The Buckinghamshire Primary Pupil Referral Unit

This policy was agreed by the Management Committee: Autumn 2026

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New Policy Autumn 2026

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# 1. Introduction and aims

At The Buckinghamshire Primary Pupil Referral Unit, our policy aims to:

- Ensure our environment is mobile phone-free by default
- Ensure the safe, responsible and lawful use of mobile phones, where applicable
- Provide clear guidelines for the use of mobile phones for pupils, staff, parents/carers, visitors and volunteers
- Support the PRU's other policies including safeguarding, relational, e-Safety policies and Staff and Pupil E-safety Code of Conduct and use of IT equipment.

This policy also aims to address some of the challenges posed by mobile phones in the PRU, such as:

- Risks to child protection
- Data protection issues
- Risk of theft, loss or damage
- Appropriate use of technology for learning purposes

Note: throughout this policy, 'mobile phones' refers to mobile phones and similar devices.

# 2. Relevant guidance

This policy meets the requirements of section 36 of the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act 2026, and the Department for Education (DfE)'s mobile phone guidance and behaviour guidance. Further guidance that should be considered alongside this policy includes Keeping Children Safe in Education, which sets out the expectation that all schools should be mobile phone-free environments by default.

# 3. Roles and responsibilities

## 3.1 Staff

All staff (including teachers, support staff and supply staff) are required to actively enforce this policy and challenge any breach of mobile phone restrictions immediately and consistently.

Volunteers, or anyone else otherwise engaged by the PRU, must alert a member of staff if they witness, or are aware of, a breach of this policy.

The Headteacher, Sam Haig, is responsible for monitoring the policy and reviewing it every year and holding staff and pupils accountable for its implementation.

Staff will address any questions or concerns from parents/carers quickly and clearly communicate the reasons for prohibiting the use of mobile phones.

## 3.2 Management Committee

The Management Committee reviews and approves this policy annually.

## 4. Use of mobile phones by staff

The DfE's mobile phone guidance says that staff should not use their own mobile phone for personal reasons in front of pupils throughout the PRU day. All PRUs should be mobile phone-free environments by default: anything other than this should be by exception only.

### 4.1 Personal mobile phones

Staff (including volunteers, contractors and anyone else otherwise engaged by the PRU) are not permitted to use their personal mobile phone during the PRU day while pupils are present. Use of personal mobile phones must be restricted to non-contact time, and to areas of the PRU where pupils are not present (such as the staffroom).

There may be circumstances in which it's appropriate for a member of staff to have use of their phone during contact time, for personal reasons. For instance (this list is non-exhaustive):

- For emergency contact by their child, or their child's PRU
- In the case of acutely ill dependents or family members

The headteacher will decide on a case-by-basis whether to allow for special arrangements.

If special arrangements are not deemed necessary, PRU staff can use the PRU office number 01296 387300 as a point of emergency contact.

### 4.2 Data protection

Staff must not use their personal mobile phones to process personal data, or any other confidential PRU information, including entering such data into generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools such as chatbots (e.g. ChatGPT and Google Gemini).

More detailed guidance on data protection can be found in the PRU's GDPR and e-Safety policies.

### 4.3 Safeguarding

Staff must not give their personal contact details to parents/carers or pupils, including by connecting through social media and messaging apps.

Staff must avoid publicising their contact details on any social media platform or website, to avoid unwanted contact by parents/carers or pupils.

For further guidance refer to the Staff E-safety Code of Conduct and use of IT equipment, and e-Safety policy.

Staff must not use their personal mobile phones to take photographs or recordings of pupils, their work, or anything else that could identify a pupil. If it's necessary to take photos or recordings as part of a lesson / PRU trip / activity, this must be done using PRU equipment unless in exceptional circumstances.

### 4.4 Using personal mobiles for work purposes

In some circumstances, it may be appropriate for staff to use personal mobile phones or a similar device during the PRU day in front of pupils for work. Such circumstances may include, but are not limited to:

- Use of multi-factor authentication

- Emergency evacuations
- Supervising off-site trips
- Supervising residential visits

In these circumstances, staff will:

- Use their mobile phones in an appropriate and professional manner, in line with our staff code of conduct
- Not use their phones to take photographs or recordings of pupils, their work, or anything else that could identify a pupil
- Refrain from using their phones to contact parents/carers. If necessary, contact must be made via the PRU office

### 4.5 Sanctions

Staff that fail to adhere to this policy may face disciplinary action. See the PRU's staff disciplinary policy for more information.

## 5. Use of mobile phones by pupils

The DfE's mobile phone guidance says that the use of mobile phones should be prohibited throughout the PRU day.

Pupils must not use their mobile phones during the school day, including during lessons, in the time between lessons, at breaktimes and at lunchtimes, unless explicitly authorised by a member of staff (for example, for a specific medical reason).
Due to some pupils travelling for a long period of time in taxis they are permitted to bring mobile phones to the PRU for use on the way to and home from the PRU. Pupils with medical needs would be permitted to have a mobile phone

Staff collect mobile phones on arrival and these are kept in in a secure location in the office.
Pupils will be taught the risks that are associated with the use of mobile phones, both in the PRU and more broadly, to make sure they understand the decision to prohibit the use of mobile phones throughout the PRU day. These risks can include a loss of focus in lessons, classroom disruption and an increase in bullying. Pupils will be encouraged to see a mobile-phone free environment as desirable and valuable.

### 5.1 Use of smartwatches by pupils

The DfE's statutory mobile phones guidance includes in the term 'mobile phones' all devices with communications and smart technology that the PRU chooses to include in its policy.

Smartwatches are wristwatches with smart technology in them. They can be used to tell the time, send and receive text and voice messages, make calls and listen to music. Some smartwatches have wellness and health-related features.

Pupils are not permitted to bring smartwatches to the PRU.

### 5.2 Exceptions for special circumstances

The PRU may permit pupils to use a mobile phone in the PRU, due to exceptional circumstances.

In the case of permission due to exceptional circumstances, permission will only be granted where there is a documented safeguarding or medical necessity. To request such permission, pupils or parents/carers should contact the Teacher in Charge at the relevant site.

Any pupils who are given permission must then adhere to the PRU's code of conduct for mobile phone use (see appendix 1).

### 5.3 Sanctions

If a pupil is in breach of this policy mobile phones will be confiscated until the end of the school day (PRUs are permitted to confiscate phones from pupils under sections 91 and 94 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006). Repeated breaches may result in parents/carers being required to collect the device.

## 6. Use of mobile phones by parents/carers, volunteers and visitors

Parents and carers are encouraged to reinforce and discuss this policy at home as appropriate, including the risks associated with mobile phone use and the benefits of a mobile phone-free environment.

Parents/carers, visitors and volunteers (including Management Committee members and contractors) must adhere to this policy as it relates to staff if they are on the PRU site during the PRU day.

This means:

- Not taking pictures or recordings of pupils, unless it's at a public event (such as a PRU fair), or of their own child
- Using any photographs or recordings for personal use only, and not posting on social media without consent
- Not using phones in lessons, when working with pupils or while children are present

Parents/carers, visitors and volunteers will be informed of the rules for mobile phone use when they sign in at reception or attend a public event at the PRU.

Parents/carers must use the PRU office as the first point of contact if they need to get in touch with their child during the PRU day. They must not try to contact their child on their personal mobile during the PRU day.

## 7. Loss, theft or damage

Pupils bringing mobile phones to the PRU must make sure that their phones are appropriately labelled, ready to be stored away securely in the office when not in use during the PRU day.

Pupils must turn off their phones before handing them to office staff to store during the school day. Staff must secure their mobile phones as much as possible, including using passwords or pin codes to protect access to the phone's functions. Failure by staff to do so could result in data breaches.

The PRU accepts no responsibility for mobile phones that are lost, damaged or stolen on PRU premises or transport, during PRU visits or trips, or while pupils are travelling to or from the PRU.

To ensure pupils and parents/carers are aware of the disclaimer above the PRU will:

- Include the disclaimer in the inreach pack
- Put signs up in the PRU entrance or office
- Include disclaimers in your permission forms for bringing a phone to the PRU
- Provide a copy of the mobile phone policy to new parents/carers

Confiscated phones will be stored in the PRU office a secure location / locked cabinet. The PRU is responsible for the safe keeping of confiscated mobile phones.

Lost phones should be returned to the PRU office. The PRU will then attempt to contact the owner.

## 8. Monitoring and review

The PRU is committed to making sure that this policy has a positive impact on pupils' education, behaviour and welfare. When reviewing the policy, the PRU will take into account:

- Feedback from parents/carers and pupils
- Feedback from staff
- Records of behaviour and safeguarding incidents
- Relevant advice from the DfE, the local authority and any other relevant organisations

If there are any concerns regarding this policy, these should be brought to the attention of the Headteacher, Sam Haig, in a timely manner.

The Management Committee's role in reviewing this policy is set out in section 3.

## 9. Appendix 1: Code of conduct for pupils allowed to bring their phones to the PRU due to exceptional circumstances

### Pupil Code of Conduct for Mobile Phone Use

At Buckinghamshire Primary PRU, you must follow the rules below if you bring your mobile phone to school:

1. You may not use your mobile phone during the school day.
2. Phones must be switched off as you enter the school building and must not go back on until you have left, unless you have permission to leave it on in exceptional circumstances.
3. Phones must be given to the office staff on arrival at school and will be stored safely in the office until the end of the day.
4. You cannot take photos or recordings (either video or audio) of school staff or other pupils on the school premises.
5. Avoid sharing your contact details with people you don't know, and don't share other people's contact details without their consent.
6. Don't share your phone's passwords or access codes with anyone else.
7. Don't use your mobile phone to bully, intimidate or harass anyone. This includes bullying, harassing or intimidating pupils or staff via:
    a. Email
    b. Text/messaging app
    c. Social media

**Parent and Pupil (KS2) Agreement**

We understand the school's code of conduct around mobile phones in the PRU and will adhere to this carefully.

Pupil signature: _____ (KS2 pupils only)

Parent signature: _____

## 10. Appendix 2: Permission form allowing a pupil to bring their phone to the PRU

| PUPIL DETAILS | |
|---|---|
| **Pupil name:** | |
| **Year group/class:** | |
| **Parent/carer(s) name(s):** | |

The PRU has agreed to allow *[insert pupil name]* to bring their mobile phone to the PRU because they either:

- Travel to and from the PRU in a taxi
- Are a young carer
- Need the phone to support their medical needs

Pupils who bring a mobile phone to the PRU must abide by the PRU's policy on the use of mobile phones, and its pupil code of conduct for mobile phone use.

The PRU reserves the right to revoke permission if a pupil does not abide by the policy.

Parent/carer signature: _____

Pupil signature (KS2): _____

| FOR PRU USE ONLY | |
|---|---|
| **Authorised by:** | |
| **Date:** | |

## 11. Appendix 3: Template mobile phone information slip for visitors

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### Use of mobile phones and similar devices in our PRU

Our PRU is a mobile phone-free environment.

- Please keep your mobile phone on silent/vibrate while on the PRU grounds
- Please do not use phones where pupils are present. If you must use your phone, you may go to the PRU office or staffroom
- Do not take photos or recordings of pupils (unless it is your own child), or staff
- Do not use your phone in lessons, when working with pupils or while children are present

The PRU accepts no responsibility for phones that are lost, damaged or stolen while you are on the PRU grounds.

A full copy of our mobile phone policy is available from the PRU office.