Policy for the use of phones on site for children and parents

FAIRLAWN & HASELTINE FEDERATION

September 2026

Aims:

- to set clear guidelines in relation to mobile phones for children
- to ensure safe and appropriate practice across the Fairlawn and Haseltine Federation.

This policy works in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Safeguarding
- Behaviour
- Anti- bullying
- IT acceptable use

We are a smartphone free school, and we distinguish between basic phones and smartphones. In this policy, the terms mobile phone, basic phone and brick phone are used to mean a mobile phone without access (or potential access) to the internet. The term smartphone is used to mean any mobile phone with access (or potential access) to the internet.

Rationale for restrictions and delaying smartphone use:

The school leadership team and governors have determined that waiting longer to introduce smartphones benefits children's mental health and well-being, focus and broader development. The restrictions also aim to mitigate practical challenges posed by mobile phones, such as the risk of theft, loss, or damage and greater risk to pedestrian safety due to loss of focus.
Specific concerns regarding smartphone use by children include:

- Social and emotional mental health: Access to platforms with age limits (usually 13+) can expose children to social media stress, unrealistic images, peer pressure, and online bullying. Three in ten pupils worry about maintaining friendships and their mental health (source: National Behaviour Survey: Findings from Academic Year 2021/22, cited in the DfE guidance re mobile phones in school.)
- Wellbeing and sleep: Screen time displaces positive activities like socialising, exercise, and good sleep. The blue light from screens and the temptation to scroll and message late at night can affect sleep quality, impacting mood, concentration, and behaviour at home and school.
- Safety risks: Smartphones pose risks of cyberbullying and exposure to harmful content, such as violence or inappropriate material. Even with parental controls, they can give access to unsuitable websites, videos, and messages. One in five children aged 10-15 have experienced at least one type of bullying behaviour online (source: Office for National Statistics (ONS), based on the 10- to 15-year-olds' Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW))

The ban on children bringing in smart mobile phones:

Governors and the school leadership team have made the decision to ban children from bringing smart phones, smart watches and meta glasses onto the school premises. This aspect of the policy will come into effect on 1 September 2026.

Permitted devices:

We accept that parents/carers may want to provide their child with a mobile phone for personal security and safety.

- Pupils walking to or from school on their own are permitted to bring a mobile phone. Generally, only children in Years 5 or 6 should need a mobile phone for their journey to and from school.
- A basic phone or brick phone is considered the safest option. It is less likely to be targeted by thieves, does not facilitate access to internet harms.
- Parents are advised to get a call-and-text-only SIM with no data roaming for basic or brick phones.

Daily procedures:

Children who bring a mobile phone to school are required to adhere to the following procedures:

- Turn off their mobile phone before entering the school.
- Hand the mobile phone to an adult at the gate for safekeeping immediately upon arrival at school at Haseltine or put it in a classroom safe at Fairlawn.
- The mobile phone will be locked away until the end of the school day. The mobile phone may not be kept in the child's school bag.
- Children must collect their mobile phone at the end of the school day from their class teacher.
- The mobile phone must not be turned on until after they have left the school premises.
- If attending the Breakfast Club before school or Afterschool Club at the end of the day, the mobile phone must be handed in to the Club staff.

Exemptions:

In line with the Equality Act 2010, we recognise limited cases where pupils should be exempt from the rules because they have a special educational need, a disability, a medical need, or, because of a safeguarding concern.

- If a smartphone is required for medical reasons e.g. diabetes, its acceptable use will form part of an agreed and regularly reviewed care plan.

- Any smartphone that has been agreed for other reasons following a formal meeting with the headteacher, will need to be handed to the office for the day. To arrange a meeting contact the school office in the first instance.

Consequences:

- Confiscation: Children found in possession of a mobile phone who have not handed it in, or who have brought in a smartphone will have the phone confiscated. It will be kept in the school office, and parents will be notified.
- Collection: The child will not be permitted to collect the mobile phone without their parent/carer coming to the school and meeting a member of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT).
- Liability: The school accepts no responsibility for replacing lost, stolen, or damaged mobile phones.

Ensuring the safe and appropriate use of mobile phones and smartphones for parents/carers:

This section details the expectations for parents and carers accessing the school premises during drop-off, collection, or other activities.

- Restriction: Parents and carers should not be using mobile phones on the school premises, particularly when dropping off or picking up children at the end of the day. We ask all parents and carers to help us maintain a focused, screen-free environment for our children during drop-off and collection times, allowing children to transition smoothly and securely from their school day

Exceptions for parents/carers for special events and photo sharing:

- Exceptions: Exceptions to this rule are made for special events such as class assemblies, performances, concerts and Sports Day as the school appreciates that parents/carers may wish to keep memories of such occasions.
- Sharing restrictions: Parents and carers are reminded before each event that Images and videos taken on these occasions should not be shared on social media. Sharing restrictions are vital for child protection, data protection, religious or cultural reasons and personal privacy.

Review:

The Federation is committed to monitoring and managing mobile device use in the context of safeguarding and adhering to the Department of Education's Filtering and Monitoring Standards.

This policy will initially be reviewed after one year, and then every two years thereafter.