

Mobile Phone Policy

John Henry Newman Academy



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1. Introduction and aims

At John Henry Newman Academy we recognise that mobile phones and similar devices, including smartphones, are an important part of everyday life for our pupils, parents/carers and staff, as well as the wider school community.

Our policy aims to:

- Promote safe and responsible phone use
- Set clear guidelines for the use of mobile phones for pupils, staff, parents/carers, visitors and volunteers
- Support the school's other policies, especially those related to child protection and behaviour
 - Anti-bullying policy
 - Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) (Children)
 - Behaviour policy
 - Child protection policy
 - Staff Code of conduct
 - Confidentiality policy
 - Curriculum policies, such as: Computing, Personal Social and Health Education (PSHE), Citizenship and Relationships and Sex Education (RSE)
 - Data security
 - Online Safety

This policy also aims to address some of the challenges posed by mobile phones in school, such as:

- Risks to child protection
- Data protection issues
- Potential for lesson disruption
- Risk of theft, loss, or damage
- Appropriate use of technology in the classroom

Note: throughout this policy, 'mobile phones' refers to mobile phones and similar devices.

2. Relevant guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the Department for Education's non-statutory [mobile phone guidance](#) and [behaviour guidance](#). Further guidance that should be considered alongside this policy is [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#).

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 Staff

All staff (including teachers, support staff and supply staff) are responsible for consistently enforcing this policy.

Volunteers, or anyone else otherwise engaged by the school, must alert a member of staff if they witness, or are aware of, a breach of this policy.

The Executive Head Teacher/Head of School is responsible for monitoring the policy every 2 years, reviewing it, and holding staff and pupils accountable for its implementation.

Staff will address any questions or concerns from parents/carers quickly, and clearly communicate the reasons for prohibiting the use of mobile phones.

3.2 Governors

Governors will monitor this policy each year as part of safeguarding reviews.

4. Use of mobile phones by staff

4.1 Personal mobile phones

Staff (including volunteers, contractors and anyone else otherwise engaged by the school) are not permitted to use their personal mobile phone, **during contact time**. Use of personal mobile phones must be restricted to non-contact time, and to areas of the school where pupils are not present (such as the staffroom).

There may be circumstances in which it's appropriate for a member of staff to have use of their phone during contact time for personal reasons. For instance (this list is non-exhaustive):

- For emergency contact by their child, or their child's school
- In the case of acutely ill dependents or family members

The Heads of School and Executive Headteacher will decide on a case-by-basis whether to allow for special arrangements.

If special arrangements are not deemed necessary, school staff can use the school office 01865 772495 as a point of emergency contact.

Exceptional allowances will be made where there is a medical need. Staff who require medical devices—such as continuous glucose monitors (CGMs) for diabetes—may need to access these via their mobile phones in order to manage their condition. The school will make reasonable adjustments to support necessary phone use for this purpose once staff have informed us of their medical requirements.

4.2 Data protection

Staff must not use their personal mobile phones to process personal data, or any other confidential school information, including entering such data into generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools such as chatbots (e.g. ChatGPT and Google Bard).

You can find more detailed guidance on data protection in the ODST Data Protection Policy, available on the school's website in the Policies and Procedures section.

4.3 Safeguarding

Staff must not give their personal contact details to parents/carers or pupils, including connecting through social media and messaging apps.

Staff must avoid publicising their contact details on any social media platform or website, to avoid unwanted contact by parents/carers or pupils. You can find more detailed information in the ODST Online Safety Policy Guidance Acceptable Use of Information & Communications Technology (ICT), available in the policies and procedures section of the school's website.

Staff must not use their personal mobile phones to take photographs or recordings of pupils, their work, or anything else that could identify a pupil. If it's necessary to take photos or recordings as part of a lesson/school trip/activity, this must be done using school equipment.

When using personal devices to access the internet in school, staff should follow the school's acceptable use and safeguarding policies at all times. Personal devices must be secured with strong passwords and kept up to date, and staff should avoid accessing personal social media, email, or cloud storage while on the school network. School systems and approved platforms should be used for any work involving pupils or sensitive information, and data protection requirements must always be followed. Any safeguarding concerns, suspicious activity, or security issues should be reported immediately to the DSL or IT lead to ensure staff, pupils, and information remain safe.

4.4 Using personal mobiles for work purposes

In some circumstances, it may be appropriate for staff to use personal mobile phones for work. Such circumstances may include, but are not limited to:

- Issuing homework, rewards or sanctions
- Use of multi-factor authentication
- Emergency evacuations
- Supervising off-site trips
- Supervising residential visits

Please refer to the schools policy on educational visits available on the schools website [here](#)

In these circumstances, staff will:

- Use their mobile phones in an appropriate and professional manner, in line with our staff code of conduct
- Not use their phones to take photographs or recordings of pupils, their work, or anything else that could identify a pupil
- Refrain from using their phones to contact parents/carers. If necessary, contact must be made via the school office

4.5 Sanctions

Staff that fail to adhere to this policy may face disciplinary action.

See the school's staff disciplinary policy for more information.

5. Use of mobile phones by pupils

The DfE's non-statutory mobile phone guidance says that pupils should not use mobile phones throughout the school day.

Updated 2026 DfE guidance mandates that English schools should be mobile phone-free by default to improve behaviour, but it specifically allows exceptions for medical necessity. Pupils requiring devices, such as continuous glucose monitors (CGMs) for diabetes, must have access to manage their conditions. Schools should make reasonable adjustments and use Individual Healthcare Plans (IHPs) to facilitate this.

Pupils should not use their mobile phones during the school day, including during lessons, in the time between lessons, at breaktimes and at lunchtimes.

- Children are not permitted to use mobile phones during the school day.
- If a child walks home alone, they may bring a phone into school for safety reasons, but it must be handed in to a member of staff on arrival and will be securely locked away until the end of the day.
- Phones must not be accessed on school premises, and the school cannot take responsibility for any devices that are not handed in as required.

5.1 Use of smartwatches by pupils

The DfE's [non-statutory mobile phone guidance](#) includes in the term 'mobile phones' all devices with communications and smart technology that the school chooses to include in their policy.

Smartwatches are wristwatches with smart technology in them. They can be used to tell the time, send and receive text and voice messages, make calls and listen to music. Some smart watches have wellness and health-related features.

Smart watches are not permitted to be used in school as they can access the internet, take photos, send messages, and bypass school safeguarding systems. If a child needs a smart watch for safety reasons, for example when walking home alone, it must be handed in to a member of staff on arrival and will be securely locked away until the end of the school day. This ensures children are kept safe, privacy is protected, and learning time is free from distractions.

5.2 Screening, searching and confiscation of electronic devices

Electronic devices, including mobile phones, can contain files or data which relate to an offence, or which may cause harm to another person. This includes, but is not limited to, indecent images of children, pornography, abusive messages, images or videos, or evidence relating to suspected criminal behaviour.

Where there are any concerns regarding children's use of mobile technology or policy breaches, they will be dealt with in accordance with our existing policies, including anti-bullying, child protection, online safety and behaviour.

Staff may confiscate a pupil's mobile phone or device if they believe it is being used to contravene our child protection or behaviour policy.

Mobile phones and devices that have been confiscated will be held in a secure place and released to parents/carers. The devices will be stored in the main office and returned at the end of the school day.

Where a concern involves a potentially indecent image or video of a child, staff will respond in line with our child protection policy and will confiscate devices, avoid looking at any content, and refer the incident to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or deputy) urgently as they will be most appropriate person to respond.

If there is suspicion that data or files on a child's personal device or mobile phone may be illegal, or may provide evidence relating to a criminal offence, the device will be handed over to the police for further investigation

If deemed to be necessary and appropriate, searches of mobile phones or personal devices may be carried out in accordance with our behaviour policy and the [DfE 'Searching, Screening and Confiscation'](#) guidance. The Executive Headteacher or a member of staff authorised by the Executive Headteacher can carry out a search and examine any data or files on an electronic device confiscated as a result of a search, if there is good reason to do so. This would be where they have reasonable grounds for suspecting the device or content on the device poses a risk to staff and/or pupils, is prohibited, or identified in the school's behaviour policy for which a search can be made or is evidence in relation to an offence. The headteacher can authorise individual members of staff to search for specific items, or all items set out in the school's behaviour policy.

Staff will respond in line with our child protection policy and follow the most appropriate safeguarding response if they find images, data or files on a pupil's electronic device that they reasonably suspect are likely to put a person at risk.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (or deputy) will always be informed of any searching incidents where authorised members of staff have reasonable grounds to suspect a pupil was in possession of prohibited items, as identified in our behaviour policy.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (or deputy) will be involved without delay if staff believe a search of a pupil's device has revealed a safeguarding risk.

If the Executive Headteacher or a member of staff finds any data or files that they suspect might constitute a specified offence, they will be delivered to the police as soon as is reasonably practicable.

Certain types of conduct, bullying or harassment can be classified as criminal conduct. The school takes such conduct extremely seriously and will involve the police or other agencies as appropriate.

Such conduct includes, but is not limited to:

- Sexting (consensual and non-consensual sharing nude or semi-nude images or videos)
- Upskirting
- Threats of violence or assault
- Abusive calls, emails, social media posts or texts directed at someone on the basis of someone's ethnicity, religious beliefs or sexual orientation

6. Use of mobile phones by parents/carers, volunteers and visitors

Parents/carers, visitors and volunteers (including governors and contractors) must adhere to this policy as it relates to staff if they are on the school site during the school day.

This means:

- Not taking pictures or recordings of pupils, unless it's at a public event (such as a school fair), or of their own child
- Using any photographs or recordings for personal use only, and not posting on social media without consent
- Not using phones in lessons, or when working with pupils

Parents/carers, visitors and volunteers will be informed of the rules for mobile phone use when they sign in at reception or attend a public event at school.

Parents/carers or volunteers supervising school trips or residential visits must not:

- Use their phone to make contact with other parents/carers
- Take photos or recordings of pupils, their work, or anything else that could identify a pupil

Parents/carers or volunteers supervising trips are also responsible for enforcing the school's policy for pupils using their phones, as set out in section 5 above, but must refer any sanctions to a member of staff, as they do not have the power to search or confiscate devices.

Parents/carers must use the school office as the first point of contact if they need to get in touch with their child during the school day. They must not try to contact their child on their personal mobile during the school day.

7. Loss, theft or damage

Pupils bringing mobile phones to school will hand phones in where they will be stored securely when not in use.

Pupils must secure their mobile phones as much as possible, including using passwords or pin codes to protect access to the phone's functions.

Staff must also secure their personal phones. Failure by staff to do so could result in data breaches.

All schools continue with:

The school accepts no responsibility for mobile phones that are lost, damaged or stolen on school premises or transport, during school visits or trips, or while pupils are travelling to and from school.

We will make parents aware of this by:

- including this disclaimer in our information packs
- including this in the letter sent to parents when they request their child walks home alone.
- Ensuring Y5 and Y6 parents sign a disclaimer at the start of the year

Confiscated phones will be stored in the main office, locked in the cupboard.

Lost phones should be returned to the main school office. The school will then attempt to contact the owner.

8. Monitoring and review

The school is committed to ensuring that this policy has a positive impact on pupils' education, behaviour and welfare. When reviewing the policy, the school will take into account:

- Feedback from parents/carers and pupils
- Feedback from staff
- Records of behaviour and safeguarding incidents
- Relevant advice from the Department for Education, the local authority and any other relevant organisations

If there are any concerns regarding this policy, these should be brought to the attention of Katie Screatton, via office.2000@jhnacaemy.co.uk in a timely manner.

9. Appendix 1: Code of conduct / acceptable use agreement for pupils allowed to bring their phones to school due to exceptional circumstances

Code of conduct / acceptable use agreement - pupils at JHN

You must obey the following rules if you bring your mobile phone to school:

1. You may not use your mobile phone/smartwatch in school
2. Your mobile phone/smartwatch must be handed in every day
3. Mobile phone/smartwatch must be switched off (not just put on 'silent').
4. You cannot take photos or recordings (either video or audio) of school staff or other pupils
5. Avoid sharing your contact details with people you don't know, and don't share other people's contact details without their consent.
6. Don't share your phone's password(s) or access code(s) with anyone else.
7. Don't use your mobile phone to bully, intimidate or harass anyone. This includes bullying, harassing or intimidating pupils or staff via:
 - a. Email
 - b. Text/messaging app
 - c. Social media
8. Don't use your mobile phone/smartwatch to send or receive anything that may be criminal.
9. Rules on bullying, harassment and intimidation apply to how you use your mobile phone/smartwatch even when you aren't in school.
10. Don't use vulgar, obscene or derogatory language while on your mobile phone/smartwatch or when using social media. This language is not permitted under the school's behaviour policy.
11. You must comply with a request by a member of staff to switch off, or hand over, a mobile phone/smartwatch. Refusal to comply is a breach of the school's behaviour policy and will be dealt with accordingly.

10. Appendix 2: Mobile phone information slip for visitors

Use of mobile phones and similar devices in our school

- Please keep your mobile phone on silent/vibrate while on the school grounds
- Please do not use phones where pupils are present. If you must use your phone, you may go to the staff room or school office
- Do not take photos or recordings of pupils (unless it is your own child), or staff
- Do not use your phone in lessons, or when working with pupils

The school accepts no responsibility for phones that are lost, damaged or stolen while you are on the school grounds.

A full copy of our mobile phone policy is available from the school office.

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Links to other policies in JHN which can be found on our website or upon request from the school office.

- [Data protection](#)
- [Online Safety Policy](#)
- [Behaviour Policy](#)
- Social Media Policy (on request from the school office)