

The Federation of Winklebury Infant and Junior Schools

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Believe, Strive, Achieve

Mobile Phone Policy

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Mobile Phone Policy

Introduction

At Winklebury Infant and Junior Schools, we are committed to creating a safe, nurturing and inclusive environment where every child feels valued, connected and ready to learn. As a Thrive school, we recognise the importance of positive relationships, emotional wellbeing and meaningful interactions in supporting children's development and learning.

From September 2026, we will be introducing a Smartphone-Free School Policy. This approach is designed to support our pupils' social, emotional and cognitive development by reducing potential distractions and promoting opportunities for face-to-face communication, play, creativity and connection with others. We believe that primary-aged children benefit most from being fully present in their learning and relationships. Limiting the presence of smartphones and internet-enabled devices during the school day helps to create an environment where children can develop confidence, resilience, independence and healthy friendships.

This policy also aims to support children's wellbeing by reducing potential risks associated with smartphone use, including online harms, social pressures and distractions from learning. We value our partnership with parents and carers and ask for their support in helping us create a school environment where children can thrive, build positive relationships and engage fully in the opportunities school provides.

This policy applies from September 2026 onwards.

Rationale

As a Thrive school, we recognise that children develop best when they experience strong relationships, meaningful social interactions and opportunities to build emotional resilience. This policy supports these outcomes by helping to create a calm, connected and distraction-free learning environment.

We have adopted this approach because we believe it helps to:

- Promote children's social and emotional development, including the growth of communication skills, emotional regulation and critical thinking.
- Encourage face-to-face interactions, collaboration and positive relationships between pupils.
- Reduce distractions from learning and play.
- Support children's wellbeing by limiting exposure to online risks, social pressures and privacy concerns during the school day.
- Foster a calm, connected and inclusive school culture where children can focus on learning and belonging.

We value our partnership with parents and carers and encourage families to support this policy by ensuring that children do not bring smartphones to school. By working together, we can help children develop healthy habits around technology use and maximise opportunities for learning, relationships and personal growth.

Risks Associated with Smartphone Use

While smartphones can provide benefits such as communication and access to information, research increasingly highlights a number of risks for young children when smartphones and unrestricted internet access are used without appropriate supervision and support.

These risks may include:

- **Cyberbullying and Online Conflict**

Smartphones can provide access to social media, messaging platforms and online gaming environments where negative interactions may occur. Unlike face-to-face disagreements, online incidents can continue beyond the school day and may have a significant impact on children's wellbeing.

- **Exposure to Inappropriate Content**

Internet-enabled devices can expose children to material that is unsuitable for their age, including violent, distressing or misleading content. Children may encounter such content intentionally or accidentally.

- **Impact on Emotional Wellbeing**

Excessive smartphone use has been linked to increased worries, anxiety, sleep disruption and difficulties managing emotions. Children may also experience pressure to remain constantly connected to peers and online activity.

- **Distraction from Learning and Play**

Smartphones can interrupt concentration, reduce opportunities for sustained attention and limit engagement in learning, creative activities and physical play.

- **Privacy, Safety and Security Concerns**

Children may not yet have the knowledge or maturity to recognise online risks, manage privacy settings or protect their personal information. This can increase vulnerability to inappropriate contact, scams or exploitation.

- **Social Comparison and Self-Esteem**

Social media platforms often encourage the sharing of carefully selected images and experiences. For some children, this can lead to unhealthy comparisons, concerns about appearance, reduced self-confidence and an increased need for external validation.

- **Reduced Opportunities for Face-to-Face Interaction**

Regular smartphone use can reduce opportunities for children to practise important social skills such as conversation, collaboration, empathy, problem-solving and conflict resolution through direct interaction with others.

As a Thrive school, we are committed to helping children develop healthy relationships, emotional resilience and positive habits around technology. Our smartphone-free approach seeks to minimise these risks during the school day while creating opportunities for connection, communication and learning in a supportive environment.

Smartphone Ban – A Staggered Approach

To support children's wellbeing, relationships and engagement in learning, the school will introduce a phased approach to reducing the presence of smartphones on school premises.

- Mobile phones should only be brought to school where there is a genuine safeguarding or practical need, for example when a child travels to and from school independently.
- From September 2026, pupils in Year 6 may bring a smartphone to school if necessary, although a basic mobile phone ("brick phone") that allows calls and text messages only is strongly encouraged. Pupils in all other year groups must not bring a smartphone to school. Where a phone is needed for safety reasons, a brick phone may be brought in.
- From September 2027, smartphones will no longer be permitted in school for any pupil. Where a phone is required for safety reasons, pupils in Years 5 and 6 may bring a brick phone capable of making and receiving calls and text messages only.
- Any mobile phone brought to school must be switched off before entering the school site and handed to a member of staff on arrival. Phones will be stored securely during the school day and returned to pupils at the end of the school day. Mobile phones must not be accessed or used during school hours unless authorised by a member of staff in exceptional circumstances.

These expectations apply equally during educational visits, residential visits and any other school-led activities.

This phased approach allows pupils, families and the school community time to adapt while maintaining our commitment to creating a calm, connected and distraction-free environment in which all children can thrive.

Exceptions

We recognise that some pupils may require access to a smartphone for medical or additional needs. In such circumstances, parents or carers should discuss this with the Headteacher so that appropriate arrangements can be agreed on an individual basis.

Location-Tracking Devices

The safety and wellbeing of all pupils is our highest priority. To support effective safeguarding arrangements for individuals and groups of children, pupils must not bring or wear GPS tracking devices, electronic tags or other location-monitoring devices whilst attending school, educational visits, residential visits or any school-led activity. This includes devices that allow parents, carers or other individuals to track a child's location in real time.

The use of tracking devices may create safeguarding, privacy and data protection concerns for both the individual child and others within the school community. For this reason, the school does not permit the use of such devices on school premises or during school activities.

Where a pupil arrives wearing a tracking device, staff will ask for it to be removed and stored securely until the end of the school day. Parents and carers are asked to support the school by ensuring that children do not wear or bring tracking devices to school.

In exceptional circumstances, where a tracking or monitoring device forms part of an agreed medical or safeguarding plan, arrangements must be discussed in advance with the Headteacher so that appropriate consideration can be given to the needs of the child.

Responding to Breaches of the Policy

We expect all members of our school community to follow this policy in order to maintain a safe, calm and focused learning environment. Where the policy is not followed, staff will respond in a respectful, proportionate and consistent manner, in line with our Relationship and Behaviour Policy.

- Any smartphone or internet-enabled device brought onto school premises without prior agreement will be collected by a member of staff and stored securely.
- Confiscated smartphones or internet-enabled devices will only be returned directly to a parent or carer.
- Where a pupil brings a permitted mobile phone (for example, an approved brick phone for travel purposes), it must be handed to a member of staff upon arrival. If it is not handed in and is found during the school day, it will be collected and stored securely. The device will be returned directly to a parent or carer.
- Staff will use each incident as an opportunity to support understanding and reinforce the reasons for the policy. Where appropriate, discussions will take place with the pupil and their family to strengthen future compliance and address any concerns.
- Repeated breaches of this policy may lead to further actions being taken in accordance with the school's Relationship and Behaviour Policy.
- School staff have the authority to confiscate items where this is reasonable, lawful and proportionate, and all such actions will be carried out with regard for the wellbeing and dignity of the child.

Our aim is not simply to enforce rules but to help children develop responsibility, self-regulation and an understanding of how their choices affect their learning and wellbeing. We believe that working collaboratively with pupils and families is the most effective way to achieve lasting positive outcomes.

Definition of a Brick Phone

A brick phone (sometimes called a basic phone, feature phone or dumbphone) is a simple mobile phone designed primarily for making and receiving calls and sending and receiving text messages. Unlike a smartphone, a brick phone does not typically provide access to social media, app stores, internet browsing, video-sharing platforms or other online services. Brick phones are generally simpler to use and have fewer features than smartphones.

For the purposes of this policy, a brick phone is defined as a mobile phone that:

- Allows voice calls and text messaging.
- Does not provide access to the internet through a web browser.
- Does not support social media applications.
- Does not provide access to app stores or downloadable apps.
- Does not allow location sharing or GPS tracking through apps.

The school reserves the right to determine whether a device meets the definition of a brick phone. Where there is any uncertainty about a particular device, parents and carers should seek clarification from the school before the phone is brought onto school premises.

Working Together

At Winklebury Infant and Junior Schools, we recognise that technology is an important part of modern life. This policy is not intended to discourage the appropriate use of technology, but to support children in developing healthy relationships, strong social skills and positive habits around digital devices. By working together, staff, pupils and families can ensure that our school remains a safe, nurturing and connected environment in which all children can thrive.

Appendix 1 – Example Alternative Options to Smart Phones

This list is not comprehensive, and acts only to give examples. They are not recommendations.

Nokia 105 £19.99

Sim-free mobile phone
Talk, text and wireless FM radio
Very good battery life
Torch and snake game



Nokia 2660 Flip £50-60

Texts and phone calls
Very long-lasting battery
Range of colours
Bright, colourful display (non-pixelated text)
Built in FM radio, MP3 player and torch
Snake (and Tetris but you need to pay for the full game)
Single rear facing camera (no selfies!)



Nokia 5710 £74.99

Like an iPod with in-built wireless earbuds which charge when not in use
Inbuilt mp3 player with storage for thousands of songs
Inbuilt speaker
Wireless FM radio
Great sound quality
Great battery life
No wifi or whatsapp



Appendix 2 – SIM Card Details

When purchasing a SIM card for your child's phone, we advise that it has no data within the contract, but rather only calls and texts. This is so that there is no chance that they can access the internet. Asda, amongst a few other mobile providers, offer this type of SIM card. This is not a recommendation but a suggestion.