



The ReConnect Programme

Phone & Digital Devices Policy

1. Introduction

The ReConnect Programme recognises that mobile phones and digital devices are a normal part of modern life. Many of our learners use them to stay connected with family, friends, and support networks, and they can be useful learning tools when used appropriately.

However, phones and devices can also cause distraction, anxiety, and conflict if not managed carefully. This policy aims to strike a fair balance — allowing safe and responsible use while ensuring that learning, wellbeing, and respect for others always come first.

2. Aims and Principles

Our aims are to:

- Promote focus, safety, and respect across all learning environments.
- Protect learners and staff from inappropriate content, online harm, and privacy breaches.
- Encourage young people to use technology responsibly and reflectively.
- Ensure that phones and devices support learning, rather than interrupt it.

Our principles:

- Phones are a privilege, not a right, within sessions.
- All use must be safe, sensible, and respectful.
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- Staff model the same expectations they set for students.
 - Every learner's needs and circumstances are considered individually.
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3. Legislative and Statutory Context

This policy is informed by:

- DfE: Behaviour in Schools (2022)
- DfE: Searching, Screening and Confiscation (2022)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (2025)
- Data Protection Act 2018 (UK GDPR)
- Online Safety Act 2023
- Education and Inspections Act 2006

These documents emphasise a school or provider's right to set clear expectations for safe and appropriate mobile phone use.

4. Expectations for Students

Students are expected to:

- Keep mobile phones and devices off and out of sight during learning sessions unless a tutor gives explicit permission to use them for an agreed purpose.
- Never record, photograph, or film anyone without consent.



- Never share or view inappropriate content, including violent, discriminatory, or explicit material.
 - Avoid social media use during sessions or on site unless it is part of a structured learning activity.
 - Follow staff instructions about when and how phones can be used.
 - Hand in or store phones securely if this forms part of their individual support plan or safety agreement.
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5. Staff Expectations

Staff are expected to:

- Model appropriate and professional use of devices.
 - Explain clearly when and why phone use may be permitted (for example, researching music, taking a photo of artwork, or accessing a learning app).
 - Ensure consent is gained for any recording or media creation involving others.
 - Address misuse calmly and fairly, focusing on understanding and reflection rather than punishment.
 - Record any safeguarding concerns linked to phone use using the appropriate channels (e.g. MyConcern).
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6. Managing Phone Use

We recognise that every learner is different, and some may use their phone as part of a personal regulation strategy (for example, listening to music during breaks). Staff will agree these arrangements individually and note them on the learner's plan.



Typical expectations:

- During sessions: phones should be silent and out of sight unless agreed otherwise.
- During breaks/lunch: phones may be used appropriately in social areas.
- During off-site activities or work experience: students must follow staff guidance and site-specific policies.

If a phone becomes a distraction or is used unsafely, staff may:

1. Ask for the phone to be turned off and put away.
2. Ask for it to be handed in for safekeeping until the end of the session or day.
3. Contact parents or carers if issues persist or are serious.

In rare cases where a phone contains inappropriate or harmful material, the provider may confiscate it under the DfE's Searching, Screening and Confiscation Guidance (2022) and inform safeguarding staff immediately.

7. Safeguarding and Online Safety

The use of phones and digital devices can pose safeguarding risks. To mitigate these:

- Staff and students must never share personal contact details.
- Online communication between students and staff is only permitted through approved ReConnect platforms and channels.
- Students must not access or share explicit, violent, or extremist material.
- Cyberbullying, harassment, or the unauthorised sharing of images will be treated as safeguarding concerns and dealt with in line with our Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.



8. Use of Phones for Learning

Where appropriate, staff may allow supervised phone or tablet use to:

- Access learning platforms or apps.
- Research project topics.
- Record creative or vocational work (e.g. music, photography, or mechanics progress).
- Capture evidence for portfolios, provided consent is gained and data is stored securely.

All digital evidence must be uploaded to the ReConnect network or agreed storage and deleted from personal devices afterwards to comply with GDPR.

9. Communication and Emergencies

Students can contact parents or carers through staff if needed during the day.

Parents or carers needing to contact a student during learning hours should do so via the ReConnect office, not directly by phone.

In genuine emergencies, phone use will always be permitted under staff supervision.

10. Consequences of Misuse

Consequences are always proportionate, restorative, and consistent.

Depending on the situation, they may include:

- A reminder and opportunity to comply.
- Temporary confiscation for the session or day.
- Discussion with staff and parents or carers.



- Review of individual phone arrangements.
- Restorative or reflective conversation.
- In cases involving safeguarding or criminal concern, referral to DSL or external agencies.

Repeated or serious misuse may result in the learner being asked to hand in their phone at the start of each session until trust is rebuilt.

11. Parental and Carer Partnership

We ask parents and carers to support this policy by:

- Discussing safe and respectful phone use with their child.
- Avoiding contacting students directly during learning hours.
- Supporting agreed plans for managing phone use if difficulties arise.

12. Review and Monitoring

This policy will be reviewed annually or following any significant incident or change in legislation or guidance. Feedback from staff, students, and visitors will be considered to continuously improve safety measures.

Reviewed by: Chris Sodey CEO of The ReConnect Programme Date: 5/5/25