Smart Phone and Device Policy			
Reviewed by	Susannah Holmes	Authorised by	WGB Committee
Last Review	Summer 2026	Date	June 2026
Next Review	Summer 2027	Review Cycle	Yearly

1. Rationale and Context

Freegrounds Infant School is committed to promoting the safety, wellbeing and positive development of all pupils.

There is increasing national discussion regarding children's use of smartphones and social media. Recent government action has strengthened expectations around children's online safety and the use of mobile phones in schools. The school recognises the growing evidence linking excessive smartphone and social media use with risks to wellbeing, learning, concentration and safeguarding.

In response to these developments, and to support pupils' safety, wellbeing, learning and social development, the school has adopted a clear and proactive approach to the use of smartphones, smart devices and social media. The school aims to provide a safe, focused and inclusive learning environment in which pupils can fully engage with their education and develop healthy relationships both online and offline.

From September 2026, Freegrounds Infant School will operate as a smartphone-free school for pupils.

This policy also sets out expectations for adults on site, including parents, carers, visitors and staff. These expectations are designed to:

- Safeguard children and staff
- Promote a calm, focused school environment
- Model appropriate and responsible behaviour

The school is committed to ensuring that expectations are clear, proportionate and practical, and will work with staff to support individual circumstances where required.

2. Key Principles

- Pupils will not use or have access to smartphones during the school day
- Smartphones and similar devices such as Smart Watches are listed as prohibited items during the school day
- Adults are expected to model appropriate and responsible use of technology
- Safeguarding and privacy take precedence over convenience
- Expectations must be realistic and workable within the day-to-day running of the school

3. Scope

This policy applies to:

- Pupils
- Parents, carers and visitors
- All staff, including teaching and support staff

This policy should be read alongside the school's Behaviour Policy, Safeguarding Policy, Staff Code of Conduct, Acceptable Use Policy and Data Protection Policy.

4. Parents, Carers and Visitors

4.1 Drop-off and Collection Times

Freegrounds Infant School is committed to maintaining a safe, calm and respectful environment at the start and end of the school day.

Parents, carers and visitors are expected to:

- Make every reasonable effort to avoid using smartphones while on the school site during drop-off and collection times
- Refrain from making or receiving calls, using messaging apps or accessing social media in areas where pupils are present

Parents, carers and visitors must not:

- Take photographs, video or audio recordings of pupils or staff (other than their own child) on the school site
- Share images or recordings taken on the school site on social media or other platforms

The school recognises that brief and unavoidable phone use may occasionally be necessary. Staff will take a proportionate approach; however:

- Prolonged or visible use in pupil areas is discouraged
- Any form of recording without permission will be challenged

This approach is intended to:

- Model positive behaviour to pupils
- Protect the privacy and safeguarding of all children and staff
- Support a calm and orderly school environment

4.2 School Performances and Events

At specific, organised school events (e.g. performances, concerts, celebrations), the school may permit photography or recording under controlled conditions.

Where permitted:

- Parents may record their own child(ren) for personal use
- Reasonable care should be taken to avoid capturing other children

This does not permit:

- Routine recording during the school day
- Sharing images containing other children on social media

The school reserves the right to:

- Set conditions for recording
- Withdraw permission if safeguarding or organisation is compromised

5. Staff Use of Smartphones

5.1 Core Principle

Staff are expected to model professional and responsible behaviour.

Smart phones should not be visible, heard or used in the presence of pupils, except:

- In a genuine emergency
- Where explicitly authorised for school business

5.2 Permitted Use

Staff may:

- Carry personal smartphones during the school day
- Keep devices silenced and stored out of sight in pupil-facing areas
- Access phones in staff-only areas (e.g. staffroom, offices)

Staff may also use smartphones:

- In classrooms or workspaces during breaktimes, lunchtimes, before school and after school, provided pupils are not present

5.3 Expectations

Staff must:

- Ensure phones are not visible or used in front of pupils
- Avoid handling phones in classrooms, corridors, playgrounds or other pupil areas when pupils are present
- Keep phones on silent during teaching and supervision

5.4 Prohibited Use

Staff must not:

- Use smartphones during lessons, assemblies or while supervising pupils (unless in an emergency or authorised)
- Use personal devices to take photographs, video or audio recordings of pupils under any circumstances

All pupil-related recording must be carried out using school-approved devices in line with safeguarding procedures.

5.5 Practical and Operational Use

The school recognises that staff may need to use their phones for legitimate reasons, including:

- Emergency contact (e.g. family or own children's school)
- Accessing work systems (e.g. CPOMS authentication)
- Checking essential communication (e.g. email)
- Managing workload during breaktimes and lunchtimes

Where possible, this should take place outside pupil-facing time. However:

- Reasonable and proportionate use during non-pupil time is permitted
- Staff are not expected to leave their workspace unnecessarily to access their phone

5.6 Breaktimes, Lunchtimes and After School

- Classrooms are considered pupil spaces when pupils are present
- When pupils are not present (e.g. lunchtime, before school, after 3:15pm), staff may use phones appropriately
- Staff may remain in classrooms during these times and are not required to move to staff-only areas

5.7 Individual Circumstances

The school recognises that some staff may require access to their phone for specific reasons, including:

- Medical needs
- Family circumstances
- Safeguarding responsibilities

In such cases:

- Staff should speak with a member of the Senior Leadership Team
- Reasonable adjustments and agreed arrangements will be put in place

5.8 Professional Standards

While occasional and necessary use is understood:

- Routine or casual use in pupil-facing contexts is not appropriate
- Concerns will be addressed in line with staff conduct expectations

All staff use of smartphones is subject to:

- Safeguarding Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Acceptable Use Policies

6. Confiscation and Prohibited Items

In order to maintain a smartphone-free environment for pupils, smartphones and similar devices are listed as prohibited items during the school day.

6.1 Pupils

- Pupils must not bring smartphones or internet-enabled personal devices onto the school site
- If a pupil is found to have a smartphone or similar device i.e. smart watch, it will be confiscated by a member of staff

Confiscated devices will be:

- Taken to the school office or designated secure location
- Logged where appropriate
- Returned to a parent or carer, or in line with the Behaviour Policy

Repeated breaches may result in further action in accordance with the Behaviour Policy.

The school will take a proportionate and reasonable approach at all times, in line with DfE guidance on searching, screening and confiscation.

6.2 Searching

Where there is reasonable suspicion that a pupil is in possession of a prohibited item:

- Staff will request that the pupil hands over the device
- All searches will:

- Be conducted sensitively and respectfully
- Follow safeguarding procedures
- Be proportionate to the circumstances

6.3 Data and Privacy

Staff will not access, search, or alter content on a pupil's device. Where a severe safeguarding concern exists, the device will be passed immediately to the Senior Leadership Team, who will manage it strictly in accordance with statutory DfE searching, screening and confiscation guidance.

Where necessary, devices may be passed to senior leaders for further action.

6.4 Staff and Visitors

This section applies to pupils only.

Any inappropriate use of smartphones by staff, parents or visitors will be managed in line with:

- This policy
- The Staff Code of Conduct
- The school's safeguarding procedures

7. Implementation and Review

This policy will:

- Be reviewed and formally adopted by Governors
- Be communicated clearly to staff and parents
- Be implemented from September 2026

The school will continue to:

- Seek staff feedback
- Monitor practicality and consistency
- Make adjustments where necessary to ensure the policy remains effective and workable

8. Smartphone Free Childhood

Freegrounds Infant School is a signatory and supporter of the Smartphone Free Childhood campaign. Fundamentally, this is a grassroots movement bringing families together to stand up for healthier, happier childhoods.

Further information, FAQs and incredibly useful resources for families can be found at smartphonefreechildhood.org

9. Summary

Freegrounds Infant School is taking a clear and deliberate approach:

- A smartphone-free environment for pupils
- Clear expectations for adults
- A strong safeguarding focus
- Professional trust and flexibility for staff

This ensures a policy that is not only principled, but also practical and sustainable in everyday school life.