



Snowflake School

‘Improving the quality of family life’

Mobile Phones and Smart Devices Policy

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1. Policy status and links

Status: Whole-school policy supporting:

- Written Behaviour Policy (Independent School Standards – ISS Part 3)
- Safeguarding / Child Protection Policy (KCSIE)
- Online Safety / Filtering & Monitoring Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- SEND Policy
- Positive Handling Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Photography and Images Policy

Applies to: All pupils (all phases), staff, volunteers, visitors, contractors.

Review cycle: Annually, or sooner if national guidance changes.

2. Purpose

This policy exists to maintain a calm, safe and focused learning environment; reduce bullying and safeguarding risks; and support wellbeing.

For pupils with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), it also aims to reduce anxiety, sensory overload, perseveration and task avoidance, and to support consistent application of Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA) strategies.

The school operates a mobile-phone-free environment by default.

3. Definitions

Smart devices include mobile phones, smart watches, tablets, or any device capable of internet access, messaging, recording audio/video, photography, social media or notifications.

4. Core rule: phone-free during the school day

Pupils must not access or use personal devices during the school day, including lessons, transitions, break/lunch, interventions, assemblies, or off-site learning where the school has responsibility.

Devices are handed in on arrival or secured in staff-controlled locked storage or secure pouches.

Pupils are not expected to self-manage access. Exceptions are documented in Behaviour Support Plans (BSPs).

Staff avoid personal phone use in front of pupils and never photograph pupils using personal devices.

5. ABA-informed implementation principles

This policy is implemented using ABA principles including antecedent control, consistency, visual structure, positive reinforcement, individualisation through BSPs, and data-informed review.

6. Reasonable adjustments and exceptions

Exceptions may be authorised for medical needs, communication (AAC), safeguarding plans, curriculum use under supervision, or specific transport safety needs.

All exceptions must be approved by the Headteacher/DSL, recorded in writing, risk assessed, time-limited and reviewed.

Device hierarchy:

1. Devices required for medical monitoring (e.g. diabetes)
2. Dedicated AAC devices
3. School-owned locked-down devices
4. Personal devices (last resort)

7. Devices and reinforcement

Personal devices are not used as default reinforcers or first-line calming strategies.

Where personal devices are to be used therapeutically, this must be function-based, time-limited, documented in the BSP and paired with teaching alternative skills.

8. Parent and carer communication

Parents and carers should contact pupils during the school day via the school office or agreed safeguarding routes only.

Consistency between home and school routines is strongly encouraged.

9. Behavioural responses and consequences

Responses are function-based, proportionate and focused on skill development and de-escalation.

Confiscation is environmental control, not punishment.

Responses may include reminders, temporary confiscation with return to parents, BSP updates, increased supervision or safeguarding referrals.

10. Confiscation, searching and handling devices

All confiscations, searches, and safeguarding-related incidents involving devices will be logged in accordance with the school's safeguarding record-keeping procedures. All confiscated devices will be logged and stored securely.

Searching is conducted only when necessary, lawfully, and in accordance with the DfE guidance on searching, screening and confiscation, and the school's Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy, by trained staff, considering trauma and sensory needs.

Content is viewed only where safeguarding concerns exist and managed by the DSL.

11. Safeguarding and online safety

Device misuse may indicate bullying, peer abuse, sexual harassment, exploitation or harmful content access.

The school recognises the four key online safety risk categories:

content, contact, conduct and commerce, as defined in the Online Safety Policy and Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy.

Device misuse will be assessed against these categories when determining safeguarding responses.

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and therefore all staff, volunteers and contractors must report safeguarding concerns about device use immediately to the DSL/DDSL.

Concerns will be recorded on the school's safeguarding recording system in line with the Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy and may result in referral to children's social care and/or the police where required.

Staff must not investigate safeguarding concerns themselves or promise confidentiality to pupils.

The DSL has lead responsibility for online safety, device-related safeguarding decisions, viewing content, and referrals to external agencies.

The Headteacher is responsible for ensuring staff compliance and training.

The policy operates alongside the school's filtering and monitoring systems and Online Safety Policy.

The school recognises emerging risks from generative AI, misinformation and new technologies, and these will be considered in safeguarding risk assessments and annual online-safety reviews led by the DSL.

12. Visual supports and accessibility

The policy is supported through visual rules, symbol schedules, social stories and transition cues.

13. Staff training

Staff receive training in ABA-consistent behaviour support, de-escalation, trauma-informed practice, device-related safeguarding and lawful searching/confiscation.

14. Monitoring and review

The school monitors incident frequency, compliance at hand-in, exception plans and behaviour data to inform BSP updates, training and policy refinement.

15. Complaints

Any complaints relating to the implementation of this policy will be managed under the school's Complaints Policy.

16. Inspection statement

This policy supports the Independent School Standards, DfE mobile phone guidance, safeguarding duties under KCSIE, the Education Act 1996, Education and Inspections Act 2006, Searching Screening and Confiscation Guidance, and reflects best practice for specialist ASD provision using evidence-based behavioural strategies.

Reviewed March 2027

Next Review Date: March 2027

Approved By: Proprietor / Board of Trustees March 2026

Revision

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Review due	March 2027
Reviewed By	Sumen Starr
Approved by Board of Trustees on	March 2026