



Mobile and Smart Technology Policy 2024/25

The Link Academy Trust is a company limited by guarantee and an exempt charity, regulated by the Education & Skills Funding Agency (ESFA). All Members of the Board of Trustees are Directors of the company as well as Trustees of the exempt charity; the term 'Trustee' used in this Policy also means Director.

This Policy applies to all staff within the Link Academy Trust.

1. Policy Statement

The Link Academy Trust places the safety of young people as its highest priority, including safeguarding children and young people when using mobile devices and smart technology at school. The use of such devices must be managed effectively in the learning environment. Pupils will be educated to take a responsible approach in the use of technology, inside and outside of school, to help them recognise and understand the risks and build their digital awareness and resilience (Please see the Trust's *Online Safety Policy*).

The purpose of this policy is to safeguard and promote the welfare of all members of the Link Academy Trust community with regard to the use of mobile devices and smart technology in the school environment and is fully endorsed by the Board of Trustees.

This policy applies to pupils, visitors, all staff, including the governing body, leadership team, teachers, support staff, external contractors, volunteers and other individuals who work for, or provide services on behalf of the schools. It applies to all mobile devices and smart technology on site; including, but not limited to, mobile phones and personal devices, such as tablets, e-readers, games consoles and wearable technology, such as smart watches and fitness trackers, which facilitate communication or have the capability to record sound or images.

2. Policy Framework

The 2023 UNESCO report on [Global Education Monitoring Report 2023](#) found that the use of mobile devices in school can be harmful to children and young people's mental and physical wellbeing causing distraction from learning, risks to pupil privacy and cyber-bullying. Following these findings DfE has issued [Mobile phones in schools: guidance](#) and the use of **personal mobile devices for pupils will not be allowed** in the Trust's schools during the school day.

This policy has also been developed in line with:

DfE guidance [Keeping children safe in education \(KCSiE\) 20243](#)

[Working Together to Safeguard Children](#) (updated 2024)

[Searching, Screening and Confiscation 2022](#) (updated 2023)

This policy should read alongside, Link Academy Trust's:

- Data Protection policy
- Web Filtering policy
- Staying Safe Online
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Code of Conduct & Ethics (CoCE)

The school's:

- Safeguarding Policy
- Anti-bullying policy and child-on-child abuse policy
- Behaviour policy
- Complaints Policy

3. Safe use of mobile and smart technology expectations

3.0 Link Academy Trust recognises that use of mobile and smart technologies is part of everyday life for pupils, staff and parents/carers. As part of the introduction and induction to the school the Executive/Academy Head (E/AH) will explain this policy to the pupil and their parents/carers, and that it has been developed in best interests of pupils to create a safe and positive learning environment.

3.1 All members of the school community are advised to ensure that their mobile phones and personal devices do not contain any content which may be offensive, derogatory or illegal, or which would otherwise contravene our behaviour or safeguarding policies.

3.2 The sending of abusive or inappropriate messages or content via mobile phones or personal devices is forbidden by any member of the school community; any breaches will be dealt with in line with the school's anti-bullying, behaviour and safeguarding policies.

3.3 All members of the school community are advised to use passwords/PIN numbers to ensure that unauthorised access, calls or actions cannot be made on their phones or devices.

4. Pupils use of mobile and smart technology

The devices brought into school are entirely at the risk of the owner and the decision to bring the device into the school lies with the user as does the liability for any loss or damage resulting from the use of the device in school.

The school accepts no responsibility or liability in respect of lost, stolen or damaged devices while at school or on activities organised or undertaken by the school (the school recommends insurance is purchased to cover that device whilst out of the home)

The school accepts no responsibility for any malfunction of a device due to changes made to the device while on the school network or whilst resolving any connectivity issues

4.0 Personal electronic devices, including phones, smart watches and iPads, brought onto site by pupils must be handed in at the school admin office. They will be put into a lockable container. Pupils are asked to switch the device off or put it into aeroplane mode before it is placed in the lockable box. The devices will be stored safely until the end of the school day when pupils can collect them from the school admin office.

The school will provide devices required for learning.

Exceptional Circumstances - If a pupil requires access to a personal device in exceptional circumstances, such as for medical assistance and monitoring, this will be

discussed with the E/AH prior to use being permitted. Any arrangements regarding access to personal devices in exceptional circumstances will be documented and recorded by the school in the child's IHCP. Specific agreements and expectations (including sanctions for misuse) will be provided in writing and agreed by the pupil and/or their parents carers before use is permitted.

- 4.1 If parents or carers need to contact the pupil during school hours, they should contact the school office. If a pupil needs to contact their parents or carers whilst on site, in emergency circumstances, they will be allowed to use a school phone in the school office.
- 4.2 Pupils will be educated regarding the safe and appropriate use of mobile and smart technology, including mobile phones and personal devices, and will be made aware of behaviour expectations and consequences for policy breaches. Safe and appropriate use of mobile and smart technology will be taught as part of an embedded and progressive safeguarding education approach using age- appropriate sites and resources.
- 4.3 Mobile phones and personal devices must not be taken into examinations or tests. Pupils found in possession of a mobile phone or personal device which facilitates communication or internet access during an exam will be reported to the appropriate examining body. This may result in the withdrawal from either that examination or all examinations.
- 4.4 Where pupils' mobile phones or personal devices are used when learning at home, this should be supervised by the parent or carer.
- 4.5 Any concerns regarding a pupil's use of mobile technology or policy breaches will be dealt with in accordance with our existing policies.
- 4.6 This policy applies when pupils take part in off-site activities and trips during the school day. The pupil's personal device should be kept at the school and collected at the end of the school day as usual.

5. Searches, screening and Confiscation

- 5.0 Any screening, searching and confiscation that is required in the school will be carried out in accordance with the DFE's [Searching, Screening and Confiscation](#) guidance.
- 5.1 Only the E/AH, or a member of staff authorised by the E/AH, can carry out a search. The E/AH can authorise individual members of staff to search for specific items. The Designated Safeguarding Lead (or deputy) should be informed of any searching incidents, and they should consider the circumstances of the pupil who has been searched to assess the incident against wider safeguarding concerns.
- 5.2 Pupils' mobile phones or devices may be searched by a member of Senior Leadership Team, with the consent of the pupils or a parent/carers. If any content is found that contravenes any of the school or Trust policies, it will be dealt with appropriately in line with these policies.
- 5.3 If staff find any images data or files on an electronic device that they reasonably suspect are likely to put a person at risk, they must consider the appropriate safeguarding response:

If there is suspicion that material on a pupil's personal device or mobile phone may be illegal, or may provide evidence relating to a criminal offence, the device will be handed over to the police for further investigation. The Trust Head of Safeguarding/ Safeguarding Adviser must be informed immediately dsl@thelink.academy

If the data or files are not suspected to be evidence in relation to an offence, and the continued existence of the data or file is likely to continue to cause harm to any person, and the pupil and/or the parent refuses to delete the data or files themselves, a member of staff may delete the data or files. The member of staff must inform the DSL and record the incident on the pupil's record.

- 5.4 Staff may confiscate a pupil's mobile phone or device if it is being used to contravene any of the school or Group policies.
- 5.5 Where there is a concern that a child is at risk of harm, the school will respond in line with the School's Safeguarding Policy. If a child or young person is at risk of immediate harm, staff must inform the police straight away.
- 5.6 Concerns regarding policy breaches by pupils will be shared with parents/carers as

appropriate unless this creates a risk to the child. Appropriate action, which may include sanctions and pastoral/welfare support, will be implemented in line with the school and Group policies.

6. Staff use of mobile and smart technology

Personal mobile devices may be used by staff in accordance with the discretion of the Academy Head/ EAH.

Staff may bring personal mobile devices into school as this supports efficiency and can enhance the teaching and learning in school, for example:

1. authentication on CPOMS / use of Microsoft software
2. contacting colleagues within the Trust
3. to support staff with teaching and learning e.g. uploading to Tapestry, school learning platforms, Sway.

The expectations for taking/storing/using images/video aligns with the school's acceptable use policy and use of images/video policy. The non-consensual taking/using of images of others is not permitted.

Devices should be used as discreetly as possible and kept on mute if possible.

Devices are not permitted to be used in specific areas on site, such as changing rooms and toilets.

The devices brought into school are entirely at the risk of the owner and the decision to bring the device in to the school lies with the user as does the liability for any loss or damage resulting from the use of the device in school.

The school accepts no responsibility or liability in respect of lost, stolen or damaged devices while at school or on activities organised or undertaken by the school (the school recommends insurance is purchased to cover that device whilst out of the home)

The school accepts no responsibility for any malfunction of a device due to changes made to the device while on the school network or whilst resolving any connectivity issues

Personal devices should not be used for personal purposes during teaching sessions, unless in exceptional circumstances, for example to aid with a medical condition. Personal contact should take place in specific, child-free areas during non-contact time.

Staff are advised to:

- Ensure that any content brought onto site via personal mobile phones and devices is compatible with their professional role and our behaviour expectations.
- Be aware that they are not permitted to use their own personal accounts for contacting learners or parents and carers at any time. Any pre-existing relationships or circumstance, which could compromise staff's ability to comply with this, will be discussed with the DSL and the E/AH.
- If a member of staff is thought to have illegal content saved or stored on a mobile phone or personal device or to have committed a criminal offence using a personal device or mobile phone, the police will be contacted, and the Local Authority Designated Officer or equivalent will be informed in line with the Trust's Managing

Allegations Policy. If a member of staff breaches this policy, action will be taken in line with the Code of Conduct & Ethics and Managing Allegations Policy.

Staff will use mobile and smart technology in accordance with the law, DFE guidance and the relevant Trust and school policies, such as Safeguarding, Data Protection and confidentiality and the Code of Conduct & Ethics (CoCE) and Mobile Device Policy.

Exceptional Circumstances - If a member of staff requires access to a personal device in exceptional circumstances, such as for medical assistance and monitoring, they will inform the E/AH. Any arrangements regarding access to personal devices in exceptional circumstances must be documented and recorded by the school.

7. Visitors' use of mobile and smart technology

7.0 Parents/carers and visitors, including volunteers, are asked not to use their mobile phones or smart devices whilst on the school premises. They should be stored securely when not being used and locked with appropriate security settings (e.g. passcode/passwords/pin numbers). They should be switched off, or put on aeroplane mode, when at school. Each setting will display a clear signage in reception asking all visitors to comply with these arrangements.

7.1 Under no circumstances should a visitor allow a pupil to use their mobile device. All devices must be passcode/password/PIN protected and "locked" if left unattended.

7.2 Appropriate signage and information is in place as part of our signing in process to inform visitors of our expectations for the safe and appropriate use of personal devices and mobile phones.

7.3 Visitors, including volunteers, who are on site for regular or extended periods of time are expected to use mobile and smart technology in accordance with the Mobile Device policy and other associated policies, including Safeguarding.

7.4 If visitors require access to mobile and smart technology, for example when working with pupils as part of multi-agency activity, this will be discussed with the E/AH prior to use being permitted. Any arrangements regarding agreed visitor access to mobile/smart technology will be documented and recorded by the school. This may include undertaking appropriate risk assessments if necessary.

7.5 Members of staff are expected to challenge visitors if they have concerns about their use of mobile and smart technology and inform the DSL or E/AH of any breaches of the policy.

For special events such as performances where parents/carers may want to record the event, the AH/lead should state 'Before we get started could I just ask that any photos you take are of your child and for your personal use only. We would ask that these are not put on social media as some parents would rather this didn't happen.'

8. Contractor's use of mobile and smart technology

If contractors require access to mobile and smart technology, for example when taking readings, measurements and pictures of work, this will be discussed with the E/AH prior to use being permitted. Any arrangements regarding agreed contractor access to mobile/smart technology will be documented and recorded by the school. This may include undertaking appropriate risk assessments if necessary.

9. Policy monitoring and review

9.0 Technology evolves and changes rapidly. This policy will be reviewed at least annually. The policy will be revised following any national or local policy updates, any local concerns and/or any changes to our technical infrastructure.

9.1 We will regularly monitor internet use taking place via our provided devices and systems and evaluate online safety mechanisms to ensure that this policy is consistently applied. (Please see *Web Filtering Policy*) Any issues identified will be incorporated into our action

planning.

9.2 All members of the school community will be made aware of how the school will monitor policy compliance: this is achieved through staff training and access of policies

10. Responding to policy breaches

10.0 All staff are informed of the need to report policy breaches or concerns in line with existing policies and procedures as part of their induction and training.

10.1 Should any mobile/smart device related incidents occur, staff must prioritise the pupil's immediate safety. They must remain professional and adhere to all safeguarding and confidentiality procedures.

10.2 The DSL or deputy must be informed immediately. This must be done verbally and then followed up **on the same day** and documented on the school's electronic recording system and the Trust's Head of Safeguarding/Safeguarding Adviser notified via email.

10.3 On receipt of the information, the DSL must consider all information and then, in cases of serious concern, report this within **one working day** to the host authority, placing authority, and where relevant, the Local Authority Designated Officer or local equivalent.

10.4 If there is suspicion that any personal device or mobile phone contains or may provide evidence relating to a criminal offence, the device must be confiscated and handed over to the police for further investigation.

10.5 After any investigations are completed, leadership staff will debrief, identify lessons learnt and implement any policy or curriculum changes, as required.

10.6 Staff, parents/carers and pupils are required to work in partnership with us to resolve issues.

10.7 All members of the community will respect confidentiality and the need to follow the official procedures for reporting concerns.

10.8 Pupils, parents/carers and staff will be informed of our complaints procedure and staff will be made aware of the Whistleblowing Policy.

This policy will be reviewed and approved by Audit Committee every 2 years.

Approved by Audit Committee: 5th December 2024

Next Review: Autumn 2026