

## Mobile Phone & Device Policy

### DOCUMENT INFORMATION – FRONT SHEET

Please note – the generic policy will be published on the Trust website with a School specific policy published on the individual School Website. Physically printed copies of this policy may be out of date. For the most up to date policy please go to the School Website.

### POLICY DETAILS

| POLICY OWNER/AUTHOR                        | NEW POLICY | CURRENT POLICY - REDRAFT/AMENDMENTS |  |
|--|------------|-------------------------------------|--|
| Lara Hall – Director of School Improvement | Yes        | No                                  |  |

### VERSION HISTORY

| VERSION NO & DATE        | N/A         |              |  |  |
|--------------------------|-------------|--------------|--|--|
| VERSION DETAIL & CHANGES | 1           |              |  |  |
| PREVIOUS REVIEW DATE     | NEXT REVIEW | REVIEW CYCLE |  |  |
| N/A                      | August 2026 | TBC          |  |  |

### APPROVAL INFORMATION

| DATE APPROVED/REVIEWED      | APPROVED BY                               |     |  |
|-----------------------------|---|-----|--|
| UNION CONSULTATION REQUIRED | IF YES, PLEASE STATE DATE OF CONSULTATION |     |  |
| No                          |   | N/A |  |
| NAME OF LIFE MAT SCHOOL     | The Winstanley School                     |     |  |

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## 1. Purpose

This policy:

- establishes a **mobile phone-free environment during the school day by default**
- reduces disruption, improves focus, and supports learner wellbeing and positive behaviour
- supports safeguarding, including reducing risks of bullying, harmful content, filming/sharing, and online incidents
- sets consistent expectations for learners, staff, and parents across the LiFE Multi-Academy Trust

### 1.1 Relationship to other policies

- Behaviour Policy
  - Searching, Screening and Confiscation procedures (school-level, aligned to DfE searching guidance)
  - Child Protection/Safeguarding Policy (KCSiE)
  - ICT Acceptable Use / BYOD (mobile phones excluded from BYOD)
  - Equality, SEND, Supporting Learners with Medical Conditions
  - Educational Visits / Trips Policy
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## 2. Scope and definitions

### 2.1 Devices covered

This policy applies to **mobile phones** and **smart technology with similar functionality**, including (where relevant):

- smartphones and feature phones
- smart watches capable of messaging/notifications/recording
- devices capable of audio/video recording or internet access via networks

Schools may extend this to other devices (e.g., personal tablets) via their local schedule.

### 2.2 What “school day” means

The **school day** includes:

- lessons, transitions between lessons, breaktimes, lunchtime
  - Schools may also apply restrictions to before/after school while learners are under school supervision.
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## 3. LiFE MAT minimum standards

All LiFE MAT schools must:



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1. Operate as a **mobile phone-free environment by default** during the school day. Any departure is **exceptional and justified**.
  2. Ensure learners **do not have access** to their mobile phone during the school day (how this is achieved is a school decision).
  3. Set clear **sanctions**, including when **confiscation** is used, and ensure consistent enforcement.
  4. Include mobile phones/smart devices in the list of items that **may be searched for** (within legal powers) and align practice to searching guidance.
  5. Build in **reasonable adjustments/adaptations** for learners who need access because of disability/SEND or medical needs (e.g., diabetes monitoring), with individual plans.
  6. Set expectations for **staff conduct** (staff should not use phones for personal reasons in front of learners during the school day, with defined exceptions).
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## 4. Local school implementation choices (School Implementation Schedule)

### 4.1 School model

Our approach as a school is as follows:

#### “Not seen, not heard”

Phones switched off. Must remain in the learner’s school bag all day. If seen/heard → confiscated

### 4.2 Device state rule

Learners can keep possession of their mobile phones only on the strict condition that they are never used, seen or heard during the school day (8.30am til 3.05pm). We know some students like to use their mobile phones on their way to and from school, which is still permitted, but we will ensure that phones are switched off when they enter the site and placed at the bottom of their school bag.

### 4.3 Parent contact arrangements

Parents have an important role in supporting the school’s policy on prohibiting the use of mobile phones and should be encouraged to reinforce and discuss the policy at home as appropriate, including the risks associated with mobile phone use and the benefits of a mobile phone-free environment.

Where parents need to contact their child during the school day, they should be directed to the school office, where staff will pass on the message to the student.

### 4.5 Trips and outside normal hours

This policy is in effect during school hours daily (8.35am and 3.05pm) but phones maybe permitted for appropriate use on school trips and visits.

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## 5. Expectations and rules

### 5.1 Learners

Learners must not:

- use phones/smart devices during the school day (including breaks and transitions)
- record audio/video or take photos on site unless explicitly authorised for curriculum purposes

- use devices to contact others during the day

Learners should be taught:

- risks of phone use (distraction, disruption, bullying) and benefits of phone-free culture

## 5.2 Staff

- Staff must **consistently enforce** the school's rules
- Staff should not use personal phones **in front of learners who may be present** during the school day, except where authorised (e.g., school systems for behaviour/rewards, medical emergencies).
- Staff may use their phone when required to access an authenticator app but should be done so without learner's present.
- Staff may wear **smart watches** or similar devices. Brief and discreet interaction with a smartwatch (for example, to check a notification, time, or work-related alert) is permitted where it does not disrupt teaching, supervision, or engagement with learners. Staff must not use smart watches to send messages, access social media, record audio/video, or otherwise engage in personal communication while supervising learners unless there is a clear professional or safeguarding reason.

## 5.3 Parents/carers

- Parents should support the policy and direct daytime contact via [office@winstanleyschool.org.uk](mailto:office@winstanleyschool.org.uk) or tel: 0116 289 8686
- Parents should understand any exception plans and reinforce expectations at home

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## 6. Sanctions, confiscation, and returns

In accordance with government guidance published in February 2024, the Winstanley School does not permit the use of mobile phones on site. Students can keep possession of their mobile phones only on the strict condition that they are never used, seen or heard during the school day (8.30am til 3.05pm). We know some students like to use their mobile phones on their way to and from school, which is still permitted, but we will ensure that phones are switched off when they enter the site and placed at the bottom of their school bag. Failure to adhere to these expectations will result in the following consequences:

### 6.1 Minimum suggested stepped response

1. For the first breach of this policy, the device will be confiscated and placed in an envelope in reception ready to be collected at the end of the school day by the student.
2. For a second breach of this policy, the device will be confiscated and placed in an envelope in reception ready to be collected at the end of the school day by the parent.
3. For a third breach of this policy, students will be prohibited from having these devices on site and may be searched each morning before entering the premises.

DfE guidance notes schools should feel confident to confiscate phones where policy is breached, and that staff are protected from liability for loss/damage when acting lawfully.

### 6.3 Refusal to hand over

If a learner refuses to hand over a phone when the policy has been breached, we will seek parental support to ensure the learner follows our instruction and prevent further sanctions e.g. suspensions, in accordance with our behaviour policy.



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If a learner is on a mobile phone ban and it has been reported they have it on their person, we may enforce our searching powers (see section 7)

Certain types of conduct, bullying or harassment can be classified as criminal conduct. The school takes such conduct extremely seriously and will involve the police or other agencies as appropriate.

Such conduct includes, but is not limited to:

- Sexting (consensual and non-consensual sharing nude or semi-nude images or videos)
  - Upskirting
  - Threats of violence or assault
  - Abusive calls, emails, social media posts or texts directed at someone on the basis of someone's ethnicity, religious beliefs or sexual orientation
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## 7. Searching learners

- Headteachers (or authorised staff) have statutory powers to search where there are reasonable grounds and where items are prohibited by school rules; schools can identify mobile phones as an item that may be searched for within the behaviour policy.
  - All searching must follow the school's Searching, Screening and Confiscation procedures aligned to [DfE searching guidance](#).
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## 8. Reasonable adjustments and exceptions

### 8.1 Core principle

A phone-free environment is the default, but schools **must** meet legal duties and make **reasonable adjustments**.

### 8.2 Typical exceptions (examples)

- **Medical needs** (e.g., diabetes monitoring via phone) where preventing use would be unreasonable
- **Disability/SEND** where access is necessary to avoid substantial disadvantage (Equality Act)
- Other exceptional circumstances assessed case-by-case (e.g., young carers)

### 8.3 How exceptions work (required)

Where Parents/Carers or other adults believe their child requires their phone for any of the above, they should contact a member of the pastoral team to discuss the matter. If approved the following will be clearly communicated to parent/carer, staff and learner:

- permitted purpose
  - permitted times/locations (e.g., Head of Year office)
  - supervision arrangements
  - how to minimise wider access/distraction
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## 9. Safeguarding, online safety, and incidents



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- If phone misuse raises concerns that a learner may be at risk of harm, staff follow safeguarding procedures and involve the DSL.
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## **10. Implementation, communication, and review**

### **10.1 Implementation expectations**

Each school must:

- brief staff and train on consistent enforcement
- educate learners on rationale and expectations
- publish the policy and communicate it clearly to parents

### **10.2 Monitoring arrangements**

This policy will be reviewed annually by a Director of School Improvement for LiFE Multi-Academy Trust. At every review, it will be approved by the board of trustees.

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