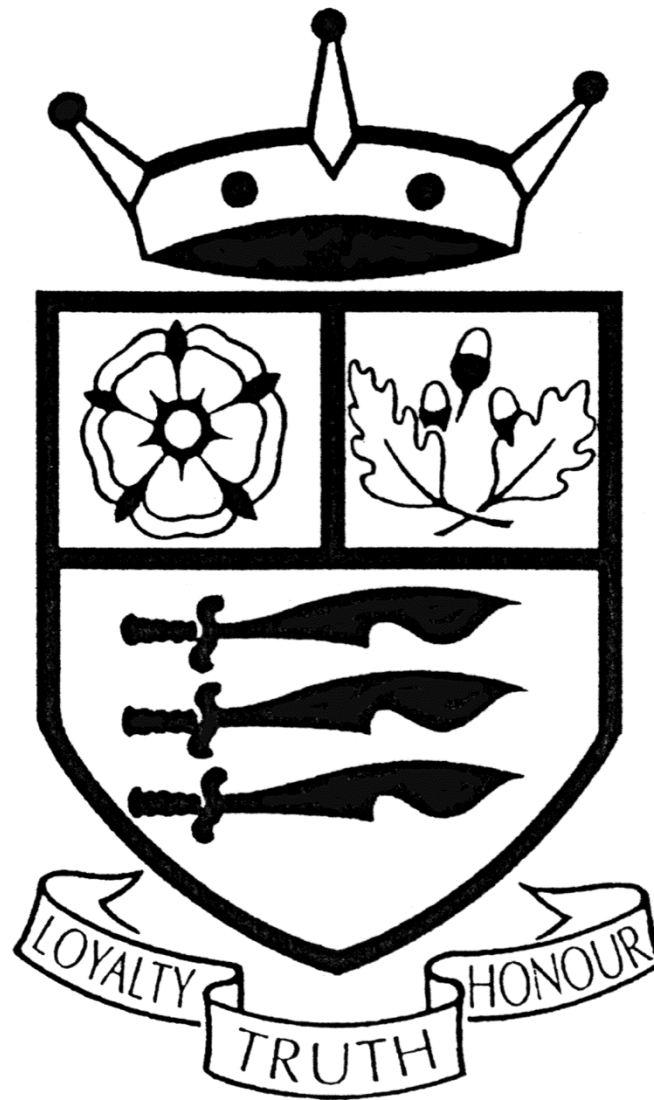


West Lodge Primary School



Personal Devices Policy

Approved by:	
Next review due by:	September 2025

Context

At West Lodge we are concerned about the safeguarding issues related to the use of personally owned mobile devices by pupils. This includes but is not limited to:

- Excessive use of mobile phones, including social media and gaming apps, can lead to screen addiction, which can negatively impact mental health by causing anxiety, depression, and sleep disturbances.
- Excessive phone use may lead to reduced face-to-face social interactions, which are important for the development of social skills and emotional intelligence.
- Excessive smartphone use affects the development of the brain
- Internet access on phones and personal devices can allow pupils to access inappropriate and harmful content
- Excessive smartphone use can cause damage to pupils physical health, including potentially leading to myopia, damage to pupils' spine, preventing pupils playing outside, affecting pupils' sleep patterns
- The use of social media sites on smartphones can lead to cyberbullying and/or risk of exploitation
- Internet access on phones and personal devices can allow pupils to bypass school internet filtering platforms
- Possible disruption to classroom activities
- Mobile phone cameras could lead to child protection, bullying, data protection issues with regards to inappropriate capture, use or distribution of images of pupils or staff
- Making disrespectful comments, misrepresenting events or making defamatory remarks about teachers or other pupils
- Pupils posting material on social network sites with no thought to the risks to their personal reputation and sometimes with the deliberate intention of causing harm to others
- The deliberate filming of events or people in order to humiliate, embarrass and intimidate by publishing to a wider audience such as on social media websites
- Children becoming targets for phone theft/robbery

Policy

1. No pupil is allowed a smartphone or smartwatch on the school premises.
2. If it is necessary for a child to bring a mobile phone into school the parent must complete a request form (see over) and return it to the class teacher
3. Personally-owned devices must not be used in any way while on school premises
4. Mobile phone devices bought in to school are the responsibility of the device owner. The school accepts no responsibility for the loss, theft or damage of them
5. Phones must be switched off before entering school premises and placed in the child's classroom with the class teacher
6. Any device found to be switched on during the school day will be confiscated, held by the Headteacher and only returned to parents or carers thereafter
7. Any child bringing a device into school without a completed authorisation form will have it confiscated and it will only be released to the parents or carer thereafter
8. Parents must not attempt to contact their child via their mobile phone during the school day, but must contact the school office

Useful websites:

1. Internet Matters <https://www.internetmatters.org/>
2. UK Safer Internet Centre <https://saferinternet.org.uk/>
3. NSPCC <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/>
4. Smartphone Free Childhoods <https://www.smartphonefreechildhood.co.uk/>
5. Delay Smartphones <https://delaysmartphones.org.uk/>

Further reading:

1. UK Council for Internet Safety: Child Safety Online: A practical guide for parents and carers whose children are using social media <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/child-safety-online-a-practical-guide-for-parents-and-carers/child-safety-online-a-practical-guide-for-parents-and-carers-whose-children-are-using-social-media>
2. Effects of Excessive Screen Time on Child Development: An Updated Review and Strategies for Management <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC10353947/>

Appendix 1

Personal Device and Pupil Mobile Phone Authorisation Form

Please can I request permission for _____ (child's name) in class
_____ to bring his/her mobile phone into school.

The reason why a phone is needed at school by my child is...

I have read and agree to the school's policy on mobile phones and devices.

I understand that, if authorised the device is the sole responsibility of the parent/carers and that a breach to the policy will result in confiscation and possible behaviour sanctions thereafter.

I understand that the device should not be a smartphone and instead a simple phone that makes and receives calls.

Signed Parent/Carer _____

Date _____

Appendix 2 – Parent Smartphone Agreement

In partnership with parents, West Lodge Primary school strongly recommends that to safeguard our children they should not be given a smartphone or smartwatch for their personal use.

If a child goes home alone in Year 5 or Year 6, a phone may be needed for communication between parent and child. If so we recommend a basic phone that does not have access to the internet but can be used for calls or texts.

As parents, if we decide our child is ready to have a smartphone for personal use, we recognise that the phone belongs to us, the parent(s) and that we are responsible for all content stored on the phone or sent from the phone- this includes, but is not limited to, images, messages, video content either generated on the phone by the child or others.

We understand that any inappropriate content stored on or sent from the phone at any time, even after being deleted, could have serious legal implications for us.

We recognise the importance of modelling and encouraging a healthy and responsible approach to phone use.

We will follow the guidelines below and the Policy drawn up by the school in consultation with us, the parents.

The school will:

- support parents who choose to delay purchasing a smart phone for their child
- provide online safety education for all children and promote alternatives to smartphones
- not permit children to bring smartphones or smartwatches to school

Parents will:

- not give a smartphone or smartwatch to their child for their personal use
- not allow their child to access any apps or social media with an age rating beyond their age (this includes, but is not limited to, WhatsApp, Instagram, Snapchat and TikTok)
- monitor and supervise their child's internet use
- lead by example by being mindful of excessive screen time and engaging in face-to-face interactions wherever possible

1. How our child will use their phone

If we decide to give our child a smartphone at home we will not allow our child to access any apps or social media with an age rating beyond their age. This includes but is not limited to, WhatsApp, Instagram, Snapchat, TikTok and YouTube. We will make sure that our child does not have unsupervised use of their phone.

2. How we will monitor and supervise our child using their phone

We will regularly monitor our child's phone usage, including the apps they use, websites they visit and messages they send. We will use appropriate parental control tools and put in place safeguards to protect our children from potential online risk, with help from the recommended guides on parental controls (see our website)

3. How school and parents will prepare children to use phones

We understand that the school will deliver robust Online Safety Education. We, as parents, will support school by talking about and actively engaging our children in online safety, privacy concerns, issues of cyber bullying and the potential of inappropriate phone use. ***We also understand that smartphones are not allowed in school, only phones that can be used just for calls/texts and only if absolutely necessary for a child in Y5 or Y6.***

4. How we will lead by example

We will model healthy phone habits by demonstrating responsible phone use, being mindful of excessive screen time and engaging in face-to face interactions with our children and other family members. We will limit our own use during family time and prioritise quality time together without distractions. When collecting my child from school I will ensure that I am not on my phone.

5. When things go wrong

We will support school in managing situations if our child is involved in inappropriate phone use and will trust the judgment of school in these situations. Where there is inappropriate use we will reconsider whether our child is ready to own a smartphone and consider advice from school professionals about this. We understand that the school is recommending we do not give our children a phone until they start Secondary School at the earliest.

By committing to this Parent Agreement for children's phone usage, we are supporting their growth, well-being and positive digital citizenship.

We agree with the School's Policy that our child(ren) will not have access to a personal smartphone or smartwatch at school – only basic phones for making calls can be used if they travel home alone in Y5 or Y6.

We will assess our child(ren)'s readiness for having a personal phone and make a decision as to when our child is mature enough to possess their own phone.

We agree to abide by this parent agreement.

Child(ren) _____

Parent(s) _____

Signed _____

When this agreement is returned to school, it will be photocopied and a copy will be sent home for you to keep and refer to.
