



ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION DEVICES POLICY

For pupils, staff and visitors
(Updated September 2026)

Electronic Communication Devices Policy

Introduction and Aims

At Woodlands Academy of Learning the welfare and well-being of our pupils is paramount. The aim of the Electronic Device policy is to allow users to benefit from modern communication technologies, whilst promoting safe and appropriate practice through establishing clear and robust acceptable mobile user guidelines. This is achieved through balancing protection against potential misuse with the recognition that electronic devices, including mobile phones are effective communication tools.

It is recognised that it is the enhanced functions of many mobile devices that cause the most concern, offering distractions and disruption to the working day, and which are most susceptible to misuse- including the taking and distribution of indecent images, exploitation and bullying. However, as it is difficult to detect specific usage, this policy refers to ALL electronic devices that enable communication of any kind (ie text, phone call or notifications) plus devices that contain a camera option; or can access the internet; or have the ability to record. These devices include, but are not limited to, mobile phones, smart watches, tablets and any other device capable of communication, internet access, recording or photography

Many electronic communication devices now include Artificial Intelligence (AI) features such as voice assistants, image generation, transcription and chatbot applications. These functions must not be used to create, record, edit, analyse or share information relating to pupils, staff or school activities without the express permission of the Headteacher. Any use of AI must comply with the school's safeguarding, data protection and acceptable use expectations.

Scope

This policy applies to all individuals who have personal electronic devices on site. This includes staff, volunteers, governors, parents, carers, visitors and contractors. The list is not exhaustive.

This policy defines practice in terms of:

- **Staff use of electronic communication devices in work and for work**
- **Volunteers, Visitors, Governors and Contractors use of electronic devices**
- **Parents use of photographs and film taken at school events**
- **Pupil use of electronic communication devices in school as listed above**
- **Electronic communication device, including mobile devices agreement for children and parents**

This policy should also be read in conjunction with the following policies:

- Safeguarding Children Policy
- Code of Conduct

- Anti-Bullying Policy

Code of conduct

A code of conduct is promoted with the aim of creating a cooperative workforce, where staff work as a team, have high values and respect each other; thus creating a strong morale and sense of commitment leading to increased productivity.

Our aim is therefore that all practitioners:

- have a clear understanding of what constitutes misuse.
- to never send inappropriate messages to or about any member of the school community either directly or through social media.
- know how to minimise risk.
- avoid putting themselves into compromising situations which could be misinterpreted and lead to possible allegations.
- understand the need for professional boundaries and clear guidance regarding acceptable use.
- are responsible for self-moderation of their own behaviours.
- ensure there is no inappropriate or illegal content on their device.
- to ensure electronic devices do not cause a disruption to pupils' learning
- are aware of the importance of reporting concerns promptly.

It is fully recognised that imposing rigid regulations on the actions of others can be counterproductive. An agreement of trust is therefore promoted regarding the carrying and use of mobile devices within the setting, which is agreed to by all users.

Visitors, pupils and staff need to be aware that if they choose to bring a mobile device into school then a member of SLT or the safeguarding team can request access if they have cause for concern regarding use or content on the device. This would always be in the presence of the owner and with two members of SLT / safeguarding team.

Staff use of electronic communication devices in work and for work

Staff are not permitted to make/receive calls/texts during contact time with children. Emergency contact should be made via the school office.

- Staff should have their devices on silent or switched off and out of sight (e.g. in a drawer, handbag or pocket) during class time.
- Staff working in EYFS should have their mobile devices locked away
- Mobile devices should not be used in a space where children are present (eg. classroom, playground).
- Use of devices (inc. receiving/sending texts and emails) should be limited to non-contact time when no children are present e.g. in office areas, staff room
- It is also advised that staff security protect access to functions of their device.

- Should there be exceptional circumstances (e.g. acutely sick relative), then staff should make the Headteacher (or member of SLT if HT is unavailable) aware of this and can have their device close in a safe place where it may be heard, in the case of having to receive an emergency call.
- Staff are not at any time permitted to use recording equipment on their mobile devices, for example: to take recordings of children, or sharing images (except in cases when a staff member has a pupil who is a family member – see ‘visitors’ below). (Unless there are exceptional circumstances ie a school visit and the HT is informed)
- Legitimate recordings and photographs should be captured using school equipment such as cameras and ipads.

Staff should report any usage of mobile devices that causes them concern to the Headteacher.

Electronic communication devices for work related purposes

We recognise that mobile devices provide a useful means of communication on offsite activities. However, staff should ensure that:

- Mobiles used on these occasions are appropriate and professional (and will never include taking photographs of children).
- If a mobile device is required to take an image then permission must be sought from the headteacher (or member of SLT) Once the image has been downloaded onto a school device then a member of staff should witness the deletion of the images from all folders on the device.
- Mobile devices should not be used to make contact with parents during school trips – all relevant communications should be made via the school office.
- Where parents are accompanying trip’s they are informed not to make contact with other parents (via calls, text, email or social networking) during the trip or use their device to take photographs of children.

Remote Learning

All staff and pupils using video communication must:

- Communicate in groups where possible – one-to-one sessions are best undertaken when the staff member is in a room with another adult/colleague. School will consider whether one-to-one sessions are appropriate in some circumstances e.g. to provide support for pupils with SEND. This will be approved by the SLT, in collaboration with the SENCO and DSL.
- Wear suitable clothing – this includes others in their household.
- Be situated in a suitable ‘public’ living area within the home with an appropriate background – ‘private’ living areas within the home, such as bedrooms, are not permitted during video communication.

- Use appropriate language – this includes others in their household.
- Maintain the standard of behaviour expected in school.
- Use the necessary equipment and computer programs as intended.
- Not record, store, or distribute video material without permission.
- Ensure they have a stable connection to avoid disruption to lessons.
- Always remain aware that they are visible.
- Sessions will be recorded by staff, parents to be made aware of this through Newsletter communication.
- No recordings to be shared externally. Staff will follow GDPR guidance when storing or sharing these recordings in school.
- The staff member who is facilitating the call must be the last person to leave the session.

All staff and pupils using audio communication must:

- Be located in a public area of the home, where possible.
- Use appropriate language – this includes others in their household.
- Maintain the standard of behaviour expected in school.
- Use the necessary equipment and computer programs as intended.
- Not record, store, or distribute audio material without permission.
- Ensure they have a stable connection to avoid disruption to lessons.
- Always remain aware that they can be heard.
- All sessions will be recorded by staff, parents to be made aware of this through Newsletter communication.
- No recordings to be shared externally. Staff will follow GDPR guidance when storing or sharing these recordings in school.
- The staff member who is facilitating the call must be the last person to leave the session.

GDPR

- Staff members will be responsible for adhering to the GDPR when teaching remotely and will ensure the confidentiality and integrity of their devices at all times.
- Sensitive data will only be transferred between devices if it is necessary to do so for the purpose of remote learning and teaching.
- Any data that is transferred between devices will be suitably encrypted or have other data protection measures in place so that if the data is lost, stolen, or subject to unauthorised access, it remains safe until recovered.

Volunteers, Visitors, Governors and Contractors use of electronic devices

All Volunteers, Visitors, Governors and Contractors are expected to follow our mobile device policy as it relates to staff whilst on the premises. On arrival, such visitors will be informed of our expectations around the use of mobile devices.

Visitors

Visitors are requested not to use their mobile devices while in school. Devices should be on silent and out of sight.

We do however allow parents to photograph or video school events such as shows or sports days using their mobile devices – **but insist that parents do not publish images (e.g. on social networking sites) that include any children other than their own.**

Please refer to Guidance on the Use of Photographic Images and Videos of Children in Schools and see separate appendix that contains further detail for parents and a poster to be displayed in school.

Pupils use of electronic devices

Please also see separate communication device policy and school agreement for pupils in the appendix

For the purposes of this policy, smart watches are treated as electronic communication devices. They must be switched off before entering school and handed in with any other permitted electronic communication device.

Remote Learning Through Electronic Devices and Google Meets

- Sessions will be recorded by staff, parents to be made aware of this
- No recordings to be shared externally. Staff will follow GDPR guidance when storing or sharing these recordings in school.
- The staff member who is facilitating the call must be the last person to leave the session.
- Children are expected to follow the Woodlands' behaviour expectations during the session.
 - To be respectful of everyone's ideas and opinions.
 - To listen to everyone and wait for their turn to speak.
 - No inappropriate language to be used.

It is the responsibility of all staff members to exercise vigilance at all times and to raise concerns as soon as possible, either directly with the person who is

contravening expectations or by reporting the incident to a member of the safeguarding team as soon as possible.

Dissemination

The communication device policy will be shared with staff and volunteers as part of their induction. It will also be available to parents via the school office and website. The poster summarising the visitor policy will be displayed in a prominent place around the school.

Review

This policy will be reviewed in twelve months - Autumn 2027

Policy for Parents use of photographs and film taken at school events

It is natural for every parent to want to share their children's activities and achievements at school with their family and friends. At Woodland's we are keen to allow this as much as possible, while keeping this in balance with children's privacy and individual safety.

Therefore, the policy of our school is that parents and guardians are permitted to take photographs and film events at Woodlands when permission has been specifically given and parents adhere to the key principles of our photograph and film policy as listed below:

Safeguarding our children: It is important to ensure that photography or film does not lead, either directly or indirectly, to anything that may potentially endanger the safety of the children at the school.

Respecting Privacy: We believe that every child and parent is entitled to their own privacy and can therefore choose not to feature in photographs or film.

Projecting the right image: Photographs taken at the school should not do anything that may cause embarrassment to the school, the children, or the staff.

Distribution and publication of photos and videos: Photographs taken at these events are for parents personal use only. They must not be sold or published on any internet site. This includes Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Pinterest and all other social media services.

Photos featuring only parents own children: There is one exception to the internet publication rule. If the photo or video includes only the parents own children, the parent may share it on the internet if they choose. For this exception to apply, there must be no other children in shot, however briefly or clearly they can be seen (this includes if using icons etc to block faces etc).

Parents are able to attend school events by invitation of the Head teacher and the Governors. We have the responsibility of deciding whether photography or film is permitted and this decision is based upon the need to keep our children safe.

The attached poster summarises this policy and will be displayed at prominent points in the school.

Electronic Communication Devices, including mobile phones, at Woodlands Academy



According to our safeguarding policies, visitors to Woodlands should not use their communication device or be seen with their device on site at Woodlands.

If any visitor is found with a communication device, they will be asked to pass their device to a member of the management or safeguarding team so that it can be checked for photographs of the children which will be deleted.

However, families will be able to take photographs and video of special events involving their child when specific permission has been given. Such as: Class assemblies, school productions and sport days. Only photographs or film containing shots of your own children may be placed on a social media site.

This is for the safety of all our children and yourself. Thank you for respecting the policies of Woodlands and the privacy of our children.



Pupil use of electronic communication devices in school

Use of electronic communication devices, such as mobile phones or watches are becoming increasingly sophisticated and can therefore present a number of problems in a school environment. We are referring specifically to devices that enable communication of any kind (ie text, phone call or notifications) plus devices that contain a camera option; or can access the internet; or have the ability to record. These devices could include a handset, watch or tablet.

Electronic communication devices can be valuable items and might render a pupil vulnerable to theft

- Electronic communication devices can make pupils objects of envy or disparagement and could have implications with regard to discipline and bullying.
- Use of newer devices with integrated cameras could lead to child protection and data protection issues with regard to inappropriate capture, use or distribution of images.
- An electronic communication device on a pupil's person could potentially undermine classroom discipline and distract the pupils learning.

The main reason for an electronic communication device in school is for a child in Y6 who walks to or from school independently. However, if a child brings an electronic communication device into school in years 3, 4 & 5 for exceptional circumstances, such as being collected by another family member at the end of the day, there are certain rules that must be adhered to within school.

- If parents feel that their child needs to bring an electronic communication device into school, either regularly or occasionally, parents must complete and submit to the head teacher, the 'Electronic Communication Device' Agreement form. This will enable the school to have a full and accurate record of pupils who have an electronic communication device in school. Only pupils whose parents have submitted this form are allowed to bring a device into school. The form is available as an appendix of this policy and from the school office.
- These devices should be clearly marked with the child's name so it can be identified by a member of staff and the child. School will accept no electronic communication device in school without it being clearly marked with the child's name.
- Parents must ensure that their child understands the rules and procedures when bringing their device into school and the consequences if they do not follow these rules.

- If pupils bring devices to school, the device must be switched off when they are entering school premises and handed over to a member of staff and signed in by the pupil, when entering the school building, at the start of the day.
- The mobile devices will be locked away securely during the school day and collected by a staff member at the end of the day.
- At the end of the day, pupils collect their device from staff, and sign them out, before leaving school.
- If a pupil is found to have an electronic communication device in their bag, locker, playground or on their person, it will be taken off them and given to a senior member of staff who will keep the device safe until the end of the day and parents notified and action will be taken following the school behaviour policy.
- If a pupil is found taking photographs or video footage with the device, this will be regarded as a serious offence and the device will not be returned until the images have been removed by the pupil in the presence of a teacher. Disciplinary action may be taken according to the school's behaviour policy and parents will be contacted.
- Should a pupil be found to be using a device inappropriately, or staff have a suspicion that a device contains unsuitable material, the school reserves the right to withdraw this privilege and they will no longer be able to bring a device into school and action will be taken according to the schools behaviour policy, safeguarding and child protection policy and Government legislation. In circumstances where there is a suspicion that the material on the device may provide evidence relating to a criminal offence, then appropriate action will be taken and staff can remove the device from the pupil and hand over to the relevant authorities.

Our policy prohibits the use by pupils of these devices while on the school premises, grounds or off site activities e.g. swimming, school trips

Parents and pupils are advised that Woodlands Academy of Learning accepts no liability for the loss or damage to electronic communication devices which are brought into the school or school grounds.

Pupils will only be allowed an electronic communication device in school if the 'Electronic Device Agreement' has been signed by Parent and Pupil.



Electronic communication device, including mobile devices agreement for children and parents

If you would like your child to have a communication device in school, you and your son/ daughter are required to read the 'Electronic Communication Device Policy' and sign the agreement form below, and return it to the school office.

- Communication devices **MUST** be switched off when entering the school premises and handed in to a member of staff on entering the school premises
- Communication devices **MUST** be clearly marked with the child's full name.
- Communication devices **MUST** be **signed in** and **signed out** by the pupil at the beginning and end of the school day.
- Pupils who do not adhere to the school policy/ rules will have their device removed and face consequences according to the school behaviour policy and /or may be banned from bringing a communication device into school.

Parents and pupils are advised that Woodlands Academy of Learning accepts no liability for the loss or damage to communication devices which are brought into the school or school grounds.

We agree to the terms and conditions of this mobile device agreement and acknowledge that we have read the '*Electronic Communication Device Policy*'

Reason communication device will be in school.....

.....

.....

Name of child.....Class.....

Parent's/ Guardians signature..... Date.....

Pupils signature..... Date.....

