledge that some parents will want to give their children a device for security and communication when travelling and/or as a rite of passage; however, as smartphones have become increasingly common, we recognise the need for a comprehensive mobile phone policy that addresses the potential dangers associated with their use. This policy not only aligns with our safeguarding policy but also emphasises our commitment to student well-being.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to:

1. **Identify the risks associated with smartphone use.**
2. **Establish guidelines for mobile phone usage within the school environment.**
3. **Promote awareness among students, staff and families about responsible phone use.**
4. **Provide solutions that avoid the necessity to buy a smartphone for a child.**

Smartphones vs. Brick / Feature phones (Dumb phones)

Smartphones

Smartphones offer advanced features such as front-facing cameras, internet access, social media, games and various apps. While they can serve educational purposes, their multifunctionality often leads to distractions, addictions, poor behaviour and significant risks.

The risks associated with smartphone use necessitate clear guidelines. Some of the primary dangers include:

1. Cyberbullying

Smartphones can become tools for harassment, making it difficult for students to escape bullying. Organisations like *Smartphone Free Childhood* highlight the emotional toll that cyberbullying can take on young people, leading to anxiety and depression.

2. Exposure to Inappropriate Content

The internet provides unfettered access to content that may not be suitable for children. Our safeguarding policy emphasises protecting students from harmful influences, reinforcing the importance of a controlled digital environment.

3. Mental Health Concerns

Research indicates that excessive smartphone use can contribute to mental health issues, including anxiety and depression. The need for social validation through 'likes' and 'shares' can lead to significant stress and a distorted sense of self-worth.

4. Distraction from Learning

Smartphones can disrupt the learning process, impacting the user (and their classmates if allowed at school). Our goal is to maintain a focused learning environment free from unnecessary distractions.

5. Privacy and Security Risks

Children may lack the understanding of how to protect their personal information online, exposing them to potential exploitation and privacy breaches. Personal devices which are not controlled and overseen allow for children to share data to their detriment.

6. Self-obsession and personal curation

Children with front-facing camera phones often find the selfie culture to be overwhelming, curating a personality, lifestyle, appearance removed from reality. Certain apps, Instagram, Snapchat, BeReal etc can create significant confidence issues.

Brick Phones (also called Feature Phones or Dumb Phones)

In contrast, "brick phones" are basic mobile phones that primarily offer voice calls and text messaging. They lack internet access and advanced features, making them a safer alternative for younger children. Brick phones allow for necessary communication without the added risks associated with smartphones.

Smart tags and trackers

For families that want to keep tabs on the location of their child, electronic tags can be attached to bags or blazers to replicate the tracking features of smartphones.

Policy on smartphone Ownership

Greenfield School does **not** support children under the age of 14 owning a smartphone. We believe that:

- Children are still developing critical thinking and emotional regulation skills. Limiting smartphone access helps to foster a healthier relationship with technology.
- Encouraging children to engage in real-life social interactions helps them build essential social skills.
- Without the complexities of smartphones, children are less likely to encounter privacy risks and online dangers.

At Greenfield, we encourage families to sign up to the [Smartphone Free Childhood Pact](#)

Our **Safeguarding policy** outlines our commitment to student safety. This mobile phone policy supports our safeguarding efforts by:

- **Promoting Digital Literacy:** We will educate students on the safe and responsible use of technology.
- **Encouraging Open Dialogue:** Students should feel comfortable discussing their online experiences and reporting any concerns.
- **Implementing Hardline Strategies:** Students will not be allowed phones in school during school hours to protect students and enhance learning.

Guidelines for Mobile Phone Use at Greenfield School

Further to government guidance from February 2024 ([here](#)) to minimise the risks associated with mobile phone use, the following guidelines will be implemented by the start of the school year 2025/26:

- From September 2025 Greenfield children may **not** bring a smartphone to school (unless medical need requires it).
- If a phone is deemed necessary by a parent, it must be a brick phone.
- It must be handed in to the School office on arrival.
- Nor will we allow other devices that link to the internet independently of a smartphone (ie some smartwatches, smart glasses etc).

Any Greenfield pupil's smartphone or internet linked device discovered on site will be immediately confiscated and will only be returned to a parent or carer.

Any brick phone discovered during the school day will be confiscated and only returned to a parent or carer.

Repeated violation will result in the child's detention.

Parents are encouraged to engage in discussions with their children about responsible phone use. Resources will be provided to help parents understand the implications of smartphones and foster safe habits at home. We encourage families to explore the [Smartphone Free Childhood website](#), and the work of Jonathan Haidt entitled [The Anxious Generation](#).

We recognise that children use devices other than smartphones to communicate electronically and we recommend that parents pay close attention to their children's use of tablets, games consoles, online gaming and other forms of communication in the home.

Regular **workshops** will educate the children about online safety, digital citizenship, and the importance of privacy. These sessions will incorporate insights from many authors, emphasising mindfulness and moderation in technology use. At Greenfield we support and uphold the age rating systems for video games, mobile apps, films and music, and recommend parents pay close attention to what their children are accessing.

Aware that at home **children** may receive unsolicited messaging, we will expect Greenfield pupils to report any incidents of cyberbullying or inappropriate content exposure to a trusted adult at school. Our safeguarding and behaviour policies will guide our response to these reports, ensuring that Greenfield children and families feel supported.

Reporting Concerns

If a child, staff member, or family has a concern regarding mobile phone use, they should promptly report it to the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead.

All concerns will be treated seriously and addressed in line with the school's safeguarding and behavioural policies, ensuring a safe and respectful environment for everyone.

Conclusion

Greenfield School is committed to fostering a safe, productive learning environment. This mobile phone policy, in conjunction with our safeguarding policy, addresses the potential dangers of smartphones while promoting responsible habits among the children. We encourage parents, staff, and pupils to work together to create a culture of safety and respect within our school community.

For further information, we invite parents to visit the *Smartphone Free Childhood* website for resources and support related to children's smartphone use. Together, we can help protect our pupils from the dangers of smartphones and guide them toward healthier technology use.



Chair

Signed

Chair of the Board of Governors

Reviewed: February 2025

Next Review: January 2027