

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 Physically printed copies of this policy may be out of date.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	N/A	NEXT REVIEW	August 2026	REVIEW CYCLE	TBC

APPROVAL INFORMATION

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

Table of Contents

1.	Purpose	3
2.	Scope and Definitions	3
3.	LiFE MAT minimum standards.....	3
4.	Local school implementation choices (School Implementation Schedule)	4
5.	Expectations and rules	4
6.	Sanctions, confiscation, and returns	5
7.	Searching learners (summary statement).....	6
8.	Reasonable adjustments and exceptions	6
9.	Safeguarding, online safety, and incidents	7
10.	Implementation, communication, and review.....	7

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:

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:

Mobile phones should not be “**seen, heard or used**” throughout the school day. Phones should be switch off and remain in the students’ bag all day. If they are “**seen, heard or used**”, they are to be confiscated.

4.2 Device state rule

Students on arrival to school should ensure their mobile phones are:

- powered off
- stored out of sight in bags

in addition, students should ensure the following:

- smart watches disabled
- Headphones/Airpods/earbuds are removed and stored out of sight in their 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 contact reception where staff will pass on the message to the student.

4.4 Sixth form

(this is not applicable)

4.5 Trips and outside normal hours

The rules outlined in this policy apply equally to school day trips and residential visits unless a member of staff gives permission for students to use their phones.

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 can use their phones for professional use but not in front of students unless there are occasions where it is appropriate for a teacher to use a mobile phone or similar device for instance to issue homework or to use multi-factor authentication.
- 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 reception
- Parents should understand any exception plans and reinforce expectations at home

6. Sanctions, confiscation, and returns

6.1 Graduated response to breach of this policy

1. **First breach:** confiscation until end of day + behaviour consequence including a lunchtime detention. Student can collect.
2. **Second breach:** confiscation until parent collection + behaviour consequence including a lunchtime detention. Parental meeting to be had with the relevant Head of Year/SLT year link.
3. **Third breach:** Student must hand in their phone each day to the relevant Head of Year/Member of SLT or leave their phone at home.

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. The Department for Education guidance states that *'headteachers are backed by DfE to confiscate mobile phones and similar devices, if they consider it proportionate, for whatever length of time they deem proportionate.'*

Where a phone needs to be collected by a parent, they must do this between the hours of 8:30am and 4pm during the school term.

6.3 Refusal to hand over

If a student refuses to comply with a confiscation, the following will take place:

- If in a lesson, a teacher will ask for On Call support
- The student will be taken by a senior staff member to inclusion where they will be based for the remainder of the day or until they hand their phone in to members of staff.
- The student will have to hand in their phone to staff at the start of the following day which will be collected at the end of the day.
- If a student claims to not have their phone but they are suspected to have been seen with one, they will be searched to check if they have a phone which, if present, will then be confiscated. (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

7. Searching learners (summary statement)

- 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](#).

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 their relevant head of year/SLT year link. If approved the following will be clearly communicated to parent/carers, 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

- 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.
