



Use of Tracking Devices in School

1. Introduction and Aims

Culford School recognises that personal tracking devices, including smartphones, are an important part of everyday life for our pupils, parents and staff, as well as the wider school community.

The aim of this policy is to set clear guidelines for the use of personal tracking devices for pupils, parents and staff. This policy also aims to address some of the challenges posed by the use of personal tracking devices in school, including on school trips such as:

- Risks to child protection
- Data protection issues
- Potential for disruption

2. Overview

The presence and use of tracking devices and similar devices in school raises some key concerns:

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.

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 group of children on social media platforms or parent group chat, 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.
- Can be a choking hazard for younger children.

Disruption to School Trip Management

- Bluetooth trackers (e.g. Airtags) can interfere with drivers' tachographs in passenger vehicles.
- 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 and emergency response protocols.
- Staff undertake extensive safety preparation and planning prior to trips. This includes risk assessment and contingency planning which would enable them to respond to unforeseen circumstances while away from School.

- Parents tracking their children can create additional time pressure on staff and take away their focus when managing an incident or where travel arrangements have changed, by messaging or calling them directly and expecting an individual response.
- Our Staffs' focus will remain on managing any situation that may arise and ensuring the children are safe and well.

Additional Concerns

- If a pupil has 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 is a risk of unauthorised individuals detecting or following a tracking device, making it a potential security and safeguarding issue.

For these reasons, the school has adopted a “no tracking devices during the school day” approach.

3. Management of tracking devices in School, including on school trips.

Personal tracking devices are not permitted in school. Parents should trust the school's supervision arrangements and safeguarding policies, which are designed to protect children's safety.

Travel arrangements for school trips will be communicated to parents in advance of travel. Should parents have specific concerns about their child's wellbeing on a school trip, they should communicate these directly with the trip lead prior to the trip.

Bluetooth trackers (e.g. Airtags) must be handed into the School Office for Prep and Pre Prep and to reception for Senior School. Pupils can collect them at the end of the school day. Any trackers found on pupils during the school day will be removed and stored in the School Office.

Staff must notify either the DSL or a Deputy DSL in a timely manner if an air tag is found with a pupil.

Parents will be contacted to collect the item.

- All devices handed in will be stored during the school day.
- The school accepts no responsibility for loss, theft, or damage to devices brought on site in breach of this policy.
- Parents are reminded that communication with pupils during the day should go via the school offices.