

Acceptable Pupil Use of Mobile Phones and Other E-Devices Policy

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Policy Author:	Eve Bartlet – Director of Education
Ratified by:	Fitri Brock – Proprietor



Helm Academy

EMPOWERING MINDS. NAVIGATING FUTURES

This policy is one of a series of school policies that, taken together, form a comprehensive statement of the school's aspiration to provide an outstanding education for all pupils and the mechanisms and procedures in place to achieve this. It should be read alongside policies relating to Equality and Diversity, Health and Safety, Safeguarding and Child Protection, Online Safety, Data Protection and Positive Behaviour Support.

This policy is non-contractual.

Policy Issues and Updates

Version	Created / Reviewed by	Date	Comment	Next Review
1	E. Bartlet	March 2026	Policy implemented – new framework aligned	March 2027
2	E. Bartlet	July 2026	Policy updated – KCSIE 2026	July 2027



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Legal Framework

This policy has due regard to current UK legislation and statutory guidance, including:

- DfE – *Mobile phones in schools* (most recent guidance)
- DfE – *Behaviour in Schools*
- DfE – *Keeping Children Safe in Education* (current edition)
- DfE – *Searching, Screening and Confiscation*
- *Working Together to Keep Children Safe*
- Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR
- Voyeurism (Offences) Act 2019
- Sexual Offences Act 2003
- Protection of Children Act 1978
- DfE (2014) *Cyberbullying: Advice for Head of Schools and school staff*

This policy operates in conjunction with the Anti-Bullying Policy, Online Safety Policy, Data Protection Policy, Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, Complaints Procedures Policy, Child-on-Child Abuse Policy, Positive Behaviour Support Policy and Staff Code of Conduct.

Roles and Responsibilities

Head of School

The Head of School is responsible for:

- Ensuring the effective implementation of this policy
- Monitoring its impact on behaviour, safeguarding and wellbeing
- Ensuring the policy does not discriminate against any pupil group
- Reviewing the policy annually
- Handling complaints in line with the Complaints Procedures Policy

Staff

Staff are responsible for:

- Enforcing the policy consistently and fairly
- Addressing misuse in line with the Positive Behaviour Support Policy
- Reporting safeguarding concerns to the DSL
- Supporting pupils to understand safe and responsible device use

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

The DSL is responsible for:

The DSL has strategic responsibility for safeguarding matters arising from the use of mobile phones and electronic devices. The DSL will ensure concerns are assessed alongside attendance, behaviour, wellbeing, mental health, SEND, Family Help, Child in Need, Child Protection and contextual safeguarding information to identify wider patterns of risk and vulnerability.

The DSL will oversee risk assessments, referrals, safety planning, information sharing, victim support, monitoring of repeat incidents and any multi-agency safeguarding responses linked to device misuse, online harm, exploitation, child-on-child abuse or criminal activity.

- Managing safeguarding incidents linked to mobile phone misuse
- Liaising with external agencies where required
- Overseeing responses to incidents such as upskirting, sexting or online abuse

Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- Follow the rules outlined in this policy
- Use devices responsibly and safely
- Report concerns or misuse promptly

Introduction

For many young people, mobile phones and personal electronic devices form part of daily life. When used responsibly, they can support learning and communication; however, misuse can undermine safety, wellbeing and learning.

Professional curiosity is essential when responding to device-related concerns. Staff will remain alert to changes in behaviour, secrecy around devices, online relationships, unexplained contact from unknown individuals, harmful online activity, exploitation indicators, cyberbullying, sexual harassment, coercion and other signs that a child may be at risk.

Staff should not view incidents in isolation and will consider whether device misuse forms part of a wider safeguarding picture requiring intervention or support.

This policy sets clear expectations for acceptable use and outlines consequences for misuse. It sits alongside the school's ICT Acceptable Use arrangements and PSHE / digital learning curriculum.

Pupils are educated regularly about online safety, digital citizenship and respectful behaviour.

The security of the devices is the pupil's responsibility. It is recommended that all devices are password/PIN protected and that pupils change their password regularly and never reveal it to anyone. The naming of devices is also recommended. Lost/found devices should be taken to Reception

Rules for Acceptable Use

Who, When and Where

- Pupils may bring mobile phones to school for use in transport only
- Secondary pupils (Years 7–11) must place phones in the secure container at Reception on arrival
- Devices are returned at the end of the school day
- Reasonable adjustments may be made for medical needs or caring responsibilities

What and How

- No age-inappropriate material may be stored or accessed
- Internet access to inappropriate platforms is prohibited
- Pupils must show content to staff when reasonably requested

Unacceptable Use

Unacceptable use includes, but is not limited to:

Staff will exercise professional curiosity when investigating misuse and will consider underlying vulnerabilities, relationship dynamics, peer influences, online grooming, exploitation risks, harmful sexual behaviour, discriminatory abuse and contextual safeguarding factors.

- Taking images, video or audio recordings of staff or pupils
- Sexting or sharing indecent material
- Cyberbullying, harassment or intimidation
- Disrespectful or abusive online communication
- Disrupting learning
- Refusing to hand over a device when requested
- Misuse outside school hours that impacts school relationships

The school does not tolerate cyberbullying.

Dealing with Breaches of the Guidelines

Responses to misuse are proportionate and aligned with the Positive Behaviour Support Policy. Actions may include:

- Returning the device to the appropriate storage location
- Temporary confiscation (parents notified)
- Removal of the privilege to bring a device
- Restorative discussion with a senior leader

Serious incidents are managed by the Director of Education in consultation with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).

Multi-agency working is central to safeguarding responses involving serious device misuse. The school may work with Children's Social Care, Family Help Services, Police, CAMHS, health professionals, local authority safeguarding teams, online safety specialists and other relevant agencies where risks indicate additional need or vulnerability.

Information will be shared lawfully, proportionately and without unnecessary delay where this is required to safeguard children and promote their welfare. Professional challenge and escalation procedures will be used where concerns remain unresolved.

Searching Pupils

School pupils have a right for their private life to be respected under Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR). This right is not absolute, and the school may interfere with this right where it is lawful, necessary, proportionate and in line with its powers under the Education Act 1996.

All searches will be conducted in accordance with the school's Searching, Screening and Confiscation Policy and relevant Department for Education guidance.

The Head of School, and other authorised staff members, have the power to search a pupil or their possessions where they have reasonable grounds to suspect that a pupil is in possession of a prohibited item. Mobile phones and personal electronic devices are deemed prohibited items for the purposes of this policy and may be searched for in line with the Positive Behaviour Support Policy.

In all cases, authorised staff will:

- Seek the co-operation of the pupil before conducting a search
- Ensure the pupil understands the reason for the search and how it will be conducted
- Give the pupil the opportunity to ask questions so that consent is informed
- Have due regard to DfE *Searching, Screening and Confiscation* guidance

Staff may search a pupil's outer clothing, pockets, possessions, desks or lockers. Outer clothing includes items not worn wholly next to the skin, such as hats, shoes, boots or scarves. Possessions include any goods over which the pupil has or appears to have control, including desks, lockers and bags.

A staff member may ask a pupil to show what they are doing on their mobile phone or electronic device if there are reasonable grounds to believe it is being used to cause harm. Where judged reasonable, staff may inspect and, if necessary, delete data on a pupil's device.

Staff will only examine or delete data where they reasonably suspect that the data has been, or could be, used to cause harm, undermine the safe environment of the school, disrupt teaching or be used to commit an offence. Where material may constitute evidence of an offence, it will not be deleted and will be preserved appropriately.

If a search uncovers a device being used to cause harm or containing prohibited material such as pornography, the device will be confiscated. Where illegal content is found, including child sexual abuse material, the device will be passed to the police as soon as reasonably practicable.

Searches will be conducted by a staff member of the same sex as the pupil, with a witness present who is also the same sex as the pupil being searched.

Pupils are required to comply with requests to show content or disable screen locks. Refusal to comply will be managed in line with the Positive Behaviour Support Policy.

Consequences

Appropriate sanctions will be applied where this policy is breached, including confiscation or restriction of device use.

Confiscation Procedure

- Pupils are informed when and how devices will be returned
- Confiscations are logged
- Devices are stored securely
- Repeated misuse may result in a long-term ban
- Parents / carers will be informed immediately

Serious Misuse or Criminal Activity

Pupils should be aware that the police will be informed if there is a serious misuse where criminal activity is suspected.

If a pupil commits an act which causes serious harassment, alarm or distress to another pupil or member of staff, the ultimate sanction may be a fixed term or in significant transgressions a managed permanent exclusion.

The school will consider the impact on the victim of the act in deciding the consequences and parents will be involved. The Head of Education or Designated Safeguarding Lead will have the right to view files stored in confiscated equipment and will seek the cooperation of parents in deleting any files which are in clear breach of these guidelines unless these are being preserved as evidence. If required, evidence of the offence will be preserved, preferably by confiscation of the device and keeping it secure or by taking photographs of the screen.

The DSL, Head of School and Director of Education will consider whether an incident should be reported to the Local Authority Safeguarding Team. The DSL will monitor repeat offences to see if there is any pattern in the perpetrator or the victim which needs further investigation.

The DSL will apply professional curiosity throughout decision-making and will analyse patterns, repeat incidents, online behaviours, victim experiences and emerging trends to identify

children who may require additional support, Family Help involvement or safeguarding intervention.

Following any such incident support will be offered and efforts made to facilitate effective closure for the victim. We also ensure that the perpetrator and any others are educated about the impact of their actions. The Head of Education and DSL will document the case history.

The impact on victims is prioritised and appropriate support provided for all parties.



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Appendix 1 – Pupil Mobile Phone Use

Never:

- Take photos of others without permission
- Bully or harass
- View or share inappropriate material
- Send indecent images

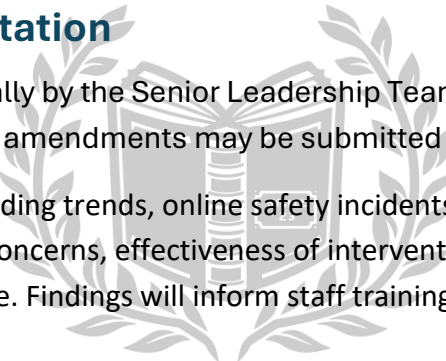
Stay Safe:

- Use passwords or PINs
- Name your device
- Hand in lost phones
- Report misuse

Review of Implementation

This policy is reviewed annually by the Senior Leadership Team and ratified by the Governance Body. Proposed amendments may be submitted to the Helm Academy Board.

Reviews will consider safeguarding trends, online safety incidents, pupil voice, staff feedback, multi-agency activity, repeat concerns, effectiveness of interventions and emerging risks associated with technology use. Findings will inform staff training, curriculum development and safeguarding priorities.



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Ofsted New Framework Alignment

Legal Framework

Inspection-aligned enhancement: Leaders ensure that expectations around mobile phone and device use directly support safeguarding, behaviour, inclusion and wellbeing. Compliance with statutory guidance is reviewed regularly and reflected in staff practice.

Roles and Responsibilities

Inspection-aligned enhancement: Leaders ensure roles and responsibilities are clearly understood and consistently applied, contributing to a calm, safe and respectful environment.

Introduction

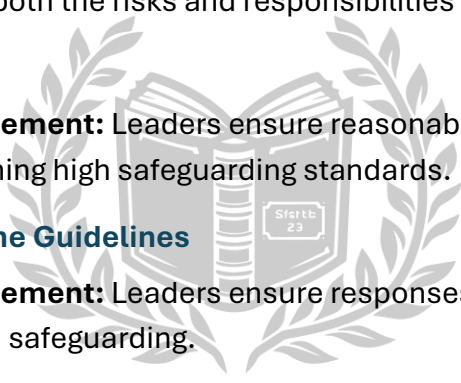
Inspection-aligned enhancement: Leaders ensure preventative education is embedded and that pupils understand both the risks and responsibilities associated with device use.

Rules for Acceptable Use

Inspection-aligned enhancement: Leaders ensure reasonable adjustments are applied appropriately while maintaining high safeguarding standards.

Dealing with Breaches of the Guidelines

Inspection-aligned enhancement: Leaders ensure responses are consistent, restorative and focused on learning and safeguarding.



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