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Education, People & Business

Education Procedure Manual 3/42

MOBILE DEVICE POLICY

For
Teachers and Employees on Scottish Negotiating Committee for Teachers (SNCT) Conditions of Service

Effective from: October 2025

Education, People & Business

This document can be provided in large print, Braille or on audio format and can be translated into other community languages. Please contact the Council's Corporate Communications Team at: East Dunbartonshire Council, 12 Strathkelvin Place, Southbank, Kirkintilloch G66 1TJ
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本文件可按要求翻譯成中文，如有此需要，請電 0300 123 4510。

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अनुरोध करने पर यह दस्तावेज हिन्दी में भाषांतरित किया जा सकता है। कृपया 0300 123 4510 पर फोन कीजिए।

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Version Control History

Version No.	Effective Date	Details of change from previous version	Date Approved	New version no.
-	Jan 2008	Updating to new template Updating terminology Review of Policy and Guidance	24/10/25	1.0

GDPR Statement

East Dunbartonshire Council holds, uses and processes information in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulations and all other relevant national data protection laws. Further information detailing how East Dunbartonshire holds and uses personal information and copies of privacy notices used throughout the Council are available on our website.

Policy Review Statement

This policy will be reviewed in line with:

- Legislative Change
- Changes to SNCT National Conditions of Service
- Other external factors
- Feedback on the effectiveness of the policy
- Requests for review by Elected Members, Trade Unions and/or Management.

1.0 Purpose

1.1 This policy sets out the East Dunbartonshire Council framework on the use of mobile devices (*e.g.* phones, tablets and smartwatches) in schools. It aims to support learning and teaching, safeguard young people, promote consistency, and ensure equity of access across schools.

1.2 The policy aligns with Scottish Government guidance (2024) and reflects the outcomes of extensive stakeholder engagement. Mobile device use should be guided by clear educational purposes that reflect teacher professionalism and context specific judgement.

2.0 Scope

2.1 This policy applies to all children, young people and staff (both teaching and non-teaching) in all EDC educational establishments.

3.0 References & Related Documentation

3.1 The following documents should be referenced when considering this procedure:

- SNCT Handbook
- Equalities Act 2010
- Scottish Government Mobile phones: guidance for Scotland's schools

4.0 Stakeholder Engagement

This policy has been developed in consultation with:

- Pupils who provided feedback on both positive uses and potential disruptions.
- Parents/Carers who raised concerns related to pupil safety, distraction from learning, and fairness of implementation.
- Teaching Staff who highlighted the need for consistent policy enforcement and practical guidance.

5.0 Principles

The following principles underpin the policy:

- The promotion of learning and teaching is the primary function of all educational establishments.
- Equity and inclusion for pupils across schools is essential.
- Protecting wellbeing of staff and pupils.
- Promoting respectful and responsible use.
- Adjustments should be made for pupils with factors including medical, communication, and additional support needs.
- Head Teachers maintain the authority to implement context-appropriate

operational measures within this policy framework.

- The policy seeks to eliminate inconsistent classroom practices by establishing uniform expectations within and across all schools in East Dunbartonshire.

6.0 Operational Guidance

6.1 Primary Schools

- Pupils are strongly encouraged to leave personal mobile devices at home.
- Where mobile phones are brought solely for use during travel to and from school (*e.g.* for safety, communication during pickups, or family transition arrangements), they must remain switched off and stored securely in school bags throughout the school day.
- Smartwatches must be set to airplane mode, to disable messaging, notifications, and camera functions.
- Personal mobile phones and smartwatches must not be used during lessons and not used during lunch or interval. Local arrangements are subject to Head Teacher discretion in consultation with stakeholders.
- Exceptions may be granted for medical, communication, or additional support needs, with parental agreement and Head Teacher approval. If use of mobile devices is permitted clear expectations and boundaries must be established to promote wellbeing, inclusion, and responsible use.
- All parent/carer communication should be directed through the school office.

6.2 Secondary Schools

- Mobile devices are not permitted in lessons unless expressly authorised by the class teacher for a specific planned educational task. If approved use has not been given, mobile devices should be switched off and remain out of sight.
- Use of mobile devices during interval and lunch times may be permitted and should be considered in consultation with pupils and staff. Where allowed, clear expectations and boundaries must be established to promote wellbeing, inclusion, and responsible use such as listening to music with earphones.
- Exceptions may be granted for medical, communication, or additional support needs, with parental agreement and Head Teacher approval. If use of mobile devices is permitted clear expectations and boundaries must be established to promote wellbeing, inclusion, and responsible use.
- The use of mobile devices is strictly prohibited during assessments or examinations.

7.0 Safeguarding and Prohibited Uses

All schools must ensure rigorous measures are in place to ensure that mobile technologies are not misused. Staff are required to be vigilant and report breaches to their line manager. The following are strictly prohibited:

- Recording or photographing staff, pupils, or premises without explicit consent.
- Audio recording of lessons or individuals.
- Sharing school-related content on social media without approval.
- Engaging in any form of online cyberbullying.

- Accessing, viewing or sharing content which is of a violent or adult nature.

Any breaches will be managed in line with the procedures set out in the school's Promoting Positive Behaviour Policy.

7.1 Teacher Responsibilities:

- Staff may use personal mobile devices during lessons only for school-related professional purposes (access to teaching tools), in line with agreed school protocols. This professional distinction must be clearly communicated to pupils to ensure transparency and fairness. All use must comply with data protection and safeguarding standards.
- Staff should not be expected to use personal mobile devices to communicate with colleagues about professional matters during the school day, except in emergency situations (*e.g.* internal phone systems are down or urgent support is required). All routine and professional communication must take place via approved internal platforms, such as GLOW, SharePoint, internal phone call or other designated communication systems.
- Staff may need access to a personal mobile device under exceptional circumstances. This is subject to approval by a line manager and is anticipated for a limited period of time.
- Staff deliver clear, consistent and regular instruction on responsible device use to all pupils.
- Staff must intervene promptly and appropriately in instances of misuse by following school procedures to managing misuse.
- Schools must provide secure storage solutions if a device is confiscated during a lesson, ensuring devices are switched off; class teachers should not be expected to personally retain or secure pupil devices after a lesson has ended. Clear school procedures must be established, for example a tray or box available on the teacher desk to store a confiscated device; possible escalation to a Principal Teacher or a Senior Leader to then store the device.

8.0 Classroom Use: Permitted Exceptions Secondary Schools

Where classroom use is permitted within lessons, it must involve school-approved platforms and be consistent across departments.

Teachers should not rely on personal pupil devices for essential learning activities.

Where device use is approved within lessons:

- The learning objective must be clearly stated.

- Pupils should be reminded of expectations prior to any permitted use.
- Only approved educational platforms and applications that are GDPR compliant should be used.
- Teachers must actively monitor usage.
- Devices must remain out of sight immediately after use.
- Routine, unsupervised and unplanned use of devices is not permitted.

9.0   Policy Non-Compliance

The following staged interventions are examples of the steps that may be taken in response to non-compliance. The specific approach should be agreed upon at school level, taking into account factors such as age, ASN status, and alignment with the school's Promoting Positive Relationship Policy.   However, severe or repeated breaches of a school's policy should be treated as a disciplinary matter.

- **First Instance:** A verbal warning and clear reminder of the policy.
- **Second Instance:** Immediate confiscation of the device during the lesson, device secured in for example a tray/box on the teacher's desk and returned at the end of the lesson. Schools have a system in place so that Pastoral Care (PC) and the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) can monitor pupils not adhering to the school policy.
- **Repeated incidence in lesson:** Immediate confiscation of the device during the lesson, with the device secured and returned at the end of the school day. Schools have a system in place so that PC and SLT can monitor pupils not adhering to the school policy. Parent/carer informed.

  Pupils are responsible for collecting a confiscated device at the end of the school day. If uncollected, the device will be secured in a locked container.
- **Repeat Violations:** A formal parental meeting with Senior Leadership and Pastoral Care teacher to discuss ongoing misuse, with potential suspension of device privileges.
- **Serious Breach:** Immediate confiscation, potential safeguarding referral, and escalation to relevant partner agencies.
- All confiscated devices must be handled with discretion and stored securely, strictly complying with agreed school procedures.

10.0   Policy Exceptions

Exceptions may be granted where justified and supported by appropriate documentation. This may include:

- A medical requirement (*e.g.* continuous glucose monitoring).
- A communication need (*e.g.* augmentative technology).
- A documented additional support need (*e.g.* ASN Action Plan).
- Young carers who require ongoing contact with family members.

11.0   Equity and Inclusion

Schools must ensure that:

- Any activity that requires the use of a personal device, the class teacher must provide alternative resources to ensure all young people can engage in the learning experience. Schools must actively monitor for any peer pressure or exclusion related to device ownership.
- No assumptions are made regarding pupils' access to personal mobile devices.
- All practices ensure fairness, equity and inclusion.
- Digital literacy support is provided for pupils with limited access or experience.

12.0   Assessments and Examinations

All personal mobile devices and smartwatches are **strictly prohibited** in assessment and examination settings. Any breach may be treated as misconduct and reported in line with SQA guidelines.

13.0   Liability

East Dunbartonshire Council and individual schools do not accept liability for:

- The loss, damage, or theft of personal mobile devices.
- The consequences of device confiscation due to non-compliance.

14.0   Policy Management, Review, and Evaluation

- Each school must maintain a mobile device policy aligned with this LNCT approved framework, which should be subject to regular review.
- All staff must receive appropriate training and regular updates on school procedures, including student teachers.
- Serious incidents must be reported to the Education Service for further review.
- Feedback channels (*e.g.* surveys or suggestion boxes) should be established for parents, pupils, and staff to share their views and concerns.
- Each school should monitor and feedback the impact of its mobile device policy as part of school self-evaluation through existing mechanisms. This should include a review of compliance, equity, digital safety incidents, and stakeholder feedback.

15.0   Parental Engagement

- Encourage parents to delay providing smartphones to younger children, in line with developing good digital habits.
- Support digital wellbeing by promoting balanced and mindful technology use and encouraging healthy device habits among pupils.
- Signpost parent workshops or seminars to explore the impacts of mobile technology and support home-school consistency in expectations.
- Provide regular guidance through newsletters or school apps on responsible

device use and digital wellbeing at home.

- The type of mobile device a young person carries is ultimately a family decision and lies out with the scope of this policy. Families may wish to consider basic mobile phones or limited-function smartwatches (*e.g.* those with GPS tracking and call/text capabilities only) where travel safety is the primary concern.

- Due consideration should be given to the Cost of the School Day to ensure that decisions around mobile devices do not place undue financial pressure on families.

16.0   Staff Training and Support

- An annual update on mobile device policy will be provided by the school for staff at the start of the school session.

- Signpost staff to professional development on current trends in mobile technology, digital safety, and pupil wellbeing.

- Equip staff with a clear, step-by-step protocol to address mobile device misuse consistently and confidently.

- Promote collaboration between teaching and support staff to reinforce policy expectations across all areas of the school.

17.0   Pupil Voice

- Pupil voice is central to policy development.

- Schools must ensure age-appropriate consultation in policy evaluation.

- All schools must consult with pupils when reviewing or updating their local mobile device policy to ensure that it reflects the needs, rights, and responsibilities of learners.

- Encourage peer-led campaigns or mentoring that support positive digital citizenship.

- Include mobile device policy education as part of personal and social education (PSE) or guidance programmes across all stages in secondary schools.