



Personal Location-Tracking Devices POLICY

(Cutthorpe Primary School)
DERBYSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

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Cutthorpe Primary School

Policy on Personal Location-Tracking Devices

1. Introduction

Cutthorpe Primary School is committed to safeguarding pupils, staff, and volunteers, while maintaining a calm, focused learning environment. As part of this commitment, the school must carefully manage the use of personal devices that include GPS, Bluetooth, or other location-tracking functions. Increasing numbers of commercially available tracking devices—such as AirTags, GPS fobs, and tracking-enabled smartwatches—present a range of safeguarding, legal, confidentiality, and wellbeing concerns. For these reasons, the school does not permit pupils to bring or use personal location-tracking devices on school premises or during any school-organised activity, including off-site visits.

2. Unauthorised Tracking Concerns

A key reason behind this policy is the significant risk of **unauthorised tracking**. Personal trackers can allow the location of a pupil to be monitored without their full understanding, or by a person who does not have legal access to the child. This presents a serious safeguarding and privacy risk. Additionally, these devices may inadvertently disclose the location of staff or other pupils travelling with the child, none of whom may have given their consent to be tracked in this way. Devices such as Apple AirTags can also alert nearby Apple device users to their presence, even if those users are unconnected to the pupil. This means that adults or older pupils with smartphones may be notified of the device, enabling them to attempt to locate it, make it emit a noise, or in some cases disable it. Such vulnerabilities pose unacceptable risks within a school or public setting.

3. Legal Requirements Regarding Adult Consent

It is illegal to track adults without their explicit consent. This policy therefore protects all accompanying adults—teachers, support staff, volunteers, parent helpers, and external providers—who may supervise or travel with pupils. For a location device worn by a pupil to function, any adult in proximity would effectively become subject to the same tracking. It would be neither practical nor safe for the school to seek written consent from every adult involved in school life and school visits. For this reason, tracking devices cannot be used by pupils under any circumstances.

4. Additional Functions and Safeguarding Implications

Many modern tracking devices offer functions beyond simple location monitoring. These may include alarms, two-way communication features, remote listening, cameras, and other capabilities that can be activated by a parent or third party without the knowledge of staff. Such functions can be disruptive during learning and raise serious safeguarding, data protection, privacy, and legal concerns. Any device capable of remote audio access could place both pupils and staff at risk by enabling unapproved recording or monitoring of school activity. For these reasons, no device with communication, listening, remote-activation, or non-classroom-based alert functions is permitted.

5. Anxiety and Wellbeing Concerns

The use of location-tracking devices can unintentionally increase anxiety for pupils, staff, and parents/carers. Unavoidable changes in travel routes, delays during school trips, or temporary changes in activity plans can cause “unexpected” movements on tracking apps. Similarly, device loss, low battery, or technical malfunction can result in false alerts or apparent location changes. These issues often escalate parental worry, which may then be passed on to pupils and staff, disrupting the educational experience and

creating unnecessary stress. For emotional wellbeing and consistency within the school day, it is essential that pupils are not monitored via personal tracking technology.

6. Loss, Damage, and Uniform Expectations

Cutthorpe Primary School maintains simple, practical rules regarding jewellery and personal items to minimise disruption, protect children from loss or damage to belongings, and uphold safety expectations. Pupils are not permitted to wear jewellery in school apart from a standard watch. Smartwatches—many of which include tracking, communication, camera, or listening features—are not allowed. Tracking devices, key-fob trackers, or wearable tags are treated as personal electronic items and are similarly prohibited. Preventing such items from being brought into school also avoids distress caused by accidental breakage or loss, which often occurs during play, PE, travel, or outdoor activities.

7. Implementation and Enforcement

If a pupil brings a tracking device into school, the item will be safely collected, stored in the school office, and returned to a parent or carer at the end of the day. Repeated breaches of the policy may require a meeting with parents/carers to review safeguarding expectations. Staff will reinforce these rules consistently, and the school will communicate annually with families to ensure clarity around permitted and prohibited devices.

8. Review of Policy

This policy will be reviewed annually as part of the school's safeguarding and behaviour policy cycle. It will also be updated if new legislation, local authority guidance, or technological developments require changes to our approach.