The GALLERY TRUST

A community of special schools

Mobile Phone and Personal Device Policy

Policy Owner	Deputy CEO
Approved by	Trust Board
Date approved	September 2026
Date of next review	September 2027
Signed:	Chief Executive Officer: Chair of Trustees:

Orion Academy

2026/2027

The Gallery Trust Policy Statement

At The Gallery Trust, we want every child and young person to experience a school where they **Belong, Believe, Embrace and Achieve**.

Our approach to mobile phones and personal devices supports these values by creating calm, safe and inclusive learning environments where relationships flourish, learning is prioritised and every pupil can access the support they need.

We recognise that unrestricted mobile phone use can negatively affect learning, wellbeing, relationships and online safety. For this reason, our schools operate a "phones away during the school day" approach.

We also recognise that for some pupils a personal device is not simply a phone but an essential tool for communication, medical needs, emotional regulation or independence. We are committed to making reasonable adjustments so that no pupil is disadvantaged because of disability. Individual adjustments will be made in accordance with the Equality Act 2010 and documented through the school's SEND and safeguarding processes.

Legislative context considered: Equality Act 2010, Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act 2026, Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE), UK GDPR, Online Safety expectations.

Principles - Our Values in Practice

Belong

We create environments where every pupil feels safe, included and respected. We make reasonable adjustments so that pupils who rely on personal devices can participate fully in school life.

Believe

We have high expectations for everyone. We trust pupils to develop responsible digital habits while supporting them to make safe and informed choices.

Embrace

We recognise and celebrate difference. We embrace technology when it removes barriers to learning, communication, health or independence, ensuring decisions are person-centred and evidence based.

Achieve

We create calm learning environments where pupils can focus, engage and succeed. Limiting unnecessary mobile phone use helps maximise learning while ensuring appropriate technology remains available when it enables achievement.

To achieve this, The Gallery Trust schools will:

- Priorities safeguarding and learning.
- Promote positive relationships and face-to-face communication.
- Reduce distractions and online risks.
- Comply with the Equality Act 2010 by making reasonable adjustments for our pupils.
- Ensure decisions are person-centred and evidence based.
- Avoid blanket approaches where these would place a pupil at a substantial disadvantage.

Policy scope

This policy applies to all pupils and students, staff, volunteers, visitors and contractors. The policy covers the following mobile device technology:

- Mobile phones
- Smartphones
- Smart watches with communication functions
- Tablets
- Personal internet-enabled devices
- Other personal communication devices

Policy expectations

During the School Day personal mobile phones should remain switched off or on airplane mode. They should be stored securely in accordance with school procedures. Upon arrival, all students hand in their mobile devices - these are stored in a locked area until the end of the school day.

The schools in The Gallery Trust are ‘typical use’ mobile phone-free environments by default.

Personal phones should not be used during lessons, social times or transitions unless authorised as a reasonable adjustment or as part of the curriculum or an agreed provision to meet an identified need. Pupils may access their phones only when:

- Directed by staff.
- A reasonable adjustment has been agreed in writing - this should be part of a co-produced plan that is reviewed regularly.
- A medical need requires access.
- An emergency situation arises.

Equality Act and reasonable adjustments

The Gallery Trust recognises that pupils have disabilities as defined by the Equality Act 2010.

For some pupils, a mobile phone, tablet or wearable device may function as:

- An assistive technology.
- An augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) device.
- A regulation tool.
- A medical monitoring device.
- A safety support.
- A transition support tool.

In these circumstances, the device is not simply a mobile phone and should be considered through the lens of reasonable adjustment. Reasonable adjustments may include permitting access to:

Communication

- AAC applications
- Speech-generating devices
- Translation and communication software
- Visual support applications

Medical Needs

- Diabetes monitoring systems
- Epilepsy monitoring applications
- Medication reminder systems
- Health-related alert systems

Sensory Regulation

- Approved calming applications
- Music or audio programmes identified within support plans
- Visual timers and schedules

Anxiety and Emotional Regulation

- Access to agreed support applications
- Communication with designated adults where specified in plans
- Transition support tools

Independence

- Travel training applications

- Safety monitoring applications
- Timetabling supports

Where a pupil requires access to a personal device, the school will consider the following in deciding what adjustments are needed. These will then be documented through individual support plans that are linked to EHCP outcomes, health care plans, risk assessments and/or behaviour support plans. These plans should be where possible co-produced to include pupil voice and parental views. When considering adjustments, schools should ask the following questions for guidance:

1) *Is there a disability-related need?*
2) *Does restricting the device place the pupil at a substantial disadvantage?*
3) *Is the device necessary to access education, communication or safety?*
4) *Can the identified need be met through an alternative approach?*
5) *Is the adjustment reasonable, practical and safe?*

Safeguarding expectations

Where a pupil has approved access to a device, the school may choose to restrict internet access, use school-managed applications, limit time of use, require supervised of use, and schools must complete a risk assessment. Staff must balance safeguarding considerations with the pupil's rights under the Equality Act.

Staff responsibilities

Staff will apply this policy consistently, fairly and compassionately, ensuring decisions reflect The Gallery Trust values.

- **Belong** by treating every pupil with dignity and respect.
- **Believe** in pupils' ability to make positive choices and learn responsible digital behaviours.
- **Embrace** individual needs through appropriate reasonable adjustments.
- **Achieve** by maintaining calm learning environments where all pupils can flourish.

Staff will recognise the approved reasonable adjustments. Staff should avoid confiscating authorised devices used for disability-related purposes. If staff are unsure, they must seek guidance where uncertainty exists and record concerns appropriately. Staff should not challenge pupils publicly regarding authorised adjustments.

Parent and Carer Responsibilities

We work in partnership with parents and carers to ensure that expectations are understood and that any agreed use of personal devices supports the pupil's safety, wellbeing, independence and learning. Together we model our Trust values by helping every child belong within their school community, believe in themselves, embrace appropriate support and achieve their full potential.

Parents and carers should inform the school of any disability-related need for device access. Parents should support this application by providing any relevant professional evidence where available. Where necessary, support the school by ensure devices are appropriately secured and maintained.

Responding to Misuse

Where devices are used inappropriately, our response will be restorative, proportionate and educational. Staff will seek to understand the reason for the behaviour, taking account of any disability-related needs and reasonable adjustments before deciding on appropriate next steps.

Where devices are deemed to be used inappropriately, staff may direct a pupil to stop using the device. This could include temporarily removing access. At this point, a full review of the individual support plan should take place with involvement of parents or carers. However, any response must be proportionate, take account of disability-related and reasonable adjustments and consider individual circumstances of the pupil. Sanctions should not be applied where behaviour directly results from a disability without consideration of reasonable adjustments.

Staff Mobile Phones

Staff should use their personal phones only in designated areas and during breaks unless required for professional purposes. Staff should never use personal devices to photograph pupils. Staff must ensure they always follow the Trust safeguarding and data protection procedures.

Monitoring and Review

The Trust will monitor the impact of this policy through regular reporting, evaluating its effect on:

- Safeguarding incidents.
- Pupil wellbeing.
- Learning disruption.
- Complaints and appeals.
- Use of reasonable adjustments.

This annual review will ensure compliance with:

- Equality Act 2010
- SEND Code of Practice
- KCSIE
- Trust safeguarding policies

This policy is more than a set of expectations about mobile phones. It reflects how The Gallery Trust creates environments where everyone can **belong**, where we **believe** in every learner's potential, where we **embrace** difference through inclusive practice, and where every pupil is supported to **achieve** their full potential.