

SOUTHVIEW SCHOOL

MOBILE PHONE AND SMART DEVICE POLICY

Respect • Excellence • Friendship

Scope

This policy applies across Southview School and to pupils, staff, volunteers, contractors, parents/carers and visitors while on the school site or taking part in school activities. It should be read alongside Southview's safeguarding, behaviour, online safety, data protection and educational visits arrangements.

Last reviewed:	September 2026
Next review due:	September 2027
Policy owner:	Headteacher

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1. Introduction and aims

Southview School is a specialist setting where pupils' safety, wellbeing, dignity, learning and independence are central to the school day. The school aims to provide an environment in which mobile phones and similar smart devices do not distract from learning, relationships or safeguarding.

This policy aims to:

- maintain a mobile-phone-free environment during the school day by default;
- ensure any authorised use of mobile phones and similar devices is safe, responsible, lawful and proportionate;
- provide clear expectations for pupils, staff, parents/carers, visitors, volunteers and contractors;
- support safeguarding, data protection, behaviour and online-safety arrangements;
- reduce risks associated with inappropriate recording, sharing of images, cyberbullying, distraction, loss, theft and damage;
- recognise legitimate medical, communication and assistive-technology needs and provide appropriate flexibility where use is authorised.

Throughout this policy, “mobile phones” includes mobile phones and similar personal smart devices capable of communication, recording or internet access, including smartwatches where the school chooses to include them.

Residential provision – The View

Southview's residential provision, The View, has its own protocols for the use of mobile phones and similar devices outside the teaching day, in accordance with applicable national standards and residential regulatory requirements. Those protocols apply during residential periods and should be read alongside this school-wide policy. Where there is a difference between the arrangements for the teaching day and the residential period, staff should follow the relevant The View protocol and seek advice from the residential lead where required.

2. Relevant guidance

This policy has been adapted from the model mobile phone policy supplied to Southview School. The source policy identifies section 36 of the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act 2026, the Department for Education's mobile phone guidance and behaviour guidance, and Keeping Children Safe in Education as relevant material. The source also directs schools to consider guidance on searching, screening and confiscation.

This policy should also be read with Southview's current:

- Child Protection / Safeguarding arrangements;
- Behaviour Policy;
- E-Safety / Online Safety Policy;

- Data Protection and Privacy arrangements;
- Staff Code of Conduct;
- Educational Visits and Trips procedures; and
- The View's residential policies and protocols, where applicable.

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 Staff

All staff, including teachers, support staff, supply staff, volunteers and contractors working with pupils, are expected to understand and consistently implement this policy.

- challenge breaches promptly, calmly and consistently;
- model appropriate phone use and professional boundaries;
- refer safeguarding, welfare or online-safety concerns through the school's established procedures;
- protect confidential information and personal data;
- use school-approved equipment for photographs, recordings and pupil information unless a specific exception has been authorised.

3.2 Headteacher and senior leaders

The Headteacher and senior leaders are responsible for oversight of the policy, supporting consistent implementation, responding to significant concerns and ensuring the policy is reviewed in light of legislation, DfE guidance, safeguarding learning and Southview's experience.

3.3 Residential leadership

The residential lead is responsible for ensuring that The View's own mobile-phone and smart-device protocols are implemented during residential periods and remain aligned with the school's safeguarding arrangements and applicable national standards.

4. Use of mobile phones by staff

Staff should not use personal mobile phones for personal reasons in front of pupils during the school day. Personal phone use should normally be restricted to non-contact time and to areas where pupils are not present.

4.1 Personal mobile phones

- Personal phones should be kept out of sight and not used while staff are teaching, supervising or otherwise working directly with pupils, except where this policy expressly permits or an authorised exception applies.
- Staff may use their phone during contact time where there is a genuine emergency or an agreed personal circumstance requiring immediate contact. Where possible, staff should use the school office as an emergency contact point.

- Staff must maintain professional boundaries at all times.

4.2 Data protection

- Staff must not use personal mobile phones to process or store pupil personal data or confidential school information.
- Pupil photographs or recordings must not be taken on personal phones.
- Confidential or personal information must not be entered into public generative AI tools or other unauthorised applications.
- Staff should follow Southview's data protection and information-security arrangements at all times.

4.3 Safeguarding and professional boundaries

- Staff must not give personal contact details to pupils or parents/carers or connect with pupils through personal social media or messaging accounts.
- Staff must not use personal phones to photograph or record pupils, pupil work or anything that could identify a pupil.
- Where a photograph or recording is necessary for an approved educational or safeguarding purpose, school-approved equipment and procedures must be used.

4.4 Authorised work use

There may be circumstances in which a personal or school-provided phone is needed for work, for example during an emergency evacuation, off-site activity, educational visit or residential supervision. Any such use must be appropriate, professional and limited to the work purpose.

- Do not use the device to photograph or record pupils unless the school's approved process and equipment are being used.
- Do not use a personal phone to contact parents/carers unless this has been specifically authorised under an established school procedure.
- Follow the staff code of conduct and any trip/residential risk assessment or communication plan.

4.5 Work phones

Where Southview provides a work phone, it must only be used by authorised staff for legitimate work purposes. Access must not be shared without authorisation. Staff remain responsible for appropriate, professional and secure use of the device.

4.6 Staff breaches

Failure to follow this policy may result in management action and, where appropriate, disciplinary action in accordance with Southview's employment procedures.

5. Use of mobile phones by pupils

Mobile phones and similar personal smart devices must not be used during the school day, including lessons, transitions, breaktimes and lunchtimes, unless explicitly authorised for a specific reason.

5.1 Bringing a phone to school

Southview recognises that some pupils may need to carry a phone because of their journey to and from school, family circumstances, medical needs, communication needs or participation in an authorised activity. Where a pupil is permitted to bring a phone onto the school site, the device must remain switched off or otherwise secured as directed by staff and must not be used during the school day unless authorised.

5.2 Medical, communication and assistive-technology exceptions

A device that forms part of a pupil's agreed medical, communication or assistive-technology provision may be used where necessary. The arrangement should be known to the relevant staff and, where appropriate, recorded in the pupil's individual plan or other agreed documentation.

Examples

This may include a device used for a specific medical monitoring system, communication or another identified support need. The school will distinguish necessary assistive use from general personal phone use.

5.3 Smartwatches and similar devices

Smartwatches and similar devices that can send or receive messages, make calls, access the internet or otherwise communicate are subject to the same expectations as mobile phones during the teaching day, unless an exception has been authorised.

5.4 Sixth form / College students

College students are expected to follow the same school-wide mobile-phone expectations during teaching and supervised learning time. Any additional access arrangements based on age, independence or an identified need must be agreed by Southview and must not compromise safeguarding or the learning environment.

5.5 Searching, confiscation and sanctions

Where a pupil breaches this policy, staff will respond in line with Southview's Behaviour Policy and applicable DfE guidance on searching, screening and confiscation.

- A member of staff may instruct a pupil to switch off or hand over a device where this is permitted under the school's procedures.

- Any confiscation will be proportionate and for an appropriate period, taking account of the circumstances and the pupil's individual needs.
- Where there is a safeguarding concern, suspected harmful content or evidence of an offence, staff will follow safeguarding procedures and seek advice from the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or deputy.
- The school will take account of age, disability, special educational needs, medical requirements and other relevant circumstances when deciding how to respond.
- Parents/carers will be involved where appropriate and in accordance with the school's procedures.

5.6 Criminal or harmful conduct

Certain forms of conduct using phones or other devices may amount to bullying, harassment, safeguarding concerns or criminal conduct. This can include the making or sharing of nude or semi-nude images, including AI-generated images, threats of violence, upskirting, or abusive communications. Southview will respond through its safeguarding, behaviour and, where appropriate, external-agency procedures.

6. Use by parents/carers, volunteers and visitors

Parents/carers, volunteers, governors, contractors and visitors are expected to model safe and respectful phone use while on the school site and during school activities.

- Do not take photographs or recordings of pupils or staff unless expressly permitted by the school.
- Do not use phones in lessons, while working with pupils or in areas where pupils are present, unless specifically authorised for an appropriate purpose.
- Do not use a phone to contact other parents/carers about pupils during a school activity or residential visit.
- Parents/carers should use the school office as the first point of contact if they need to communicate with their child during the school day.
- Visitors will be informed of the expectations when signing in and may be directed to a suitable area if they need to make a personal call.

6.1 Educational visits and residential activities

Parents/carers and volunteers supporting school trips or residential activities must follow the instructions of Southview staff. They must not photograph or record pupils or use their personal phone to communicate with other parents/carers about pupils.

For residential stays at The View, the specific residential protocols apply alongside this policy.

7. Loss, theft or damage

Pupils who bring personal devices to school remain responsible for keeping them secure and should use passwords or PINs to protect access.

Where a device is formally confiscated or placed into school custody, it will be handled and stored in accordance with Southview's procedures. The school will take reasonable steps to protect a device while it is in its custody.

Except where the school has accepted custody of a device, Southview does not accept responsibility for personal phones or smart devices that are lost, damaged or stolen on school premises, on transport, during visits or while travelling to or from school.

Lost property should be reported to the school office or the member of staff identified by the school.

8. Monitoring and review

Southview School will review the effectiveness of this policy through feedback, incident records and relevant national guidance.

- feedback from pupils and parents/carers;
- feedback from staff;
- behaviour and safeguarding incident records;
- experience of the residential provision and The View;
- relevant advice from the Department for Education, local authority and other professional bodies.

The policy will normally be reviewed annually, or sooner where there is a significant change in legislation, guidance, school practice or identified risk.

Appendix 1: Pupil acceptable use agreement

If I am permitted to bring a mobile phone or similar device to Southview School, I agree that:

1. I will not use my phone during the school day unless a member of staff has specifically authorised it.
2. I will follow instructions about switching off, silencing or storing my phone.
3. I will not use my phone in toilets, changing areas or other places where privacy is expected.
4. I will not take photographs, video or audio recordings of pupils or staff without permission.
5. I will not use my phone to bully, threaten, harass or intimidate anyone.
6. I will not share another person's personal information without permission.
7. I will not send, receive, make or share material that may be illegal or harmful.
8. I will not view or share pornography or other harmful content.
9. I will keep my passwords and access codes private.
10. I will comply with a reasonable request from a member of staff to switch off or hand over my phone.
11. I understand that phones are not permitted in internal or external examinations or tests unless the examination rules specifically provide otherwise.
12. I understand that breaches may be dealt with under the Behaviour Policy and that permission to bring a phone may be withdrawn.

Appendix 2: Permission form for a pupil to bring a mobile phone

This form may be used where Southview agrees that a pupil may bring a mobile phone onto the school site because of an exceptional circumstance or identified need.

Pupil name	
Class / year group	
Parent/carers name	
Reason for permission	
Any agreed restrictions	
Storage arrangements	
Authorised by	
Date	
Review date	

By signing below, the parent/carers and pupil (where appropriate) confirm that they have read and understood the Southview School Mobile Phone and Smart Device Policy and agree to follow the conditions above.

Parent/carers signature	Date
Pupil signature (where appropriate)	Date

School authorisation	Date
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Appendix 3: Visitor information slip

Mobile phones and similar devices at Southview School

Southview School aims to maintain a safe, respectful and mobile-phone-free environment during the school day.

- Please keep your phone on silent while on the school site.
- Please do not use your phone where pupils are present unless a member of Southview staff has authorised it for an appropriate purpose.
- Please do not take photographs or recordings of pupils or staff.
- Please do not use your phone in lessons or while working directly with pupils.
- If you need to make a personal call, please use a designated area identified by reception or the member of staff supervising your visit.
- During trips and residential activities, please follow the instructions of Southview staff and do not contact other parents/carers about pupils.

A full copy of the Southview School Mobile Phone and Smart Device Policy is available from the school.