



Introduction

This policy outlines the appropriate use of mobile phones, smartwatches and tracking devices on our school site.

Aims of policy:

- To inform all members of our school community about the appropriate use of mobile phones, smartwatches and air tags / other tracking devices.
- To outline the procedures and processes of this policy.

Rationale

Oughtibridge Primary School recognises that some pupils and their families own a mobile phone or a smartwatch. The school recognises the difference between a fitness tracker which tells the time and a smartwatch with enhanced capabilities and functionalities: internet/bluetooth connectivity and/or recording functions, whether that be sound or picture.

We recognise that some parents/carers request that their child/ren bring a mobile phone to the school for before and after school safety/security reasons and have smartwatches to promote and support physical activity and time keeping.

The school is also aware that there is growing evidence on the damaging effects of smartwatches/phones on under 12s learning and mental health and we strongly support this. Please click [here](#) to read the research.

Our core business of teaching and learning needs to be conducted in an environment free from unnecessary distractions or disruptions. Therefore, Oughtibridge Primary School **strongly discourages** the bringing of mobile phones to school by pupils. We are prepared to allow mobile phones on the premises but only for Y6 and Y5 pupils **if it is strictly necessary**.

With regard to smartwatches, Oughtibridge Primary School **strongly discourages** the bringing of these items as they are expensive and could easily be damaged during the school day. We are prepared to allow these items in school as long as the procedures and processes outlined are adhered to.

With regard to air tags and other tracking devices, Oughtibridge Primary School **strongly discourages** the bringing of these items as they are expensive, can be mislaid and because such devices have the potential to post locations of children's whereabouts on social media and to ensure that the presence of tracking devices does not disrupt teaching, learning, or safeguarding procedures.

Guidelines for mobile phones

Mobile phones are brought to school entirely at the owner's risk. Oughtibridge Primary School accepts no responsibility for replacing lost, stolen or damaged mobile phones whatever the cause.

There are no reasons why a student needs to have in their possession or use a mobile phone during the school day subject to medical exemptions to be agreed in writing and on a case by case basis. Parents are reminded that in cases of emergency the school office remains a vital and appropriate point of contact and can ensure their child is reached quickly.

1. **No mobile phones are to be used on school grounds by any pupils.**
2. Pupils must hand the phone in to their class teacher before school and collect it at the end of the school day.
3. Each mobile phone should be stored in a named plastic wallet.
4. The phones will be secured in the school office.
5. If pupils bring a mobile phone onto the school grounds during the school day, their parents need to complete the Mobile Phone Agreement.

Please note that Oughtibridge Primary School will follow its Behaviour Policy in the event of for any misuse of mobile phones (e.g. taking inappropriate photographs, sending inappropriate text messages, prank calls, malicious posting on social media etc.) outside of the school grounds/day. We will of course support any pupils affected.

If an online safety concern such as cyber bullying is identified, parents/carers will be notified and appropriate advice, support and/or consequences may be offered, depending on the circumstances.

The school cannot accept responsibility for damage or loss of a mobile phone brought into school.

The school has the right to confiscate or search a mobile phone. In the unlikely event of needing to do this, we will endeavour to contact a parent or carer.

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/65cf5f2a4239310011b7b916/Mobile_phone_s_in_schools_guidance.pdf

Guidelines for smartwatches

1. Smartwatches are brought to school entirely at the owner's risk. Oughtibridge Primary School accepts no responsibility for replacing lost, stolen or damaged smartwatches.
2. Smartwatches can be used in school for telling the time and tracking steps/fitness activity (to be checked and shared outside of the school day). School recommends less expensive fitness trackers for these purposes as they do not have the enhanced capability of a smartwatch.
3. Smartwatches cannot be used in school for recording sounds or images, sharing photos or playing games etc.

4. Pupils are advised that if they bring a smartwatch onto the school grounds during the school day, their parents need to be aware and, wherever possible, should be switched to silent/'Schooltime' mode.

Please note that Oughtibridge Primary School will follow its Behaviour Policy for any misuse of smartwatches (e.g. taking inappropriate photographs, sending inappropriate text messages, prank calls, malicious posting on social media etc.) outside of the school grounds/day. We will of course support any pupils affected.

If an online safety concern is identified, parents/carers will be notified and appropriate advice, support and/or consequences may be offered depending on the circumstances.

The school has the right to confiscate or search a smartwatch. In the unlikely event of needing to do this, we will endeavour to contact a parent or carer.

Air Tags / Other GPS tracking devices

1. Privacy and Data Protection

- Tracking devices can raise significant privacy concerns as they can track a child's location without their informed consent.
- Schools have a duty to protect all children's personal data, and the use of tracking devices could compromise this responsibility.

2. Safeguarding Risks

- Tracking devices can inadvertently reveal the real-time location of a group of children, which poses a significant risk—especially for pupils under protection orders, in foster care, or with specific safeguarding needs.
- If lost or misplaced, a tracking device could be misused, potentially putting a child at risk.
- Parents using tracking devices to post the exact location of a class or group of children on social media platforms, **places the safety of all the children and staff at risk** and specific children who may be fleeing Domestic Violence or who may be subject to court orders.

3. Disruption to School Trip Management

- Teachers and staff are responsible for the supervision and safety of all pupils during trips. The use of tracking devices may create unnecessary confusion and interfere with established safety protocols.
- School staff undertake extensive safety preparation and planning prior to trips. This includes robust risk assessment and contingency planning which would enable them to respond to any unforeseen circumstances while away from school.

4. Other Implications

- If a pupil is carrying a tracking device, teachers or other pupils might receive alerts, creating confusion or concern.
- If a tracking device beeps unexpectedly, it could cause unnecessary panic during a school trip.
- There's a risk of unauthorised individuals detecting or following a tracking device, making it a potential security and safeguarding issue.

In line with this school guidance, personal tracking devices such as AirTags are not permitted on school trips. Parents should trust the school's supervision and safeguarding policies, which are designed to ensure children's safety at all times. If parents have specific concerns about their child's wellbeing on a school trip, they should communicate these directly with the school prior to the trip.

Any tracking device found in use on a school trip will be removed and returned to parents at the end of the trip.

If parents wish to send a tracking device into school, it should be handed in at the beginning of the school day in line with the mobile phone policy.

Consequences

In line with our Behaviour and Relationships policy, pupils who fail to follow these guidelines, the following consequences may be applied:

- Confiscating the item and returning the item back to the parent/carer at an appropriate time.
- The pupil not being allowed to bring the device to school for the short, medium or long term.
- In extreme circumstances, confiscating and searching pupils' device, in accordance with the law. (We will access the DfE 'Searching, screening and confiscation at school' and Childnet cyberbullying guidance to ensure that the school's powers are used proportionately and lawfully). Devices will be handed back to a parent/carer at an appropriate time.
- Communication with parents/carers regarding smart device use at school.

Associated policies

This policy links to other key policies such as:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- GDPR policy
- Acceptable Use policy

Communication of policy to others

This policy will be shared with all staff and stored in the policy file on staffshare. It is also uploaded to our website to make it available to our community.

This policy will be reviewed on a bi annual basis.