

Whipman Woods Flying High Academy



Mobile Phone and Personal Communication Devices Policy 2026-2027

Reviewed: September 2026

Next Review: September 2027

1. Introduction and aims

Whipman Woods Flying High Academy recognises that mobile phones, smartwatches and other personal communication devices are part of everyday life for many pupils, families and staff. However, the school is committed to providing a calm, safe and focused environment in which pupils can learn, socialise and develop without unnecessary distraction or exposure to additional safeguarding risks.

In accordance with Department for Education statutory guidance, the school operates as a mobile phone-free environment by default. Pupils should not have access to or use mobile phones or other personal communication devices throughout the school day, including during lessons, transition times, breaktimes and lunchtimes, except where an individual exception or reasonable adjustment has been expressly agreed.

The aims of this policy are to:

- maintain a calm, focused and safe learning environment;
- protect pupils' safeguarding, privacy and wellbeing;
- reduce distraction and disruption to teaching and learning;
- reduce opportunities for cyberbullying, child-on-child abuse, inappropriate image sharing and other technology-assisted harm during the school day;
- reduce peer conflict and social pressure associated with mobile phones and personal devices;
- support consistent behaviour expectations;
- promote safe and responsible use of technology;
- support the school's wider approach to online safety;
- ensure appropriate arrangements are made for pupils whose individual circumstances require an exception or reasonable adjustment; and
- ensure the school fulfils its safeguarding duties under *Keeping Children Safe in Education*.

Any exception to the school's normal mobile phone-free arrangements will be considered individually, proportionately and with regard to the pupil's needs and circumstances.

2. Scope

For the purposes of this policy, references to mobile phones include smartphones and other personal devices capable of communication, internet access, photography, video or audio recording.

This includes, where relevant:

- mobile phones;
- smartwatches;
- internet-enabled watches;
- personal tablets;

- wearable communication devices; and
- other smart or communication technology which the school determines should be subject to the same restrictions.

The school may apply different arrangements to a device where it is required specifically to meet an agreed medical, SEND, disability, safeguarding or other exceptional need.

3. Relevant legislation and guidance

This policy has regard to:

- DfE statutory guidance: *Mobile phones in schools*;
- *Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026*;
- DfE guidance: *Behaviour in schools*;
- DfE guidance: *Searching, screening and confiscation in schools*;
- DfE guidance relating to the sharing of nudes and semi-nudes;
- the Education Act 1996, as amended;
- the Education and Inspections Act 2006;
- the Equality Act 2010;
- relevant data protection legislation; and
- the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, Behaviour Policy, Online Safety Policy, SEND arrangements and Staff Code of Conduct.

The school's approach will be reviewed in response to changes in statutory guidance and legislation.

4. Roles and responsibilities

4.1 Headteacher

The Headteacher has overall responsibility for the implementation of this policy.

The Headteacher will:

- ensure that the policy is communicated clearly to staff, pupils, parents/carers and visitors;
- promote consistent implementation;
- determine or appropriately delegate decisions concerning individual exceptions;
- ensure reasonable adjustments are made where required;
- authorise appropriate members of staff to undertake searches in accordance with statutory guidance;
- ensure safeguarding concerns associated with mobile phone use are responded to appropriately; and

- review the effectiveness of the policy.

4.2 Staff

All staff, including teachers, support staff and supply staff, are responsible for implementing this policy consistently.

Staff should:

- model appropriate use of mobile phones;
- reinforce the school's expectations;
- respond appropriately to breaches;
- consider whether inappropriate phone use may indicate a safeguarding or welfare concern;
- report safeguarding concerns in accordance with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy; and
- be aware of any individual arrangements relevant to pupils for whom they are responsible.

Volunteers, contractors and others working within school must alert a member of staff if they witness or become aware of a breach of this policy.

4.3 Governing body

The governing body will provide appropriate oversight and assurance that the school's arrangements are consistent with relevant statutory requirements and guidance.

5. Use of mobile phones by staff

5.1 Personal mobile phones

Staff, volunteers, contractors and others engaged by the school must not ordinarily use personal mobile phones while supervising or working directly with pupils.

Personal phones should normally be kept securely away during contact time and may be used during non-contact time in designated areas where pupils are not present, such as the staffroom.

There may be circumstances in which a member of staff needs access to their phone during contact time. Examples may include:

- emergency contact relating to their child or dependent;
- an acutely ill family member or dependent;
- a medical or health requirement;
- use of multi-factor authentication for an approved school system;
- an emergency or critical incident;
- an off-site visit or residential where specific arrangements have been agreed; or
- another exceptional circumstance agreed by the Headteacher.

The Headteacher will determine whether an individual arrangement is appropriate.

Where no exceptional arrangement is required, the school office should be used as the point of emergency contact.

5.2 Safeguarding and photography

Staff must not use personal mobile phones or other personal devices to photograph, video or make audio recordings of pupils, pupils' work or other information that could identify a pupil.

Where photographs or recordings are required for legitimate educational or school purposes, school-approved equipment and systems must be used.

Staff must not:

- exchange personal telephone numbers or personal contact details with pupils;
- communicate with pupils through personal social media accounts or messaging services;
- store photographs, recordings or personal information relating to pupils on personal devices; or
- use personal devices in a manner which compromises professional boundaries.

Any concern about inappropriate use of a personal device by a member of staff must be managed in accordance with the school's safeguarding procedures, Staff Code of Conduct and procedures for managing allegations or concerns about adults.

5.3 Data protection and artificial intelligence

Personal mobile phones must not ordinarily be used to process or store personal, sensitive or confidential school information.

School information, including information about pupils, families or staff, must not be entered into generative artificial intelligence tools using personal accounts or unapproved personal devices.

Where artificial intelligence tools are used for school purposes, staff must use school-approved systems and comply with relevant school policies concerning artificial intelligence, data protection and information security.

5.4 Use of personal mobile phones for work purposes

There may be limited circumstances in which staff need to use a personal mobile phone for legitimate school purposes, for example:

- multi-factor authentication;
- emergency evacuation or critical incidents;
- supervising off-site educational visits;
- supervising residential visits; or
- where specifically authorised by the Headteacher.

Where this is necessary, staff must:

- use the device professionally and only for the agreed purpose;
- comply with the Staff Code of Conduct;
- maintain appropriate professional boundaries;
- not use the device to photograph or record pupils;
- not store pupil information on the device; and
- wherever practicable, communicate with parents/carers through school-approved systems rather than personal telephone numbers.

5.5 Breaches by staff

Failure by a member of staff to comply with this policy may be addressed through the appropriate management or disciplinary procedures.

Any breach which raises a safeguarding concern will be dealt with in accordance with the school's safeguarding procedures and Staff Code of Conduct.

6. Use of mobile phones by pupils

6.1 School approach

The school operates as a mobile phone-free environment throughout the school day.

Pupils must not ordinarily have access to or use mobile phones or other personal communication devices during:

- lessons;
- assemblies;
- transition times;
- breaktimes;
- lunchtimes; or
- any other part of the normal school day.

Where pupils are permitted to bring a mobile phone to school, the phone must be switched off as they enter the school grounds and handed into their class teacher on arrival in the classroom. Devices will be stored securely in the school office in accordance with the school's arrangements and returned at the end of the school day.

Permission to bring a mobile phone to school does not automatically constitute permission to access or use the device during the school day.

The only exceptions to these arrangements are those agreed in accordance with section 6.3.

6.2 Smartwatches and other personal communication devices

Smartwatches and other wearable or personal devices capable of communication, internet access, photography or recording are included within this policy.

Where such a device is brought to school, it will ordinarily be subject to the same restrictions as a mobile phone.

An exception may be made where a device is required for an agreed medical, disability, SEND or other individual need.

6.3 Exceptions, adaptations and reasonable adjustments

The school recognises that there may be circumstances in which a pupil needs to bring, access or use a mobile phone or other personal communication device.

The school will consider individual circumstances carefully and will make reasonable adjustments where required by the Equality Act 2010.

Circumstances in which an exception or adaptation may be appropriate include, but are not limited to:

- a medical or health need, including where a mobile phone, smartwatch or connected device is required to monitor or manage a medical condition;
- a disability or special educational need, where access to a device constitutes an appropriate reasonable adjustment;
- an individual safeguarding or welfare need;
- circumstances relating to a pupil's responsibilities as a young carer;
- significant family or home circumstances;
- travel to and from school independently;
- attendance at a before - or after - school activity;
- a school trip, residential visit or other off-site activity where specific arrangements have been agreed; or
- another exceptional circumstance considered appropriate by the Headteacher.

Permission to bring a phone onto the school premises does not necessarily mean that a pupil requires access to it during the school day.

Pupils in Years 5 and 6 who walk to and from school independently are permitted to bring a phone for use on the journey but will hand the device into their class teacher during the school day. Devices will then be stored securely in the school office.

Where access during the school day is necessary - for example, where a device is required to monitor or manage a medical condition - the school will agree with the pupil and their parent/carers when, where and how the device may be accessed.

Individual arrangements will:

- be authorised by the Headteacher or an appropriately delegated senior leader;
- take account of the views and needs of the pupil;
- take account of information provided by parents/carers;
- where appropriate, take account of advice from health, SEND or other professionals;
- be proportionate to the identified need;
- specify whether the pupil has permission to bring, access and/or use the device;
- identify appropriate storage arrangements where necessary;
- consider safeguarding, privacy and online-safety risks;
- be communicated to relevant staff; and
- be reviewed periodically and whenever the pupil's circumstances or needs change.

A proportionate individual risk assessment or other written plan will be completed where this is necessary to manage identified risks. A separate risk assessment will not automatically be required for every routine exception where the arrangements can be safely recorded within an existing individual healthcare plan, SEND plan, safeguarding plan or other appropriate school record.

The school will ensure that implementation of this policy does not place a disabled pupil at a substantial disadvantage and will make reasonable adjustments where required.

Where permission is granted, pupils must comply with the agreed individual arrangements and, where appropriate, the Code of Conduct contained in Appendix 1.

7. Breaches, sanctions and confiscation

Breaches of this policy will be managed consistently and in accordance with the school's Behaviour Policy.

Where a pupil has a mobile phone or other device contrary to this policy, a member of staff may confiscate it where it is lawful, reasonable and proportionate to do so.

Confiscated devices will be stored securely.

Depending upon the circumstances, the device may:

- be returned to the pupil at an appropriate time;
- be returned at the end of the school day; or
- require collection by a parent/carer.

The response to a breach will take account of:

- the nature and seriousness of the incident;
- whether the device has been used;

- the purpose for which it was used;
- any previous incidents;
- the pupil's age;
- SEND and disability;
- medical needs;
- safeguarding or welfare considerations;
- any agreed reasonable adjustment or individual arrangement; and
- whether confiscation is a reasonable and proportionate response.

Where behaviour involving a mobile phone gives staff reason to suspect that a pupil may be suffering, or may be at risk of, harm, staff must follow the school's safeguarding procedures and inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead or a deputy.

8. Searching pupils and mobile devices

Mobile phones and other personal communication devices prohibited or restricted under this policy and the school's rules may be identified as items for which a search may be undertaken where the statutory criteria are met.

The Headteacher, or a member of staff authorised by the Headteacher, may search a pupil or their possessions where there are reasonable grounds to suspect that the pupil possesses a prohibited item or an item identified in the school's rules as one that may be searched for.

Any search will be undertaken in accordance with current DfE *Searching, screening and confiscation in schools* guidance and the school's safeguarding procedures.

Searches will be:

- lawful;
- proportionate;
- respectful of the pupil's dignity;
- undertaken with appropriate regard to safeguarding;
- conducted by appropriately authorised staff; and
- recorded where required.

The school will give particular consideration to pupils with SEND, disabilities, medical needs or other individual vulnerabilities when deciding whether and how to conduct a search.

Where a search raises a safeguarding concern, the Designated Safeguarding Lead or deputy must be informed.

9. Harmful, inappropriate or illegal content

Mobile phones and personal devices can be used in ways that create or contribute to safeguarding concerns.

These may include:

- bullying or cyberbullying;
- harassment, intimidation or threatening behaviour;
- child-on-child abuse;
- consensual or non-consensual sharing of nude or semi-nude images and/or videos;
- sexual harassment;
- upskirting;
- sharing violent, sexual, discriminatory or otherwise harmful content;
- abusive or threatening messages, calls or social media posts;
- recording or photographing another person without appropriate permission;
- accessing or sharing pornography;
- discriminatory abuse;
- coercion, exploitation or blackmail; and
- conduct which may constitute a criminal offence.

Where harmful, inappropriate or potentially illegal content is suspected, staff must not unnecessarily view, copy, forward or share the content.

The matter must be referred promptly to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or deputy and managed in accordance with *Keeping Children Safe in Education*, the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and relevant DfE guidance.

The police and/or children's social care will be involved where appropriate.

10. Educational visits and residentials

The use of mobile phones will not normally be permitted during school visits, residential and activities.

At the planning stage of visits, residentials and activities taking place outside of the school day, the headteacher or visit leader will determine appropriate arrangements for communication and these will be shared with parents prior to the event.

Arrangements will take account of:

- the age and needs of pupils;
- safeguarding;
- supervision;

- communication arrangements;
- the nature and duration of the activity;
- online safety;
- privacy;
- medical and SEND needs; and
- emergency arrangements.

Staff supervising visits must maintain the same safeguarding and professional standards relating to personal devices as apply on the school site.

11. Parents and carers

Parents/carers are asked to support the school's mobile phone-free approach.

Parents/carers should:

- reinforce the school's expectations with their child;
- use the school office as the normal means of contacting their child during the school day;
- not contact or encourage their child to access their personal mobile phone during the school day unless this forms part of an agreed individual arrangement;
- inform the school where they believe their child requires an exception or reasonable adjustment; and
- raise concerns about the implementation of this policy directly with the school.

Where a pupil needs to contact a parent/carer during the school day, appropriate arrangements will be made through the school office or another school-approved means.

The school recognises that families may consider mobile phones important for pupils travelling independently to and from school. Where pupils are permitted to bring phones for this reason, the device will be stored securely in the school office during the school day.

12. Visitors, volunteers, governors and contractors

Visitors, volunteers, governors and contractors must use mobile phones responsibly while on the school premises.

They must not:

- use personal phones while working directly with pupils unless this has been expressly authorised;
- photograph, video or record pupils using a personal device;
- photograph or record confidential school information;
- use phones in a way which disrupts teaching and learning; or

- use personal devices in a manner that compromises safeguarding, privacy or confidentiality.

Where a visitor needs to make or receive an urgent call, they should normally move to an appropriate area away from pupils.

Specific arrangements may be made for contractors or professionals who require a mobile device to undertake their legitimate professional duties.

13. Photography and recording at school events

The school will communicate clearly whether photography or recording by parents/carers is permitted at individual school events.

Where photography is permitted, parents/carers must:

- comply with any instructions issued by the school;
- respect the privacy and safeguarding needs of other children and families;
- use images appropriately; and
- not publish or share images of other pupils where this would be inappropriate or contrary to the school's instructions.

The school may prohibit photography or recording at any event where safeguarding, privacy, copyright, performance licensing or other considerations make this appropriate.

14. Loss, theft or damage

Pupils who bring mobile phones or personal devices to school do so at their own risk, subject to any legal duties owed by the school.

The school cannot guarantee against loss, theft or accidental damage.

Devices handed to the school or confiscated by staff will be stored with reasonable care in accordance with the school's arrangements.

Lost devices should be handed to the school office so that reasonable attempts can be made to identify the owner.

15. Online safety and incidents outside school

The school recognises that inappropriate online behaviour involving mobile phones may occur outside school hours or away from the school premises.

Where such behaviour affects pupils within school, poses a safeguarding risk, disrupts the school environment or falls within the circumstances in which the school may lawfully respond to behaviour outside school, appropriate action may be taken in accordance with the Behaviour Policy and Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

Pupils will be encouraged to report online concerns to a trusted adult.

Where necessary to enable a pupil to report or evidence an online safeguarding concern, staff will ensure that appropriate arrangements are made to access relevant information or the pupil's device safely. Staff should not unnecessarily view or reproduce harmful material.

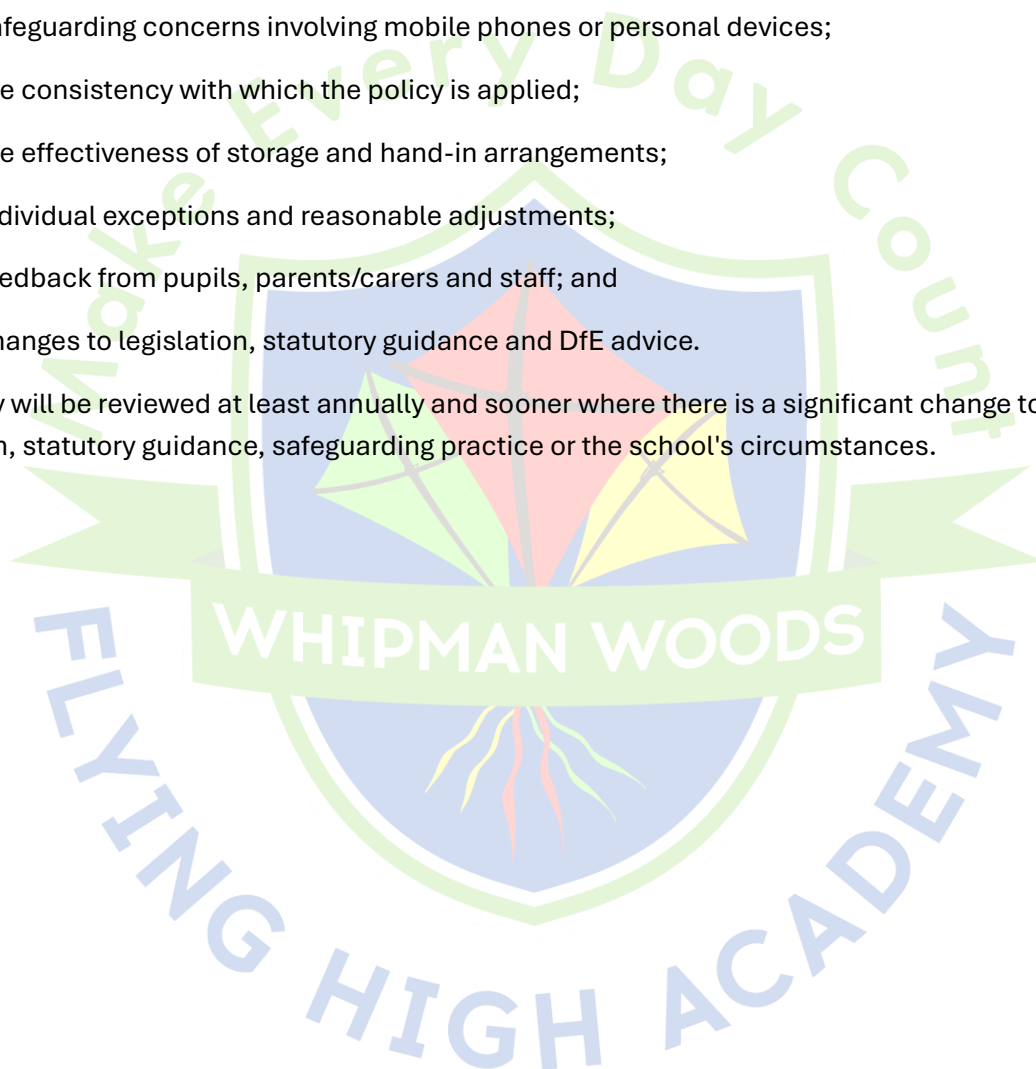
16. Monitoring and review

The school will monitor the implementation and effectiveness of this policy.

Monitoring may include consideration of:

- behaviour incidents involving mobile phones;
- safeguarding concerns involving mobile phones or personal devices;
- the consistency with which the policy is applied;
- the effectiveness of storage and hand-in arrangements;
- individual exceptions and reasonable adjustments;
- feedback from pupils, parents/carers and staff; and
- changes to legislation, statutory guidance and DfE advice.

The policy will be reviewed at least annually and sooner where there is a significant change to legislation, statutory guidance, safeguarding practice or the school's circumstances.



Appendix 1: Code of Conduct for Pupils Permitted to Bring a Mobile Phone to School

Where you have permission to bring a mobile phone or other personal communication device to school, you must follow these rules:

1. Follow the arrangement agreed for you. Having permission to bring a phone to school does not mean that you can use it during the school day.
2. Unless you have specific and pre-arranged permission to access your phone, it must be switched off when you enter the school grounds and handed in to your class teacher as you enter the classroom.
3. If you have permission to access your phone for a medical, SEND, disability, safeguarding or other agreed reason, you must only use it in the way that has been agreed.
4. You must never use a phone or other device in toilets, changing areas or other places where people have a particular expectation of privacy.
5. You must not photograph, video or make an audio recording of pupils or staff without appropriate permission.
6. You must not use your phone to bully, threaten, intimidate, harass or discriminate against another person.
7. You must not use your phone to access, create, request, send or share harmful, abusive, sexual or illegal content.
8. You must not share nude or semi-nude images or videos of yourself or another person.
9. You must protect passwords and access codes and should not share them with other pupils.
10. You must not use your phone to access social media, messaging services, games or other online content during the school day unless specifically authorised for an agreed purpose.
11. You must comply with a reasonable instruction from a member of staff concerning your phone or device.
12. If something on your phone worries, frightens or upsets you, or you need to show an adult something because you are concerned about yourself or somebody else, tell a trusted member of staff. You will not be prevented from reporting a safeguarding concern because of the school's mobile phone rules.
13. Mobile phones and other unauthorised electronic devices must not be taken into or used within statutory assessments, examinations or tests where this is prohibited. Pupils must follow the specific arrangements communicated by the school.

Failure to follow these expectations may result in permission to bring or access a device being reviewed or withdrawn, unless continued access is required as a reasonable adjustment or to meet another legal or safeguarding requirement.

Appendix 2: Individual Mobile Phone Permission and Adjustment Record

Pupil details

Pupil name:

Year group/class:

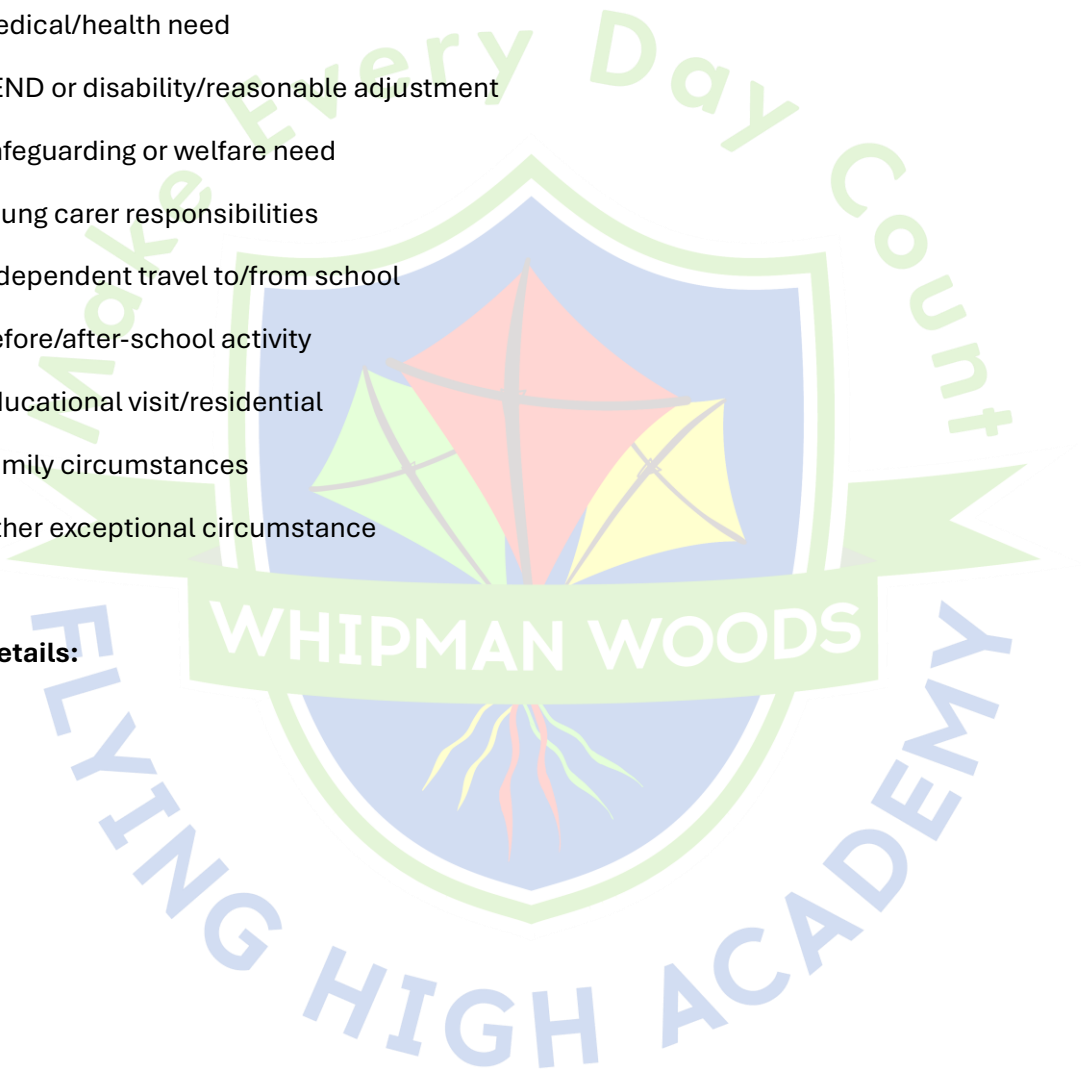
Parent/carer:

Reason for the arrangement:

Please identify the reason for the exception or adjustment:

- Medical/health need
- SEND or disability/reasonable adjustment
- Safeguarding or welfare need
- Young carer responsibilities
- Independent travel to/from school
- Before/after-school activity
- Educational visit/residential
- Family circumstances
- Other exceptional circumstance

Further details:



Appendix 3: Permission to bring a mobile phone/device to school (to be completed for all pupils bringing a mobile phone to school)

The pupil has permission to bring a mobile phone/device onto the school premises:

Yes / No

The pupil has permission to access or use the device during the school day:

Yes / No

If yes:

When may the device be accessed?

Where may it be accessed?

For what purpose may it be used?

Are there any additional restrictions or safeguards?

Storage arrangements:

The device will be:

- handed to the class teacher on arrival and stored securely in the school office;
- stored securely in an agreed location;
- retained by the pupil because immediate access is required for an agreed need; or
- subject to another agreed arrangement (add further details below).

Details:

Supporting information

Relevant healthcare plan/SEND plan/safeguarding plan/risk assessment or professional advice, where applicable:

Review:

Arrangement authorised by:

Role:

Date:

Review date:

Parent/carer informed: Yes / No

Relevant staff informed: Yes / No

Pupil's views considered: Yes / No / Not appropriate

This arrangement may be reviewed if circumstances change or if the agreed conditions are not followed. The school will not withdraw an arrangement where continued access is necessary to meet a legal duty, reasonable adjustment, medical need or safeguarding requirement without first considering how that need will otherwise be met.

Appendix 4: Mobile Phone Information for Visitors

Use of mobile phones and similar devices in our school

To help us maintain a safe and mobile phone-free environment:

- Please keep your mobile phone on silent while on the school premises.
- Please do not use your phone while working with or supervising pupils unless its use has been specifically authorised.
- If you need to make or receive an urgent call, please use an appropriate area/room away from pupils.
- Do not use a personal device to photograph, video or record pupils.
- Please follow any specific instructions concerning photography at school events.
- Do not photograph or record confidential school information.
- Professionals and contractors who require a mobile device for legitimate work purposes should discuss this with their school contact where necessary.
- Please report any safeguarding concern arising from the use of a mobile phone or personal device to a member of school staff immediately.

Thank you for helping us protect the privacy, safety and wellbeing of our pupils.

