

Perth Academy Mobile Device Policy

September 2026

Final Version

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Vision and Values

Perth Academy's vision is centred on the idea of "TEAM Perth Academy." This stands for:

- Together – being a kind, inclusive community
- Engaged – participating in fun, inspiring learning
- Achieving – building skills for life
- Motivated – being ambitious and eager to learn

In full, the school's vision is that all young people, staff and families feel a strong sense of belonging to "Team Perth Academy," with a focus on developing learners who are together, engaged, achieving and motivated.

This vision is supported by our core values (RISE):

- Respect
- Integrity
- Safety
- Equity

Overall, Perth Academy aims to create an inclusive, supportive learning community where pupils develop skills for life and grow into confident, responsible and successful individuals. The development of this policy has been firmly underpinned by our vision and values, which have guided decision-making at every stage.

Rationale

In March 2026 the views of young people, parents/carers and staff were gathered through a questionnaire and have contributed towards the development of this policy. This was due to concern that the current policy of phones off in classes was confusing and not being consistently applied across the school and that further sanctions for non-compliance were needed to be made to ensure clarity and consistent application.

Feedback from stakeholders identified the following areas which were important to our community, therefore through the implementation of this policy we aim to:

- Improve focus, learning and attainment
- Reduce distractions, bullying and safeguarding risks
- Promote positive social interaction
- Ensure equity and consistency across the school
- Clarity is key therefore a policy on a page will also be developed

Consultation with staff, pupils and parents identified that mobile phones:

- Can negatively impact learning, concentration and wellbeing
- Are also important for communication, medical needs and responsibilities therefore, this policy balances restriction with appropriate access.

A draft policy was created in June 2026 and staff were asked for feedback in August 2026. SLT met and considered staff feedback resulting in a few changes, the main one being the requirement for phones to be placed in bags.

National/Local Context

Guidance on Mobile Phones in Scotland's Schools 2024

The Scottish Government's 2024 guidance on mobile phones in schools provides non-statutory advice to schools and emphasises that there is no one-size-fits-all national policy; instead, headteachers are empowered to decide what works best for their own school. The guidance is based on evidence that mobile phones can disrupt learning, reduce concentration, and negatively affect wellbeing, while also recognising that they can have some benefits for learning and communication when used appropriately. Schools are encouraged to develop whole-school policies in partnership with staff, pupils and parents, ensuring expectations, consequences and safeguards are in place, particularly around issues such as cyberbullying and misuse. Importantly, policies should be inclusive and flexible, allowing exceptions for pupils who need access to phones for medical reasons, additional support needs or caring responsibilities, and should align with wider approaches to relationships, behaviour and pupils' rights. Overall, the aim is to support calmer, safer and more focused learning environments while balancing the risks and benefits of mobile technology.

Children's Rights: United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)

The full policy contains a separate paper called Children's Rights in Relation to the Digital Environment. This recognises that digital technology is now an important part of children's lives and should support their rights while also protecting them from harm. It states that children have the right to access information and express themselves online (Articles 13 and 17), but also the right to be safe from harm, abuse and exploitation (Article 19). It emphasises that adults—governments, schools and parents—have a responsibility to ensure that digital environments are safe, age-appropriate and supportive of wellbeing. Children should be supported to develop digital literacy, critical thinking and responsible use of technology, while ensuring their privacy is respected (Article 16) and that digital access is fair and inclusive. Overall, the UNCRC promotes a balanced approach: enabling children to benefit from digital technology while safeguarding their health, development and right

Perth & Kinross Council's Personal Mobile Device Policy for Schools 2025-2028

This policy sets a consistent, authority-wide expectation that mobile phones and digital devices should not disrupt learning, with a clear minimum standard that they are not used during lessons or in exams unless explicitly permitted by the teacher for educational purposes. While individual schools retain some flexibility in how they implement procedures, devices must generally be switched off or on silent and stored appropriately during the school day, and the school office is the main route for communication with families in emergencies. The policy aims to create a calm, focused and respectful learning environment, reduce distraction, and protect pupils and staff from risks such as misuse or bullying, while still recognising that technology can support learning when used appropriately. It also includes proportionate exceptions for pupils who need access to devices for medical reasons, additional support needs or caring responsibilities, and was developed following consultation with pupils, staff and parents to ensure a balanced and inclusive approach.

Scottish Government Announcement on Mobile Devices in Schools June 2026

In June 2026, the Scottish Government announced a significant shift towards "phone-free" schools, with Education Secretary Màiri McAllan confirming plans to introduce national legislation to restrict mobile phone use across all Scottish schools. The government committed to launching a consultation within its first 100 days on making learning environments phone-free, alongside refreshed national guidance to encourage schools to strengthen restrictions from the next academic session. While legislation is being developed, headteachers have been urged to act immediately, with continued flexibility to implement bans in classrooms or across the full school day, and with exemptions for pupils with medical needs. Overall, the announcement signals a move from the 2024 guidance (which left decisions largely to schools) towards greater national consistency and potentially mandatory restrictions on mobile phone use in Scottish schools.

We have therefore made the decision to continue with our plans for implementation of our policy for October 2026, to be reviewed when new Scottish Government legislation is in place.

Core Principles

- **Learning comes first** – phones must not disrupt teaching or learning
- **Consistency matters** – all staff will apply the same expectations
- **Respect and responsibility** – pupils are expected to meet clear standards
- **Reasonable access** – legitimate needs (e.g. medical, carers, CYPPs) will be supported
- **Supporting Wellbeing** – reducing screen time during school hours supports wellbeing, focus and engagement.

Use of Mobile Devices

Definition (as per PKC Personal Mobile Device Policy)

- Mobile Phones – any handheld device that provides communication, text messaging, internet access and multimedia functions.
- Tablets and E-Readers – portable devices with touchscreens used for reading, internet, browsing and running applications.
- Laptops and Netbooks – portable computers designed for personal use, including internet browsing, document creation and multimedia consumption.
- Wearable Technology – devices such as smartwatches and fitness trackers that can connect to the internet and other devices to provide notifications, health tracing and other functionalities.
- Portable Gaming devices – handheld consoles and devices designed primarily for gaming but may also include internet connectivity and multimedia functions.
- Smart Accessories – items such as smart glasses, smart rings, and other emerging technologies that can connect to the internet and perform various digital functions.

In Classrooms

- Phones must be on silent (no vibrate) **and placed in a bag**. If a pupil does not have a bag go to Stage 2 where the phone will be removed for the day. Phones must not be placed on pupil seats, desks or on pupil laps.
- Earphones/Bluetooth headphones should also not be used or visible.
- Any other devices such as pupil's personal tablet or smartwatch must also have notifications off or the same process may be applied.
- Devices may only be used:
    - When explicitly instructed by the teacher for learning purposes

If a device is seen or used without permission a consistent, staged response will be implemented:

- **Stage 1** – the class teacher asks the young person to place the device in their bag (not on pupil seat, desk or pupil lap). The teacher records this as an intervention in SEEMIS. A groupcall is then sent at the end of the day to inform the parent. A script will be issued to staff on what to say to ensure consistency in messaging from staff. Three interventions in a week will result in movement to Stage 3 (Guidance staff to pick up through weekly interventions report).

- **Stage 2** – if the young person does not follow the previous request, a duty call will be made and the phone will be removed by the duty person, placed in a sealed bag and the pupil asked to sign over the seal. The duty person will take the phone to the school reception, where it will be signed in and held securely until the end of the school day.

  The pupil can then collect the phone at 3.30 pm. If this happens 3 times during the school session Stage 3 will be applied. Buses leave at 3.40 pm and it will be the responsibility of the pupil to get to the bus on time, which may require the phone to be left if there is a large queue. It is not the school's responsibility if a young person misses the bus due to phone misuse.

  - **Stage 3** – if the young person does not follow the previous instructions a member of SLT will be called. The parents will be called to a meeting where it must be agreed that, from that point onwards they:

    Do not bring their phone to school, or

    (a) Surrender their phone at reception upon entering the building, not be collected when returning home, and not in between.
    (b) If a pupil's device is transported to and held in reception, the school will ensure it is kept safe and secure. The school will not take responsibility for damage or loss where a young person's phone has been surrendered due to them not following the school's policy.

If the pupil refuses to hand the phone to SLT parents will be contacted to either instruct the pupil to co-operate or come into school themselves to collect the phone. Pupils will not return to classes until the phone is handed over or parent collects and an alternative location will be allocated to the pupil.

During Social Times (before school, break, lunch)

- Mobile devices are **permitted.**
- Pupils must use phones responsibly:
    - No filming or photographing without consent
    - No inappropriate or harmful use
    - Follow school behaviour expectations

Movement Around School

Phones should remain **out of sight in corridors, and between classes.** If this is not being followed then staff will remind pupils to place the phone out of sight, if the pupil does not follow this instruction staff will refer to PT and a lunchtime reflection will be issued.

Exceptions

The school recognises that some pupils require phone access. Phones may be used where agreed for:

- Medical alerts (e.g. diabetes monitoring)
- As part of a Young Person's Plan (legitimate reason approved by SLT)

These pupils will have individual arrangements agreed with the Guidance Teacher and a member of the Senior Leadership Team, this will be communicated to staff.

Responsibilities

Staff

Staff will:

- Apply the policy consistently across all classes
- Clearly communicate expectations to pupils
- Only permit phone use when it enhances learning
- Staff use of their own phones will be similar to rules for pupils: they must not be seen nor used during class time, unless in emergency situations as part of their role. Staff can, however, access their own devices during non-contact periods and breaks. Staff working outside the school building with no access to school phones may use their phones to make contact (mainly PE staff). Pupil Support Assistants also communicate using Mobile Phones.

Pupils

Pupils must:

- Follow all instructions regarding phone use
- Keep phones out of sight in lessons
- Use phones respectfully and safely
- Avoid any misuse including:
    - bullying
    - filming others
    - accessing inappropriate content

Parents/Carers

Parents/carers are asked to:

- Support the school in enforcing this policy.
- Avoid contacting pupils directly during lessons.
- Contact the school office if urgent communication is required.
- If Stage 3 is reached it is the responsibility of parents to enforce and ensure compliance. If this is not the case the pupil the school's Relationship Policy interventions may apply.

Monitoring and Review

- The policy will be reviewed after implementation on or before Scottish Government legislation is in place.
- Feedback from pupils, staff and parents will inform adjustment.

Summary of Approach

This policy reflects consultation outcomes by:

- Avoiding a full ban
- Restricting use in classrooms with clear consequences for non-compliance
- Allowing use at social times, this was important to pupils
- Supporting pupils with genuine needs
- Ensuring clarity and consistency for staff