HIGH ERCALL PRIMARY SCHOOL



Safe Use of Technology Policy – Mobile Phones and Smart Technology 2026 - 27

To be read alongside: Online Safety Policy, Acceptable Use Policy, Child Protection Policy, Behaviour and Anti-Bullying Policy, Staff Code of Conduct, AI Policy, Data Protection Policy

Document Status			
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Date of review completion	**1st September 2026**	**Named Responsibility**	Gemma Lingham
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Date of Policy Adoption by Governing Body		Curriculum – delegated responsibility to HT.	

Introduction and aims
At High Ercall Primary School, the welfare and wellbeing of our pupils is paramount. The aim of the Safe Use of Technology Policy is to allow users to benefit from modern technologies, whilst promoting safe and appropriate practice through clear and robust guidelines, in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2026 and the statutory Mobile phones in schools guidance effective from 1 September 2026. This is achieved through balancing protection against potential misuse with the recognition that mobile phones and other smart technology are effective communication tools. Enhanced functions can create distraction and safeguarding risks, including online bullying, exploitation, the making or sharing of nudes or semi-nudes (including AI-generated or digitally altered images), and other harmful or inappropriate content. This policy refers to mobile communication and other personal technology such as tablets and smart watches.

Scope
This policy applies to all individuals who have access to personal technology on site. This includes staff, volunteers, governors, children, parents, visitors and contractors.

The policy should be read in conjunction with:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Anti-bullying Policy
- Staff Handbooks
- Staff Code of Conduct
- AI Policy

Statutory regulation
This policy has regard to Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2026, which comes into force on 1 September 2026, and the Department for Education statutory guidance Mobile phones in schools, which schools should follow from 1 September 2026. KCSIE 2026 states that schools should be mobile phone-free environments by default, with exceptions only where justified. Section 3 of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) statutory framework must also be read alongside KCSIE for children aged 0 to 5 in school-based provision and Reception. This policy applies to all year groups, including EYFS.

Personal Devices – staff

- Staff in all year groups must have their phones switched off or to silent, and they must be kept out of the classroom (in a cupboard or in a bag which is put away).
- Staff are NOT permitted to make / receive calls / texts during contact time with children. Any necessary contact should be made via the school office.
- Mobile phones or any other personal technology must not be used in a space where children are present – this includes phones, digital watches where messages / photos can be taken, IPads.
- Use of technology should be limited to non-contact times with children and in an area where no children are present.
- It is advised that staff protect their mobile phones with security features.
- Should there be exceptional circumstances when a phone is needed during contact time, the Headteacher should be consulted and a decision will be made. The school phone number can be given about by staff for emergency use – for example to the school of a staff member's child.
- Staff are not permitted to use recording equipment on their personal devices for photographic or video footage. School equipment must be used.
- Staff must report any inappropriate use that raises a safeguarding concern in accordance with the Child Protection Policy and Staff Code of Conduct. Where the concern relates to the behaviour of an adult and does not meet the harm threshold, it must be reported and managed under the school's low-level concerns procedure. Concerns about a child must be reported to the DSL or a deputy.

Mobile phones for work related purposes
We recognise that on occasions, a mobile phone may be used for off-site activities, as an appropriate method of communication. Staff should ensure that:

- Mobile phone use is appropriate and professional.
- Mobile phones should not be used to contact parents – this should be done through the school office unless it is deemed an emergency. In an emergency it is advisable to ensure that a personal number is not shared when calling a parent by using number withheld facilities.
- Where parents are accompanying children on trips, they must be informed that it should not be used to inform other parents or take photographs.
- Photographs are taken on school cameras / ipads.

Personal Devices – Pupils
We realise that mobile phones have become an important part of everyday life for many children and that they can be a method of keeping them safe and secure. However we also recognise that they can prove to be a distraction in school and can be a means of bullying or intimidating others. Therefore:

- **High Ercall is a mobile phone-free environment by default. Pupils must not have access to or use mobile phones or other smart/communication technology with similar functionality (including devices that send/receive messages or notifications, or record audio, images or video) throughout the school day, including lessons, transitions, breaktimes and lunchtime.**
- Where a parent has agreed in advance that a pupil may bring a phone for safety when travelling to or from school, it must be handed into the school office immediately on arrival and remain inaccessible to the pupil throughout the school day. Parents must contact the school beforehand to request permission.
- Mobile phones or similar devices brought in or used contrary to this policy may be confiscated in accordance with the Behaviour Policy and statutory guidance. Any sanction will be reasonable and proportionate and will take account of the pupil's individual circumstances, including age, SEND and any safeguarding considerations. A confiscated device will normally need to be collected by an adult.
- For trips and residential visits, the school will determine appropriate arrangements through the visit risk assessment. As a primary school, personal phones, tablets and smart watches with communication/recording functions will normally not be permitted. Any agreed exception, including for a medical need or reasonable adjustment, will be documented and managed by staff.
- Watches such as Fitbits or similar technological devices will be permitted, providing they cannot be used for messaging or communication, or taking images, but must not distract through the school day.

Where technology is used on or off site to bully, harass, intimidate, exploit or otherwise harm others, the school may intervene in accordance with its Behaviour and Child Protection policies. Where misuse gives cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or may be at risk of, harm, staff must follow the Child Protection Policy and speak to the DSL or a deputy.

Volunteers, visitors, Governors and Contractors
All visitors, volunteers, governors and contractors are expected to follow our policy whilst on the premises. This is outlined in our Visitors Information Sheet, which is shared on arrival at school. Phones must be turned off and put away. They should not be out in front of pupils unless permission has been given by the headteacher. Volunteers must not take personal photographs when supporting on trips, even if it is of their own child. This must be shared with all volunteers in trip preparation.

Parents / Carers
Parents / carers working on a voluntary basis in school would be expected to follow our policy whilst on site. We would ask parents / carers on site to ensure that their use of mobile phones is courteous and appropriate to the school environment.
We allow parents / carers to photograph or video school events such as shows or sports day using mobile phones – **but insist that parents do not publish any images (including on any social media sites) that include children other than their own.**

Safeguarding, online safety and KCSIE 2026
Technology is a significant component in many safeguarding and wellbeing issues. KCSIE 2026 requires online safety to be a running and interrelated theme across safeguarding policies and procedures. The school's approach considers the four areas of online risk: content, contact, conduct and commerce.
• Content: exposure to illegal, inappropriate or harmful material, including pornography, racism, misogyny, self-harm or suicide content, radicalisation/extremism, misinformation and disinformation.
• Contact: harmful interaction with other users or generative AI applications that simulate interaction, including grooming, exploitation, peer pressure and harmful commercial contact.
• Conduct: behaviour that increases the likelihood of harm, including online bullying and the making, sending or receiving of explicit images, including images generated or altered using AI.
• Commerce: risks such as scams, phishing, inappropriate advertising and online gambling.

Any safeguarding concern arising from a phone, smart device, image, message, online interaction or AI-generated content must be dealt with under the Child Protection Policy. Staff must not investigate safeguarding concerns by routinely searching through content themselves beyond what is necessary and lawful; they should preserve evidence, report promptly to the DSL/deputy and follow the school's safeguarding procedures and relevant DfE/UKCIS guidance.

Filtering, monitoring and generative AI
KCSIE 2026 requires governing bodies/proprietors to ensure appropriate filtering and monitoring systems are in place and that their effectiveness is reviewed at least once every academic year. The review should be led by the SLT member responsible for filtering and monitoring, supported by the DSL and IT support, and should include recorded checks that filtering works appropriately on internet-connected school devices in relevant locations.
The school will consider the risks created by generative AI, including dynamic or personalised content, AI-generated images/deepfakes, simulated contact, data protection and age restrictions. Pupil use of generative AI will only take place where authorised by the school, age-appropriate, appropriately supervised and subject to the safeguards set out in the AI Policy, Online Safety Policy and filtering/monitoring arrangements.

Reasonable adjustments and medical needs
The mobile phone-free expectation is the default, but the school will make reasonable adjustments and individual adaptations where required by law or justified by a pupil's circumstances. This may include access to a device required to manage a disability or medical condition (for example, a phone linked to continuous glucose monitoring), or another agreed safeguarding/welfare need. Any exception will be agreed by the Headteacher, recorded where appropriate in the pupil's Individual Healthcare Plan or other relevant plan, and limited to the specific purpose, times and locations required.

Searching, confiscation and evidence
The Headteacher, or authorised staff, may search for and confiscate mobile phones or similar devices where permitted by law and the school's Behaviour Policy. Staff will follow the current DfE Searching, screening and confiscation guidance. If a device may contain evidence of a safeguarding concern, criminal offence, nude/semi-nude image or other harmful content, staff will refer immediately to the DSL/deputy and follow safeguarding procedures rather than treating the matter only as a behaviour incident.

Dissemination
This policy will be shared with staff, pupils, parents/carers, external providers and volunteers as appropriate and will be available on the school website. Pupils will be reminded of the mobile phone-free expectation and consequences at the start of each academic year and at suitable intervals. Staff will receive safeguarding and online-safety training at induction and regular updates, including their responsibilities for filtering and monitoring and reporting concerns.

Key statutory guidance for 2026–27
• Department for Education, Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 (effective 1 September 2026).
• Department for Education, Mobile phones in schools - statutory guidance (schools should follow from 1 September 2026).
• Department for Education, Filtering and monitoring standards for schools and colleges (updated 2026).
• Department for Education, Generative artificial intelligence in education and Generative AI product safety standards.
• Department for Education, Searching, screening and confiscation at school.
• Early Years Foundation Stage statutory framework, section 3, where applicable.