

# GLC MOBILE PHONE AND ELECTRONIC DEVICE POLICY

This Policy was ratified by the Board of Directors on :	Summer 2026
This Policy will be reviewed by the GLC Board on :	Summer 2027

## **GLC Mission Statement**

The GLC’s mission is to develop active and thriving citizens within a diverse, truly fair and equal community.

This will be achieved through:

- High quality teaching that deliberately develops competencies of curiosity, creativity, communication and critical-thinking;
- An inspiring and meaningful curriculum;
- The development of productive relationships by instilling the values of compassion, resilience, responsibility and aspiration to prepare our young people for learning and life;
- A commitment to the wellbeing of our staff;
- A culture of professional generosity, collaboration, challenge and support throughout the GLC;
- The development of effective external partnerships for the benefit and wellbeing of our community.

## **Equalities Statement**

The GLC’s commitment to equality is enshrined in our mission statement to develop ‘active and thriving citizens within a diverse, truly fair and equal community’.

We are a vibrant, innovative and successful organisation: we work hard to be the place of choice to work and to learn. Across the 5 academies of the GLC, we pledge that everyone enjoys an equality of opportunity. We work tirelessly to ensure that individual characteristics including age, ethnicity, socio-economic background, academic ability, disability, gender, religious beliefs, sexual orientation are not discriminated against in any way. We create inclusive environments characterised by mutual respect where difference is celebrated.

Statutory basis: This policy is written in compliance with DfE guidance 'Mobile Phones in Schools' (February 2024), DfE statutory guidance 'Behaviour in Schools: Advice for Headteachers and School Staff' (August 2024), DfE guidance 'Searching, Screening and Confiscation: Advice for Schools' (2023), the Education Act 1996, the Education Act 2011, the Online Safety Act 2023, the Equality Act 2010, and UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018. It applies to all five GLC academies.

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## GLC Mobile Phone Policy

### Section 1: Introduction and Purpose

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The GLC Mobile Phones and Electronic Devices Policy establishes a clear framework for the use—or, in most circumstances, the prohibition—of mobile phones and personal electronic devices across all GLC academies. It sets out the responsibilities of staff, students and parents/carers and explains the consequences that will apply when the policy is breached.

This policy is underpinned by the DfE guidance “Mobile phones in schools” [February 2024], which recommends that schools prohibit the use of mobile phones throughout the entire school day, including breaks and lunchtimes. The GLC fully adopts this approach. The GLC is a “Mobile Free” environment: student mobile phones must not be used, seen or heard anywhere on any GLC Academy premises at any time during the school day.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the GLC Behaviour Policy, GLC Safeguarding Policy, GLC Searching, Screening and Confiscation Policy, GLC SEN and Disability Policy, GLC Online Safety Policy and GLC Anti-Bullying Policy.

### Section 2: Legislative Framework and Statutory Guidance

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This policy has been developed in accordance with the following legislation and guidance:

- DfE “Mobile phones in schools” guidance [February 2024];
- DfE “Behaviour in Schools: Advice for headteachers and school staff” [2024];
- DfE “Searching, Screening and Confiscation: Advice for schools” [2023];
- Keeping Children Safe in Education [KCSIE] – current edition;
- Online Safety Act 2023;
- Equality Act 2010;
- Children and Families Act 2014 [SEND];
- SEND Code of Practice 2015;
- Education Act 2011 [powers of confiscation and search];
- UK GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018.

The DfE’s February 2024 guidance identifies four approaches schools may take to restrict mobile phone use. The GLC adopts the most protective of these: mobile phones must not be used, seen or heard anywhere on any GLC Academy site during the school day. This approach is consistent with growing evidence that mobile phone restrictions improve concentration, reduce bullying and cyberbullying and support the mental health and wellbeing of young people.

### Section 3: Scope and Definitions

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#### 3.1 Scope

This policy applies to:

- All students attending a GLC secondary academy, on-site and off-site during Academy time;
- Students travelling to and from Academy in Academy uniform or taking part in Academy-related activities.

### 3.2 Definitions

For the purposes of this policy:

Term	Meaning
<b>Mobile phone</b>	Any handheld mobile/cellular telephone device, including smartphones.
<b>Electronic device</b>	Any portable electronic device capable of communication, recording, photography or internet access, including tablets, e-readers, MP3 players and similar devices.
<b>Smart watch</b>	Any wrist-worn device that enables communication, internet access or audio recording.
<b>Headphones / earphones / earbuds</b>	Any in-ear, over-ear or wireless listening device, including air pods and bone-conduction headphones.
<b>GLC Laptop</b>	An Academy-issued laptop provided to students for educational use.
<b>Academy premises</b>	The Gateway Academy site, including all buildings, outdoor spaces and any location being used for an Academy-organised activity.

### Section 4: General Prohibition – The “Mobile Free” GLC

The GLC is “Mobile Free”. In line with DfE guidance [February 2024], the GLC schools prohibit the use of mobile phones and personal electronic devices throughout the entire school day, including before and after school on Academy premises, during registration, lessons, break times, lunchtimes and all Academy-organised activities.

Students’ mobile phones must not be:

- Used for any purpose;
- Seen [including placed on a desk, in a pocket where visible, or held in the hand];
- Heard [including ringtones, vibration alerts, audio playback or notification sounds].

Mobile phones should be switched off or silenced and kept entirely out of sight in students’ bags at all times. Devices brought onto site but kept in bags and not seen are the student’s own responsibility. The Academy holds no responsibility for items that are lost or stolen; however, it will investigate, as far as reasonably possible, any such incidents.

### Section 5: Confiscation and Consequences

#### 5.1 Confiscation

If a student’s mobile phone is used, seen or heard anywhere on GLC Academy premises it will be immediately confiscated by any member of staff and passed to the Student Engagement Team [Secondary School] or front office [primary schools]. This also applies to devices used inappropriately off-site during Academy time.

Confiscated phones are held securely by SET/front office and handled in accordance with the GLC Searching, Screening and Confiscation Policy. Staff are protected from liability for any loss of or damage to confiscated items, provided they have acted lawfully.

## 5.2 Escalating Consequences

The following escalation procedure applies. At every stage the student's individual circumstance, including any SEND, will be taken into account before a consequence is applied.

Occurrence	Return of device	Additional consequence
<b>1st confiscation in an academic year</b>	Returned to the student at the end of the school day.	Phone logged on CPOMS/SIMS. Parent/carer informed by text or phone call.
<b>2nd confiscation in the same academic year</b>	Returned to a parent or carer only – after 15:00. Not returned to siblings, friends or other family members. Only a member of the Senior Leadership Team can authorise return.	Parent/carer contacted to collect device. Same-day detention or behaviour consequence applied in line with the Behaviour Policy.
<b>3rd or subsequent confiscation in the same academic year</b>	Returned to a parent or carer only – after 15:00. SLT authorisation required.	Formal meeting with parent/carer. Student may be prohibited from bringing a mobile phone into school unless exceptional mitigating circumstances apply. Breach of prohibition is treated as a serious breach of GLC values and may result in suspension.
<b>Serious or aggravated misuse [e.g. recording, sharing images, incitement, harassment]</b>	May be retained pending investigation. In cases involving potential criminal activity, devices may be handed to the police.	Consequences determined case by case in line with the Behaviour and Safeguarding Policies. May result in suspension or permanent exclusion.

## 5.3 Refusal to Surrender a Device

Refusal to hand over a mobile phone or electronic device when requested by a member of staff is treated as an act of defiance and will be sanctioned in line with the GLC Behaviour Policy escalation procedure. Staff will not forcibly remove a device from a student, but persistent refusal will result in immediate referral to SLT and may result in a behaviour sanction which could include suspension or permanent exclusion. Parents/carers will be contacted immediately. Any student who refuses to be searched may be suspended or permanently excluded and, if necessary, the matter will be referred to the police.

## Section 6: Prohibited Activities

Regardless of when or where they occur, the following are treated as serious breaches of GLC values and may result in a behaviour sanction which could include suspension or permanent exclusion:

- Recording, photographing or filming staff, students or other individuals on Academy premises or during Academy activities without explicit consent;
- Sharing, posting or distributing any recording, image or personal information about staff, students or other individuals without consent, including on social media;

- Accessing, creating or sharing inappropriate, harmful, illegal or offensive content online, including on social media;
- Using a device to bully, harass, intimidate or threaten any member of the Academy community [cyberbullying], whether on or off site;
- Inciting hate crime, violence, gang-related activity or any criminal activity via a device;
- Accessing prohibited content [pornography, extremist material, etc.] on Academy premises or on Academy networks;
- Using a device to facilitate cheating or academic dishonesty in any assessment or examination;
- Using a device to contact parents/carers during the Academy Day without staff permission [parents/carers should phone their child's academy if they need to relay an urgent message to their child].

Where a device contains material that is illegal [e.g. indecent images of children, material linked to extremism or gang activity], it will be handed to the police immediately. Safeguarding referrals will be made as appropriate in line with the GLC Safeguarding Policy and KCSIE.

## **Section 7: Permitted Exceptions**

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### **7.1 Medical Need**

In a small number of cases a student may be permitted to use a mobile phone or connected device for a specific, documented medical purpose. For example, students with Type 1 diabetes who use continuous glucose monitoring linked to a smartphone. In such cases:

- The need must be confirmed in writing by a medical professional;
- The arrangement must be agreed in advance between the child's GLC Academy [via SENCO or relevant pastoral lead] and the student's parent/carer;
- Relevant staff must be informed;
- The device must be used solely for the agreed medical purpose.

### **7.2 Students with SEND**

The GLC recognises that some students with SEND may have a legitimate need to use technology as part of their normal way of working or as a reasonable adjustment. Any such arrangement will be:

- Documented in the student's EHCP, SEND Support Plan or agreed adjustments record;
- Agreed with the student, their parent/carer and relevant staff;
- Subject to review at each annual review or support meeting.

This exception does not grant blanket permission for general use of a personal mobile phone. Where a GLC-issued laptop meets the student's needs, that will be the preferred solution.

### **7.3 Staff Direction**

A member of staff may grant permission for a student to access a mobile phone or personal device in the following specific circumstances:

- To report an online safety concern or harmful content that requires staff to view the material;
- At an Academy event outside normal school hours, where the supervising staff member has determined that students may contact parents/carers [for example, to confirm a pick-up arrangement];
- In an emergency, where the Academy's own communication systems are unavailable.

Any such permission is specific to the situation and does not constitute general permission. Staff must log any permission granted.

## **Section 8: Headphones, Earphones and Earbuds**

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Headphones, earphones and earbuds [including air pods and wireless earbuds] are subject to the same rules as mobile phones unless a member of staff expressly permits their use. Specifically:

- Students must not wear headphones or earphones in corridors, communal areas or during any period of directed activity;
- A staff member may permit headphone use in a lesson for specific educational purposes, while the student is using a GLC-issued laptop or Academy PC only;
- Students with SEND who are permitted to use headphones as part of their normal way of working may do so in accordance with the terms agreed with their parent/carer and relevant staff [see 7.2 above];
- If headphones are seen being used in a prohibited context, they will be confiscated in line with Section 5 above.

## **Section 9: Smart Watches and Other Wearable Technology**

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Smart watches and any other wearable electronic devices capable of communication, recording or internet access are subject to the same restrictions as mobile phones. If a smart watch is used to communicate, access the internet or record in any way on Academy premises, it will be confiscated in line with Section 5 of this policy.

Standard analogue or non-connected digital watches are permitted and are not subject to this policy.

## **Section 10: GLC-Issued Laptops**

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Students are provided with a GLC-issued laptop at the beginning of Year 7 and Year 3 [or on joining the Academy]. These devices are the property of the GLC and are subject to the GLC Acceptable Use Policy and IT Policy at all times.

- Students may use their GLC laptops in lessons when instructed by a member of staff or as part of their normal way of working;
- Students may use their GLC laptops at break time, lunchtime, before school and after school unless a member of staff directs otherwise;
- GLC laptops must not be used to access prohibited content, communicate in ways that breach this policy, or circumvent internet filtering or security systems;
- Misuse of a GLC laptop may result in withdrawal of IT access for a specified period, isolation, suspension or exclusion and in some cases referral to the police or other agencies.

## **Section 11: Students' Conduct Outside the Academy**

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The GLC expects all students to act as ambassadors for their Academy at all times, including outside school hours. Staff have the power to discipline students for behaviour outside the Academy premises "to such an extent as is reasonable" where that behaviour:

- Could have repercussions for the orderly running of the GLC;
- Poses a threat to another student or member of the public;
- Could adversely affect the reputation of the GLC.

This expressly includes:

- Cyberbullying of staff, students or other individuals using mobile phones or any electronic device;

- Posting or sharing harmful, offensive or discriminatory content online;
- Inciting violence, gang activity or hate crime via any electronic device;
- Sharing images or recordings of individuals taken on Academy premises without consent.

Consequences for such behaviour will be applied in line with the GLC Behaviour Policy and may include suspension or permanent exclusion. In serious cases, the matter will be referred to the police.

## **Section 12: Parental Communication During the Academy Day**

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Parents and carers must not contact students via mobile phone during the Academy Day. Urgent messages can be relayed to students by telephoning their child's Academy directly.

In an emergency, the Academy will allow a student to use an Academy telephone to contact a parent/carer, or will contact the parent/carer on the student's behalf. Mobile phones must not be used by students to contact parents/carers even in circumstances that the student considers urgent; the student should instead report to reception.

Parents/carers who repeatedly contact their child by mobile phone during the Academy Day, in full knowledge of this policy, may be sent a written reminder of their responsibilities under the GLC Home/Academy Contract.

## **Section 13: Roles and Responsibilities**

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### **13.1 The Academy [GLC] is responsible for:**

- Communicating this policy clearly and regularly to students, parents/carers and staff;
- Ensuring consistent implementation across all year groups, staff and situations;
- Providing appropriate CPD and induction training for staff;
- Monitoring behaviour data to ensure no group is disproportionately affected;
- Reviewing this policy annually or in response to changes in DfE guidance;
- Providing a safe and secure location for confiscated devices;
- Acting proportionately and in accordance with the Equality Act 2010 when applying this policy.

### **13.2 All Staff are responsible for:**

- Actively enforcing this policy consistently and without bias;
- Challenging any student whose mobile phone or device is used, seen or heard;
- Confiscating devices promptly and passing them to SET;
- Not using personal mobile phones in front of students during the school day [except in genuine emergencies or for school business];
- Modelling responsible digital behaviour at all times;
- Logging all confiscations on CPOMS/SIMS on the day of the incident.

### **13.3 Students are responsible for:**

- Keeping mobile phones switched off or silenced and out of sight in their bags at all times during the school day;
- Complying immediately when asked to surrender a device to a member of staff;
- Using electronic devices – including GLC laptops – responsibly and only for permitted purposes;
- Not recording, photographing or filming staff, students or other individuals without explicit consent;

- Reporting to a trusted adult any online safety concern, harmful content or cyberbullying they become aware of.

#### **13.4 Parents and Carers are responsible for:**

- Supporting and reinforcing this policy at home;
- Not contacting their child via mobile phone during the Academy Day – phoning the office to relay any urgent messages to their child;
- Actively monitoring their child’s online activity and use of social media outside Academy hours;
- Ensuring their child does not bring a device to school if they have been prohibited from doing so;
- Attending the Academy promptly to collect a confiscated device when required to do so;
- Engaging with the Academy if their child’s mobile phone use is causing concern, whether on or off site.

### **Section 14: Safeguarding**

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The Academy takes its safeguarding responsibilities extremely seriously. Mobile phones and electronic devices present particular safeguarding risks, including access to harmful content, sharing of indecent images, cyberbullying and exposure to radicalisation or grooming.

Where the use or content of a device gives rise to a safeguarding concern:

- The device will be secured and, where appropriate, passed to the police;
- A referral will be made to the Designated Safeguarding Lead [DSL] immediately;
- The DSL will act in accordance with KCSIE and the GLC Safeguarding Policy, including making referrals to Thurrock MASH or other agencies as appropriate;
- Any material believed to constitute an indecent image of a child will not be viewed by staff beyond what is necessary to establish that a referral is required and will be passed to the police immediately.

### **Section 15: Data Protection**

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Any images, recordings or personal data obtained by students via a mobile phone or electronic device on Academy premises – whether of staff or other students – may constitute a breach of UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018. The Academy will treat any such incident seriously. Where a member of staff has been recorded without consent, the Head of School will consider all available consequences and, where appropriate, report the matter to the Information Commissioner’s Office [ICO] or the police.

### **Section 16: Monitoring, Review and Related Policies**

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#### **16.1 Monitoring**

The Head of School, supported by the Senior Leadership Team of each GLC Academy, will monitor the implementation of this policy. Data on confiscations will be reviewed termly as part of the Academy’s behaviour data analysis, disaggregated by year group and protected characteristic to ensure proportionality and compliance with the Equality Act 2010.

#### **16.2 Review**

This policy will be reviewed annually by the GLC Board of Directors, or earlier if there are significant changes to DfE guidance or legislation. Any significant amendments will be communicated to staff, students and parents/carers promptly.

### **16.3 Related Policies**

This policy should be read alongside:

- GLC Behaviour Policy [Secondary];
- GLC Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy;
- GLC Searching, Screening and Confiscation Policy;
- GLC Anti-Bullying Policy;
- GLC Online Safety / Acceptable Use Policy;
- GLC SEN and Disability Policy;
- GLC Positive Handling Policy;
- GLC GDPR and Data Protection Policy;
- GLC Suspensions and Permanent Exclusions Policy.