Rishton Methodist Primary School

Mobile Phone and Personal Device Policy 2026 - 2027

Our Christian Vision

As a Methodist school, our values lie at the heart of all we are and do. Within our caring Christian community, where all are welcome, everyone is encouraged to be the best that they can possibly be. We promote respect, compassion and resilience to prepare our children for the challenges of an ever-changing world and encourage our whole school community to 'Rise up...take courage and do it" (Ezra 10:4).

Agreed by Governing Board on 01.09.2026

Policy will be reviewed by 01.09.2026

Created by SLT

Policy Overview Summary - Pupils must not have access to a mobile phone or similar personal smart device at any time during the school day. A phone brought to school must be handed to the school office on arrival and collected at the end of the day.

1. Purpose and Scope

This policy establishes a clear, consistent and safeguarding-led approach to mobile phones and other personal smart devices at Rishton Methodist Primary School. It supports a calm, safe and distraction-free environment in which children can learn, play and develop positive relationships.

The policy applies on the school site, throughout the school day and during school-led activities where the school determines that the same expectations are necessary. It applies to pupils, employees, supply staff, trainees, volunteers, contractors and visitors. Separate arrangements for trips and residential visits will be stated in the relevant risk assessment and parent information.

2. Statutory and Guidance Framework

This policy has been prepared with regard to:

- Department for Education (DfE), Mobile phones in schools (revised 2026; statutory from 29 June 2026 and to be followed from 1 September 2026);
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 (KCSIE), in force from 1 September 2026;
- Behaviour in schools: advice for headteachers and school staff;
- Searching, screening and confiscation at school;
- the Equality Act 2010 and the duty to make reasonable adjustments;
- the Children and Families Act 2014 and statutory guidance on supporting pupils with medical conditions; and
- UK data protection law and DfE guidance on taking and using photographs and videos in schools.

The statutory mobile-phone guidance expects schools to prohibit pupil access to mobile phones throughout the school day. A school may include this within its behaviour policy or publish a standalone policy. Rishton Methodist Primary School has chosen a standalone policy, which should be read alongside the Behaviour Policy, Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and Staff Code of Conduct.

3. Definitions

In this policy, "mobile phone" includes smartphones and basic phones. "Similar personal smart device" includes any personally owned device with comparable communication, messaging, notification, camera, audio/video recording or internet functions, including smartwatches and connected wearables. School-managed iPads and other authorised school equipment are not personal devices and are governed by school acceptable-use, safeguarding and data-protection controls.

4. Expectations for Pupils

Normal expectation:

Children should not bring mobile phones or similar personal smart devices into school. Parents and carers should contact the school office if they need to pass an urgent message to their child.

Where a phone is brought to school:

1. The device must be switched off before the child enters the school building.
2. The child must hand the device directly to the school office at the start of the school day. It must not remain in a pocket, bag, coat, locker or classroom.
3. Office staff will store the device in the designated secure location.
4. The phone must remain switched off and may not be accessed during lessons, movement between lessons, breaktime, lunchtime, clubs within the school day or collective worship.
5. At the end of the school day, the phone may be collected by the child or by their parent/carer or guardian, in accordance with the school's collection arrangements.
6. The school will take reasonable care of a handed-in device. Families are strongly advised not to send expensive devices to school; devices are brought onto the premises at the owner's risk, subject to the school's legal responsibilities.

Prohibited pupil use:

- using, checking, displaying or switching on a personal device during the school day;
- making calls, sending messages, accessing social media, games, websites or online services;
- taking, attempting to take, storing or sharing photographs, video or audio recordings;
- using a smartwatch or wearable to communicate, record, access notifications or go online; and
- using a device to bully, harass, threaten, cheat, access harmful content or undermine another person's privacy.

5. Breaches, Confiscations and Safeguarding

If a pupil has not handed in a device, or a device is seen, heard or used, a staff member will require it to be handed over. The device will be taken to the school office, stored securely and recorded. The response will be calm, proportionate and consistent with the Behaviour Policy, taking account of the pupil's age, SEND, medical needs and relevant circumstances.

- For a first or minor breach, the pupil will be reminded of the rule and the device will normally be returned at the end of the day to the pupil or parent/carer, as directed by a senior leader.
- For repeated, deliberate or serious breaches, the school may require collection by a parent/carer, apply an appropriate behaviour sanction, agree a support plan, or impose a longer proportionate period of confiscation.
- Where misuse may indicate that a child is suffering or at risk of harm, staff must follow the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and report immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or deputy.
- Only the headteacher or an authorised member of staff may search a pupil or their possessions, and only in accordance with the law, the Behaviour Policy and DfE searching, screening and confiscation guidance.
- Staff must not search through the contents of a device simply because it has been confiscated. Any examination of data must be lawful, necessary, proportionate and

undertaken only by authorised staff in line with applicable guidance; police advice will be sought where appropriate.
- If content suggests a crime, child-on-child abuse, sexual imagery, exploitation or another safeguarding concern, staff must preserve evidence, avoid copying or forwarding it, and seek immediate advice from the DSL.

6. Exceptions and Reasonable Adjustments

The school recognises that a strictly applied rule may place a disabled pupil at a substantial disadvantage or may conflict with an agreed medical-support arrangement. Any exception must be individual, necessary and documented; it is not a general exemption from the policy.

- Requests should be made to the headteacher and considered with the DSL, SENCO and/or medical lead as appropriate.
- The agreed plan will define the specific purpose, times, location, supervision, storage and review date.
- Where possible, the school will use a school-managed device or another suitable adjustment instead of unrestricted personal-phone access.
- Emergency access may be authorised by the headteacher or DSL where necessary to safeguard a pupil.

7. Staff, Volunteers and Contractors

Staff Standard - Personal mobile phones and personal smart devices must not be used during working time or anywhere they are visible or accessible to pupils. No photograph, video or audio recording of a pupil may be made on a personal device.

- Personal phones must be switched off or on silent and stored securely with personal belongings, out of sight and inaccessible to pupils. They must not be kept on desks, carried around classrooms or used in corridors, playgrounds, dining areas or other pupil spaces.
- Personal calls, messages, social media and other personal use must not take place during directed or pupil-contact time. In a genuine personal emergency, staff should inform a senior leader and use the designated private area or the school office.
- Limited operational use (for example, multi-factor authentication or an emergency call) requires prior authorisation where practicable, must be brief and must take place away from pupils. This does not authorise photography, video or audio recording.
- Staff must not give pupils or families their personal mobile number or communicate through personal accounts, except where an expressly approved school procedure applies.
- School business must be conducted through approved school systems and devices. Safeguarding concerns must be reported through the school's established procedures, not stored in personal notes, messages or cloud services.
- Supply staff, volunteers, contractors and visitors must be told the relevant expectations on arrival. A breach by an adult will be managed under the Staff Code of Conduct, disciplinary, low-level concerns, allegations or contract-management procedures as appropriate.

8. Photographs, Video and Evidence of Learning

Personal devices must never be used to photograph, film or make audio recordings of pupils, their work or school activities. This prohibition applies on site and during trips, clubs, performances and other school-led activities.

- Class iPads or another specifically authorised, school-managed device must be used to record photographic or video evidence of learning.
- Before recording, staff must check the intended educational purpose and the school's current permissions, privacy information and safeguarding restrictions.
- Only the minimum necessary images or footage should be captured. Staff should avoid recording sensitive, embarrassing or unnecessary information.
- Content must be uploaded or stored only in the school's approved system, with access limited to authorised users and retention/deletion managed under school policy.
- Images must not be transferred to personal devices, personal email, consumer messaging services or personal cloud storage.
- Any accidental capture or storage on a personal device must be reported immediately to the headteacher/DSL and Data Protection Officer; the individual must follow instructions to contain and securely delete the material.

9. Parents, Carers and Communication

- Parents and carers should not contact a child on a personal device during the school day. Urgent messages must go through the school office.
- Families should reinforce the policy at home, including the risks of distraction, online bullying, inappropriate recording and sharing.
- Parents and carers must ensure that a device brought for travel reasons is switched off and handed in on arrival.
- The school will publish and explain the policy, remind families regularly and provide clear office contact arrangements.
- Rules for parent/carer photography at performances, sports days or other events will be communicated separately and must protect pupils' privacy and safeguarding needs.

10. Trips, Clubs and Activities Outside the Normal Day

The trip or activity leader will decide, through the relevant risk assessment, whether pupil phones are prohibited, handed to staff, or subject to a defined arrangement outside the normal school day. The decision will consider age, journey safety, communication arrangements, safeguarding, SEND and medical needs. Unless parents are told otherwise in writing, the normal school-day rule applies. Staff must continue to use school-managed devices for photographs and video.

11. Roles and Responsibilities

Role	Responsibility
Governing Body	Approve and monitor the policy; assure alignment with safeguarding, behaviour, equality and data-protection duties.
Headteacher	Implement and communicate the policy; authorise proportionate exceptions and searches; ensure consistent staff practice.
DSL / deputies	Lead the safeguarding response to device-related concerns and ensure appropriate recording, referrals and support.
SENCO / medical lead	Advise on reasonable adjustments and individual medical or SEND arrangements.
All staff	Model and enforce the policy consistently; secure personal devices; use class iPads for learning evidence; report concerns promptly.
Office staff	Receive, store and return handed-in devices under the agreed secure procedure and maintain any required record.
Pupils and families	Follow the no-access rule, use the office for communication and support the school's mobile phone-free culture.

12. Training, Monitoring and Review

The policy will be included in induction and safeguarding/behaviour updates. Pupils will be reminded at the start of each academic year and at appropriate intervals. The headteacher will monitor breaches, safeguarding concerns, exceptions and consistency of implementation. The Governing Body will review the policy at least annually and sooner following a relevant incident, legal or guidance change, identified inequality, new technology or a change in school practice.

13. Complaints

Concerns should first be raised with the headteacher. Complaints will be considered under the school's Complaints Policy. Concerns about the headteacher should be directed to the Chair of Governors. Safeguarding concerns must be reported immediately through the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and must not wait for the complaints process.