



Mobile Phone and Smartphone Free Policy

Implemented September 2026

Definitions

For the purpose of this policy, the federation defines devices as follows:

Smartphone: Any mobile device with access to the internet, apps, social media, games, or messaging platforms.

Basic ('brick') phone: A mobile phone that allows calls and text messages only and does not have internet access or app functionality.

Smart watch: A mobile device, designed to be worn on the wrist, with a touchscreen display and computerised function such as sending messages, making phone calls, taking photographs.

Introduction and Aims

At Balksbury Federation, the safety, welfare and wellbeing of our children is paramount. From 1st September 2026, Balksbury Federation operates as a smartphone and smart watch free environment for children. Children are not permitted to bring smartphones or smart watches onto the federation site. Therefore, this policy reflects our commitment to safeguarding children's wellbeing, reducing risks associated with early smartphone use, and promoting healthy social development.

The aim of the Mobile Phone Policy is to regulate the use of mobile phones on federated site and safeguard against the misuse of mobile phones.

This policy applies to all individuals who have access to personal mobile phones on the federated site. This includes children, staff, parents, carers, volunteers, governors, visitors and contractors. This list is not exhaustive. This policy should also be read in relation to all federation safeguarding and behaviour policies.

A Federated Community Working Together

By working together, the federated community will encourage respectful behaviour, strong values, and a collective responsibility for appropriate mobile phone use.

Smartphones are now a common part of everyday life, but research increasingly highlights their negative effects on children. These include:

- Exposure to harmful content and cyberbullying
- Poor mental health (e.g. anxiety, depression, low self-esteem)
- Disrupted sleep, reduced attention and focus
- Reduced time for play, social interaction, and skill development

Children's Mobiles and Smart Watches

The following devices **are not** permitted for children:

- Smartphones
- Smart watches with internet, messaging or app capability
- Any device capable of accessing social media or online content

The federation recognises that mobile phones and smart watches are part of everyday life for many children and that they can play an important role in helping children to feel safe and secure. However, even if turned off and handed in during school hours, smartphones still:

- Create peer pressure for children to have a phone
- Encourage screen use during journeys to and from school within groups of children, reducing their awareness of their surroundings and personal safety
- Create social pressure and distraction

Therefore, children **are not** permitted to bring smartphones or smart watches onto the school site. Smartphones or other prohibited devices brought onto the school site will be confiscated, and parents/carers will be required to collect the device in person from the admin office.

Where a child needs a phone for safety or communication purposes (for example, walking to and from school), they may bring a basic ('brick') phone only.

Basic ('brick') phones must:

- Be switched off during the school day immediately on arrival at any school gate
- Be handed into the admin office on arrival
- Be collected at the end of the school day and not turned on until at any school gate

Medical Exception

Some children with medical conditions may require the use of a smartphone or smart watch to monitor their health (for example, to track and receive alerts for blood glucose levels in diabetes). Children who need to use a smartphone or smart watch to help manage their medical condition are permitted to have their device in school and are expected to follow the guidance in this policy. They must also sign the agreement, '*Balksbury Federation Mobile Phone in School for Medical Purposes*'.

Bringing a Basic ('brick') phone to school:

If in the event a parent/carer wishes for his/her child to bring a basic ('brick') mobile phone to school to contact the parent after school then the following conditions apply:

- The parent must notify the federation via admin office by returning the attached agreement form. Parents can also pick up a copy of this agreement from either office

- The phone or watch must be switched off on entry to site, handed in to the office first thing in the morning and collected at home time – please note that phones are left at the owner's own risk
- Basic mobile phones, smart phones or smart watches brought into school without permission will be confiscated and must be collected by an adult
- Basic mobile phones should not be turned on at the end of the school day until children leave any school gate

The Federation's Involvement in Children's Misuse of Phones Outside School

Where mobile phones or smart watches are used off school premises in ways that intimidate, harass, abuse, discriminate or otherwise negatively affect the safety or wellbeing of children within the federation, the matter falls outside our direct jurisdiction. However, when it is brought to our attention, the federation will take appropriate action when such behaviour impacts a child's safety, wellbeing, or ability to engage in school life. This may include contacting external agencies such as PCSOs, police and Children's Services.

In line with Department for Education (DfE) guidance, the federation will confiscate any mobile phone or smart device brought onto the federation site if it is believed to contain, or provide access to, material that is harmful to a child's wellbeing, as outlined above, or that conflicts with the federation's Behaviour Policy, Anti-Bullying Policy, or Code of Conduct.

The federation's lead DSL, or Leadership Team will contact parents/carers immediately to inform and discuss. The key aim for discussions with parents will be to: 'Understand, Prevent, Respond', and work together to support and protect children from:

- Cyberbullying
- Online abuse
- Emotional abuse

Visitors to the Federation Including Parents, Volunteers, Visitors and Governors

All visitors to the federation are expected to adhere to the mobile phone policy while on the premises. Mobile phones and smart watches must be kept on silent and out of sight at all times.

On arrival, visitors will be informed of these expectations through the Safeguarding Information Sheet.

Parents and governors should not use mobile phones while in school. However, parents may use their devices to take photographs or record videos during school events (such as performances or sports days). Any images or recordings must not be shared on social media if they include children other than their own.

Hampshire County Council Employees and Contractors

The above expectations apply to all individuals on site. However, the federation recognises that Hampshire County Council employees and contractors may have

specific operational needs. Where a Hampshire County Council employee or a contractor needs to use their phone for reporting and ordering, the federation insists that this is not done in front of children.

Staff Mobile Phones and Smart Watches

The federated team are not permitted to make/receive calls/texts on any device in the presence of children. Staff will ensure that emergency contact is directed through the school admin office in school hours unless otherwise directed by the Executive Headteacher or the Executive Deputy Headteacher.

It is the federation's expectations that:

- The federated team will have a clear understanding of what constitutes misuse of mobile phones through staff training
- The federated team should have their phones on silent, or switched off and out of sight. For example, in a drawer, cupboard or handbag during class time
- The use of mobile phones and smart watches should be limited to non-contact time when no children are present within admin offices or staff rooms
- The federated team will protect access to functions on their phone with passcodes/face ID/finger print access
- Should there be exceptional circumstances, for example, a sick dependent, then staff should make the Executive Headteacher aware of this so reasonable adjustments can be made
- The federated team are not permitted to use recording equipment on their mobile phones or smart watches, for example, to take recordings of children. **All** legitimate recordings and photographs should be captured using school equipment such as cameras and iPads
- The federated team will avoid placing themselves in compromising situations where they could be misinterpreted and lead to possible allegations
- The federated team will understand the need for professional boundaries and clear guidance regarding acceptable use
- The federated team will report any usage of mobile devices that causes them concern to the Executive Headteacher immediately

Mobile Device Usage on School Trips

The federation recognises that mobile devices provide a useful means of communication on offsite educational activities. However, staff should ensure that:

1. In the first instance, the offsite leader uses the federation's mobile phone
2. Federation two-way radios will be used in addition to the federation mobile phone on educational activity visits. This should be indicated on risk assessments and the channel number identified
3. Mobile use on educational activity visits should be appropriate and in line with the above, and will **never** include taking photographs of children

4. Mobile devices should not be used to make contact with parents during educational activity visits, including residential, and only follow point 1, or through the federated admin office
5. Where parents are accompanying an educational activity visit as a volunteer, they must be briefed prior to the visit in order to **not** make contact with other parents via calls, text, email or social networking, or, use their phone to take photographs of children and staff rules will apply

Policy Review Summer 2027

Balksbury Federation Basic ('brick') Mobile Phone in School Agreement

Name of Child: _____

Reason for needing a basic ('brick') mobile phone with no internet or apps in school:

Parent/Carer:

I confirm that I have explained the school rules regarding mobile phones to my child and confirm that they may take a basic mobile phone into school on that basis.

Parent/Carer signature: _____

Date: _____

Child: I will follow the school mobile phone rules.

Child signature: _____

Date: _____

The federation's Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) is Mrs MacDonald and Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads are Mrs Whitlock, Miss Bolton and Mrs Farrell; if you have any concerns regarding online safety, please do not hesitate to contact one of the DSLs.

Please return this agreement to admin office before your child brings their phone to school.

*Thank you
The Balksbury Team*

Balksbury Federation Mobile Phone or Smart Watch in School for Medical Purposes Agreement

Please make an appointment to see a member of the Leadership Team and bring your completed form to your appointment.

Name of Child: _____

Reason for needing a mobile phone in school:

Parent/Carer:

I confirm that I have explained the school rules regarding mobile phones, for the playground and in school, to my child and confirm that they may take a mobile phone into school on that basis. I understand that Balksbury Federation will not accept liability or loss of damage to the mobile phone.

Parent/Carer signature: _____

Date: _____

Child:

- I will follow the school mobile phone rules
- I will only use my mobile phone for managing my medical condition as agreed and not for any other purpose
- I will only share information on my mobile phone with adults and not with other children
- I will not allow other children to handle my phone

Child signature: _____

Date: _____

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