

Mobile phone policy

Newfield Primary School



Approved by:	Sarah Bolt	Date: August 2026
Last reviewed on:	August 2026	
Next review due by:	August 2027	

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1. Introduction and aims

At Newfield Primary School, our policy aims to:

- Ensure our environment is mobile phone-free by default
- Ensure the safe, responsible and lawful use of mobile phones, where applicable
- Provide 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 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
- Risk of theft, loss or damage
- Appropriate use of technology for learning purposes

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

2. Relevant guidance

This policy meets the requirements of section 36 of the [Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act 2026](#), and the Department for Education (DfE)'s [mobile phone guidance](#) and [behaviour guidance](#). Further guidance that should be considered alongside this policy includes [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#), which sets out the expectation that all schools should be mobile phone-free environments by default.

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 Staff

All staff (including teachers, support staff and supply staff) are required to actively enforce this policy and challenge any breach of mobile phone restrictions immediately and consistently.

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 online safety lead is responsible for monitoring the policy and reviewing it every year.

The headteacher is responsible for 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.

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 the school day, while pupils are present. 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
- If staff are expecting a call from a medical professional

The 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 number as a point of emergency contact.

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 Gemini).

More information can be found in the AI policy.

4.3 Safeguarding

Staff must not give their personal contact details to parents/carers or pupils, including by 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.

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.

4.4 Using personal mobiles for work purposes

In some circumstances, it may be appropriate for staff to use personal mobile phones or a similar device during the school day in front of pupils for work. Such circumstances may include, but are not limited to:

- Use of multi-factor authentication

- Emergency evacuations
- Supervising off-site trips
- Supervising residential visits

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
- If staff need to contact parents/carers using their own mobile phone, then they are advised to use the prefix 141 before dialing the recipient's number to ensure their own number is protected.

4.5 Work phones

Some members of staff are provided with a mobile phone by the school for work purposes.

Only authorised staff are permitted to use school phones, and access to the phone must not be provided to anyone without authorisation.

Staff must:

- Only use school phone functions for work purposes, including making/receiving calls, sending/receiving emails or other communications, or using the internet
- Make sure that all communication and conduct linked to the device is appropriate and professional at all times, in line with our staff code of conduct

4.6 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

Pupils must not use their mobile phones during the school day, including during lessons, in the time between lessons, at breaktimes and at lunchtimes, unless explicitly authorised by a member of staff (for example, for a specific medical reason).

Older pupils are allowed to bring mobile phones to school if they travel to school alone. Parental permission is required in order for pupils to bring their phone to school.

Pupils bring their phone straight to the school office where the phone is locked away by the office staff until the end of the day (once the class has been dismissed from the playground). Phones are left at the owners' own risk.

Pupils cannot use their phone during the school day.

Pupils can use their phone once they are outside the school gates.

There will be some exceptions to the rules for medical or personal reasons e.g. diabetes monitoring. These exceptions must be agreed by the Headteacher.

Pupils cannot bring in or wear any electronic or smart watches.

Any mobile phones discovered to have been brought into the school and not handed in to the office will be confiscated immediately. Parents or carers will be asked to collect the mobile phone from the school office.

Children are not allowed to carry mobile phones on any school trips.

If a member of the staff has any suspicion that a mobile phone brought into school by a pupil has unsuitable material stored on it, the pupil will be required to hand over the phone immediately to a member of staff and parents or carers will be asked to collect it from a member of the senior leadership team. In circumstances where there is a suspicion that the material on the mobile phone may provide evidence relating to a criminal offence the phone will be handed over to the school's safeguarding lead or to the head teacher for further investigation and the parent or carer asked to collect it from them.

Any breach of the acceptable use agreement by a pupil may trigger disciplinary action in line with the school behaviour policy.

Pupils will be taught the risks that are associated with the use of mobile phones, both in school and more broadly, to make sure they understand the decision to prohibit the use of mobile phones throughout the school day. These risks can include a loss of focus in lessons, classroom disruption and an increase in bullying.

Pupils will be encouraged to see a mobile phone-free environment as desirable and valuable.

Safeguarding Concerns

If staff have concerns that a pupil's behaviour may indicate they may be suffering, or at risk of, harm staff will follow the appropriate procedure set out in [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#). This will include speaking with the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) or deputy, who will consider whether pastoral support, an early intervention, or a referral to children's social care is appropriate.

5.1 Use of smartwatches by pupils

The DfE's statutory [mobile phones guidance](#) includes in the term 'mobile phones' all devices with communications and smart technology that the school chooses to include in its 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 smartwatches have wellness and health-related features.

Pupils cannot bring in or wear any electronic or smart watches. These must be handed into the school office if they have been brought in.

5.3 Sanctions

Any breach of this policy will be dealt with fairly and proportionately. Mobile phones or other devices may be confiscated and returned at a time determined by the school. Repeated or serious breaches may result in further sanctions, including contact with parents/carers. Where inappropriate, harmful or potentially criminal content is suspected, staff will follow the school's safeguarding and searching procedures and consult the DSL where appropriate. Any sanction will take account of the circumstances of the incident and the individual needs of the pupil.

Explain the sanctions you will use if a pupil is in breach of this policy.

- The mobile phones will be confiscated and given to the Headteacher. (Schools are permitted to confiscate phones from pupils under sections 91 and 94 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006)
- Parents will be contacted and a collection time / date will be agreed with the Headteacher. (Headteachers can confiscate mobile phones and similar devices for the length of time they deem proportionate, according to the DfE's guidance on mobile phones in schools)

- The use of a mobile phone in school will be considered at least a Red Behaviour and will result in at least 5 days of internal break and lunch detentions but could result in a fixed term suspension depending on the circumstances.

Staff have the power to search pupils' phones in specific circumstances, as set out in the DfE's guidance on searching, screening and confiscation. The DfE guidance allows staff to search a pupil's phone if there is a good reason to do so (such as having reason to believe the phone contains pornographic images, or if it is being / has been used to commit an offence or cause harm to another person). The search will be determined by the Headteacher. Two members of staff will be present if a phone is searched.

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:

- Making of or sharing nudes and semi-nudes including images that are digitally altered or wholly generated using AI (such as 'deepfakes' or 'deep nudes')
- 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 and carers are encouraged to reinforce and discuss this policy at home as appropriate, including the risks associated with mobile phone use and the benefits of a mobile phone-free environment.

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.

Parents and carers accompanying pupils on school trips may use their mobile phone to take photographs of their own child, where permitted by the school. However, mobile phones should not be used excessively or in a way that distracts from supervising and engaging with pupils. Parents and carers should refrain from making or taking personal calls while on school trips, except where necessary and should ensure that phone use does not interfere with their responsibilities as an accompanying adult.

This means:

- Not taking pictures or recordings of pupils, unless it's 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, when working with pupils or while children are present

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.

If a visitor, parent or carer is seen using their mobile phone, they will be asked politely to turn it off/ resist from using it/remove it from children's view.

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.

Children may inadvertently be included in photographs taken by other parents or carers. Parents and carers should therefore be made aware of the potential safeguarding and privacy risks associated with photographing and publishing images of children on social media or other online platforms. Where a photograph includes a child other than their own, parents and carers should obtain appropriate consent before sharing or publishing the image. Depending on the circumstances, unauthorised sharing of images may also raise data protection and safeguarding concerns.

7. Loss, theft or damage

Pupils bringing mobile phones to school must make sure that their phones are appropriately labelled, ready to be stored away securely in the school office when not in use during the school day.

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, as well as any work phone provided to them. Failure by staff to do so could result in data breaches.

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 or from school. A disclaimer is included in permission forms for bringing a phone to school.

It is the responsibility of parents and carers to ensure mobile phones are properly insured.

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

8. Monitoring and review

The school is committed to making sure 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 DfE, the local authority and any other relevant organisations

If there are any concerns regarding this policy, these should be brought to the attention of Sarah Bolt or Kathryn Bottomley in a timely manner.

9. Appendix 1: Acceptable use agreement for pupils allowed to bring their phones to school due to exceptional circumstances

Pupil acceptable use agreement

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

1. Hand your phone straight into the school office where the phone will be locked away by the office staff until the end of the day (once the class has been dismissed from the playground).
2. Do not use your phone during the school day.
3. Only use your phone once you have left the school premises.
4. Phones must be switched off (not just put on 'silent').
5. You cannot take photos or recordings (either video or audio) of school staff or other pupils.
6. Avoid sharing your contact details with people you don't know, and don't share other people's contact details without their consent.
7. Don't share your phone's password(s) or access code(s) with anyone else.
8. Don't use your mobile phone to bully, intimidate or harass anyone or otherwise behave in a way that goes against the school's behaviour policy. This includes bullying, harassing or intimidating pupils or staff via:
 - a. Email
 - b. Text/messaging app
 - c. Social media
9. Don't use your phone to send or receive anything that may be a criminal offence. For instance, by making or sharing nudes or semi-nudes (including AI-generated images or 'deepfakes')
10. Rules on bullying, harassment and intimidation apply to how you use your mobile phone even when you aren't in school.
11. Don't use vulgar, obscene or derogatory language while on the phone or when using social media. This language is not permitted under the school's behaviour policy.
12. Don't use your phone to view or share pornography or other harmful content.
13. You must comply with a request by a member of staff to switch off, or hand over, a phone. Refusal to comply is a breach of the school's behaviour policy and will be dealt with accordingly.
14. Mobile phones are not permitted in any internal or external exam or test environment. If you have a mobile phone, you will be asked to store it appropriately, or turn it over to an exam invigilator, before entering the test room. Bringing a phone into the test room can result in your exam being declared invalid.

10. Appendix 2: Permission form allowing a pupil to bring their phone to school

PUPIL DETAILS	
Pupil name:	
Year group/class:	
Parent/carer(s) name(s):	

The school has agreed to allow _____ to bring their mobile phone to school because they:

- ☐ Travel to and from school alone
- ☐ Need the phone to support their medical needs
- ☐ Attend a before- or after-school activity where a mobile phone is required for the activity, or to contact parents/carers

Pupils who bring a mobile phone to school must abide by the school's policy on the use of mobile phones, and its acceptable use agreement.

The school reserves the right to revoke permission if a pupil does not abide by the policy.

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

Parent/carer signature: _____

Pupil signature: _____

FOR SCHOOL USE ONLY	
Authorised by:	
Date:	

11. Appendix 3: Template mobile phone information slip for visitors

Use of mobile phones and similar devices in our school

Our school is a mobile phone-free environment.

- 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 school foyer.
- Do not take photos or recordings of pupils (unless it is your own child), or staff
- Do not use your phone in lessons, when working with pupils or while children are present
- When accompanying pupils on school trips, parents and carers may take photographs of their own child where permitted but should avoid making personal calls or using their phone excessively while supervising 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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