Mobile Devices Policy

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1. Introduction and aims

At Kingfisher Schools Trust we recognise that mobile phones and similar devices, including smartphones, are common tools for our pupils, parents/carers and staff, as well as the wider school community. We do not believe that pupil access to mobile phones during the school day is helpful to good behaviour, safeguarding, or pupil relationships. However, we understand that pupils (especially of secondary age) may need access to a mobile phone to facilitate contact with their parents when travelling to and from school. Our policy explains how our schools manage mobile phones within this context.

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 safeguarding and behaviour

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

- Risks to safeguarding
- Data protection issues
- Potential for disruption to learning and the orderly running of schools
- Risk of theft, loss, or damage
- Inappropriate use of technology in the classroom

Note, throughout this policy, 'mobile phones' refers to mobile phones and other digital devices.

The core focus of this policy is mobile phones and our provision for managing these in school, particularly how pupils may bring them with them to school but then not access them (in most circumstances). Unless explicitly agreed in advance and in writing by the headteacher or their delegate, pupils **should not bring other digital devices into school.**

An example of permitted digital devices would be a laptop or tablet, as a learning aid for a pupil with additional needs. In most cases, this would be a school owned and operated device. Such use would be agreed in advance.

Mobile/digital devices include any tablet, laptop, reader, recording device, smartglasses or other wearable device. The use of smartwatches is referred to in section 5.1. This list is not exhaustive and includes any future innovation/new devices not listed here and it is in the discretion of the headteacher to decide whether an item is permitted or not. For the avoidance of doubt, visitors/guests to school, including parents, must not use any of the above items in school without prior permission.

Our position on the purchase of smartphones for school pupils

School staff are often asked for advice on the purchase of a mobile phone for their children and we feel it would be helpful to share the following as our position.

As a trust, we understand parents' desire to be able to contact their child on journeys to and from school, especially where plans change. This is especially the case once pupils make their own way to school when of secondary age, and when they may use school or public transport.

However, the ability to make contact via text message or phone call does not require a full 'smart' device, which can give young pupils access to a range of apps and information, including inappropriate content, if not properly managed.

We advise parents that a simple phone without smart features is adequate for contact (sometimes known as a brick phone). For tracking a location, a simple airtag can be purchased and attached to a phone case.

We remind parents that most social media apps, including messaging apps, are not for use by those aged under 13 and that harmful and inappropriate content can be accessed, in addition to contact with strangers whose age and identity cannot be verified.

At the time of writing, parliament is debating additional measures which will likely increase restrictions on social media access and usage for young people.

2. Relevant guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the Department for Education's non-statutory mobile phone guidance and behaviour guidance. The Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act 2026 introduces a statutory obligation for schools to maintain a phone-free environment throughout the school day, covering all lessons, breaks, and lunchtimes. This means that students are generally not allowed to use or carry mobile phones on school premises during these hours. Schools may implement practical measures to prohibit use. 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 trust's executive team is responsible for reviewing the policy every two years. Headteachers are responsible for providing details of site-specific arrangements and 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, including to new starters to the school.

4. Use of mobile phones by staff

The DfE's mobile phone guidance says that staff should not use their own mobile phone for personal reasons in front of pupils throughout the school day.

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, while children are present. Use of personal mobile phones is restricted to non-contact time, and to areas of the school where pupils are not present (such as the staffroom).

There are some exceptions to this rule: please see section 4.4

There may be further personal 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 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 Bard).

Further information can be found in the trust's Acceptable Use and Data Protection policies.

4.3 Safeguarding

Staff must not give their personal contact details to parents/carers or pupils, including connecting through social media and messaging apps. Where staff and volunteers have pre-existing social or family relationships with parents/carers or pupils these must be declared to school leaders and particular care given to the use of social media with such contacts. For further guidance, please see our Social Media Policy and Code of Conduct.

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 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
- Use to receive and send information during duties/on-call
- Teacher use of the MCAS app, e.g. to help a pupil with their timetable

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 or staff may use the 3CX app if installed on their personal mobile phone

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 phone functions for work purposes, including making/receiving calls, sending/receiving emails or other communications, or using the internet
- Ensure that communication or 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

The Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act 2026 introduces a statutory obligation for schools to maintain a phone-free environment throughout the school day, covering all lessons, breaks, and lunchtimes. This means that students are generally not allowed to use or carry mobile phones on school premises during these hours. Schools may implement practical measures to prohibit use and these are detailed here.

Pupils should **not** use or have access to their mobile phones for the entirety of the core school day, including during lessons, in the time between lessons, at breaktimes and at lunchtimes.

Each Kingfisher trust school has its own arrangements for the collection, storage and return of mobile phones.

At Sir John Leman High School, the arrangements are as follows:

- All students will hand their mobile phone to their tutor on arrival each morning.
- They will be stored securely in lockable lockers and returned at the end of the school day during an additional 5-minute tutor time slot.
- Students who require a mobile phone for medical reasons (e.g. diabetes monitoring) will have appropriate individual arrangements in place.
- Students attending sporting fixtures or other off-site activities will be able to collect their phones before leaving school.
- Clear expectations and consequences will apply to ensure the policy is implemented consistently for all students.

There will be some random spot checks to make sure that pupils aren't bringing in second devices and we can do this through a quick look at bags or by the use of a 'wand' which detects electronic devices without contact

Pupils who are found to breach the policy, especially more than once, may be subject to regular monitoring through checks, including wanding and bag searches.

As part of the routine, mobile phones are made available again at the end of the core day. The arrangements for after-school clubs are that pupils may have their mobile phones with them but should not use them whilst they are attending the after-school club.

In the time before pupils hand in their device and in the time they have it before leaving site, they must not use it to photograph or otherwise record (video/audio) another pupil or member of staff whilst on the school site or transport.

The arrangements for the use of mobile phones for school visits and trips will be determined on each case and communicated in advance to parents and pupils, though will be consistent with the principle that use should be avoided where possible. Mobile phone use will also be considered as part of the risk assessment process. Away from the usual procedures for daily storage, our schools may adopt the position of phones being in the possession of pupils but that they must not be 'seen or heard'. Some access to mobile phones will be considered for longer journeys and trips, to allow direct contact home, including limiting access overnight/when pupils are in accommodation.

Our standard position for primary school trips and visits is that pupils do not bring mobile phones/devices.

Regardless of the particular arrangements made for each trip regarding mobile devices, it remains our position that pupils should not use or post on social media during trips.

5.1 Use of smartwatches by pupils

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.

Our arrangements for the storage of mobile phones away from pupils during the school day should prevent most use of 'smart' functions within smartwatches. As many smartwatches resemble analogue watches, it is not possible for staff to consistently monitor this or prevent them being worn. However, should it be discovered that these have been used (including through the use of any inbuilt data functionality), these items may be confiscated and sanctions applied, in line with those for the misuse of other mobile devices.

No watches (including smartwatches) can be taken into an examination hall. If this occurs, it will likely result in disqualification from that examination and others within the series.

5.2 Exceptions for special circumstances and for sixth-form pupils

The school may permit pupils to use a mobile phone in school, usually within set rules, due to exceptional circumstances. This will be considered on a case-by-case basis. For instance, some pupils may require access to a phone for monitoring blood sugar levels. To request such permission, pupils or parents/carers should contact their Year manager through reception@sirjohnleman.co.uk.

Any pupils who are given permission must then adhere to the school's code of conduct and acceptable use agreement for exceptional mobile phone use (see appendix 1).

Sixth-form pupils are allowed access to their mobile phones during the school day, to reflect their increased independence and responsibility, but must not compromise our policy on the use of mobile phones for other pupils.

Therefore, they are only permitted to use their mobile phones out of sight of younger pupils, e.g. within the common room. Misuse of mobile phones by pupils in the sixth form will lead to sanctions according to our behaviour policy.

Sixth-form pupils may also use their own laptop or tablet for making notes and research purposes, as long as this is operated in line with the acceptable use policy. This does not extend to mobile phones, which should not be in use or out on desks during lessons.

5.3 Sanctions

Breaches of the policy

Pupils will be deemed to have breached this policy for the following reasons (though this is not exhaustive):

- Refusing to follow the daily procedures for securing mobile phones in the lockers
- Bringing a second or further mobile device into school
- Directing or coercing another pupil to bringing a second or further device into school, or concealing such a device for another pupil
- Breaking or damaging the locker
- Possessing any equipment designed to interfere with our secure storage, e.g. magnet
- Placing an alternative or dummy device into the locker

Applying sanctions

These will be viewed as serious breaches of the behaviour policy and are likely to result in a significant sanction, including suspension from school.

In each case, the sanction given must be reasonable and proportionate. The school will also consider whether:

- There are any relevant special circumstances (for example, age, religious requirements, special educational needs, disability)
- The pupil's behaviour may indicate they may be suffering, or at risk of, harm. If this is suspected, staff will follow the appropriate procedure set out in Part 1 of Keeping Children Safe in Education

Confiscation and search

Where a pupil is found to have breached the policy, we have the right to confiscate a mobile phone and will exercise this. We reserve the right to give the mobile phone back to a parent/carer rather than the pupil, particularly if there are repeat breaches. We return mobile phones at the end of the school day they are confiscated and do not withhold mobile phones overnight unless we have grounds to believe that the item does not belong to that pupil, or the police request us to retain it. On some occasions, where the mobile phone is to be collected by the parent but they cannot attend that evening, we may keep it overnight, with the parent's consent.

School 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 school 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.) In our schools, only the headteacher or someone delegated by them (e.g. the designated safeguarding lead) is authorised to search a pupil's phone. In the matter of activities outside school, the member of staff in charge should try to contact the headteacher or DSL prior to initiating a search of a mobile phone. Where this is not possible, and the trip leader deems it necessary, they may initiate a search.

For any search of a phone, the colleague searching it should have another colleague in attendance as a witness.

Criminal conduct

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), it is of their own child and **clear permission has been given by the member of staff in charge**
- 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. **Note**, that these rules may change for different events, e.g. some pupils must not be photographed and therefore we may prohibit all photography on some occasions.

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

Whilst there is a daily routine for the storage of mobile phones (should pupils bring them to school), they are not constantly monitored and there is no manageable system for observing and recording the condition of these devices for all pupils at the beginning and end of each day.

Therefore, 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 seek to make parents and pupils aware of this disclaimer by:

- Displaying signs in the school entrance or office
- Including disclaimers in your permission forms for bringing a phone to school and on trips
- Including a disclaimer in our home-school agreement
- Providing a copy of your policy and disclaimer to new pupils and parents/carers

Pupils bringing mobile phones to school must ensure that the phones are appropriately labelled or identifiable as belonging to them beyond doubt.

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.

Confiscated phones will be stored in J2 in a locked cabinet. The secure storage of confiscated phones is overseen by the pastoral leadership team.

Lost phones should be returned to J2. 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 [name/role and contact details] in a timely manner.

9. Appendix 1: Pupil Code of Conduct/Acceptable use policy- pupils allowed to access their phones in school due to exceptional circumstances

You must follow these rules if you bring your mobile phone to school:

1. You may not use your mobile phone during lessons, unless the teacher specifically allows you to.
2. Phones must be switched off (not just put on 'silent').
3. You may not use your mobile phone in the toilets or changing rooms. This is to protect the privacy and welfare of other pupils.
4. You cannot take photos or recordings (either video or audio) of school staff or other pupils without their consent.
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 phone to send or receive anything that may be criminal. For instance, by 'sexting'.
9. Rules on bullying, harassment and intimidation apply to how you use your mobile phone even when you aren't in school.
10. 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.
11. Don't use your phone to view or share pornography or other harmful content.
12. 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.
13. 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 (insert name) limited access to their mobile phone during school hours because they:

- Are a young carer
- Need the phone to support their medical needs
- Need to be contactable in an emergency
- Reasonable adjustments have been agreed on a case-by-case basis in line with the school's duties under the Equality Act 2010

Pupils who bring a mobile phone to school must abide by the school's policy on the use of mobile phones, and its code of conduct / acceptable use agreement for those pupils allowed access for exceptional reasons.

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

Details of the particular conditions of use, e.g. times and locations where the pupil may access the phone and for what purposes:

-
-
-
-

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

- 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 Reception
- 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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