St John Henry Newman Catholic Primary School

Mobile Phone Usage Code of Conduct

Approved: October 2026
Next Review Date: October 2028

Policy Statement

At St John Henry Newman Catholic Primary School we are committed to providing a calm, safe and focused learning environment. In line with recent DfE guidance (February 2026), our school operates as a mobile phone-free environment throughout the school day.

This policy applies to:

- Mobile phones
- Smart watches with communication functions
- Tablets or other smart devices capable of messaging, recording or internet access
- The school's expectation is clear:
- Pupils do not have access to mobile phones at any point during the school day.

2. Rationale

This policy is based on national guidance and evidence that mobile phones:

- Disrupt learning and reduce focus
- Contribute to safeguarding risks (e.g. online harm, cyberbullying)
- Increase social pressures and conflict between pupils
- The DfE states that schools should prohibit use to support behaviour, safety and wellbeing.

3. Aims

- To ensure pupils are fully engaged in learning
- To promote positive social interaction
- To protect pupils from online risks during the school day
- To provide clarity and consistency for staff, pupils and families

4. Expectations for Pupils

4.1 Bringing Phones to School

- Pupils are strongly discouraged from bringing mobile phones to school.
- Where necessary (e.g. walking home independently), phones must be handed in on arrival.

4.2 Storage

Phones must be:

- Switched off
- Handed to the school office/class teacher on arrival
- Stored securely until the end of the day

4.3 Use During the School Day

- No pupil may access or use a mobile phone:
- In lessons
- Between lessons
- At breaktimes or lunchtime

  This reflects DfE expectations of a full-day prohibition - Mobile phones in schools - GOV.UK

4.4 Smart Watches

Smart watches with communication or recording functions are not permitted.

- Basic digital watches (time only) are encouraged.

5. Expectations for Staff

- Staff play a critical role in modelling expectations.
- Staff must not use personal mobile phones in front of pupils unless for professional purposes.

Phones should be:

- Kept out of sight during teaching time
- Used only in designated areas (e.g. staffroom)
- Use of mobile phones for Safeguarding, Educational purposes, School systems (e.g. authentication)
  is permitted where appropriate.
- Staff are expected to consistently enforce this policy.

6. Expectations for Parents and Carers

Parents and carers play a vital role in ensuring the success of our mobile phone policy. Their support helps the school maintain a safe, focused, and respectful learning environment for all pupils.

6.1 Supporting Pupil Compliance

Parents should:

- Avoid sending children to school with mobile phones unless there is a genuine need (e.g., walking home alone).
- Reinforce the school's expectations about not using phones during the school day.
- Ensure urgent messages are sent via the school office, not directly to pupils.
- Encourage pupils to hand in phones on arrival and collect them at the end of the day if required.

6.2 Parental Conduct

Parents are expected to:

- Respect school rules on mobile phone use when on school premises. Phones should not be used to record or photograph pupils or staff without explicit permission.
- Avoid contacting pupils directly during the school day via mobile phone, messaging apps, or social media. Any urgent communication should go through the school office.
- Model responsible technology use, showing children that phones are not required to manage every situation instantly.
- Communicate concerns or complaints through official channels (phone, email, or scheduled meeting), rather than using social media or informal messaging apps.

6.3 Partnership Approach

- Parents are partners in safeguarding; their cooperation is essential in reducing online risks, bullying, and distractions during the school day.
- The school may contact parents if a pupil repeatedly breaches this policy. Parental support will be requested in ensuring consistent enforcement at home and school.
- The school will provide updates and reminders to families about mobile phone expectations, ensuring all parents understand their responsibilities.

Clear, consistent cooperation between school and home helps create a positive environment where children can learn without distraction and feel safe online and offline.

7. Safeguarding and Education

The school will teach pupils about:

- Online safety
- Responsible technology use
- Risks linked to mobile devices

Integrate this into:

- Computing
- PSHE/RSE

This aligns with DfE expectations that pupils understand why restrictions are in place.

8. Breaches of the Policy

If a pupil breaches this policy:

- Device confiscated immediately
- Logged by staff
- Returned at end of day (or collected by parent for repeated breaches)
- Further sanctions may include:
- Loss of privileges
- Behaviour consequences in line with the school behaviour policy

Schools are permitted to use confiscation and sanctions proportionately.

9. Exceptions

Exceptions may be made in limited circumstances:

- Medical needs
- Specific safeguarding arrangements
- Individual SEND requirements

These must be:

- Agreed with the Headteacher
- Clearly documented

The DfE allows exceptions but states these should be rare and justified.

10. Implementation and Monitoring

To ensure consistency:

- Policy shared with all stakeholders annually
- Reinforced through assemblies and communication
- Applied consistently by all staff

11. Linked Policies

- Behaviour Policy
- Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy
- Online Safety Policy
- Acceptable Use Agreements

12. Review

This policy will be reviewed annually or in response to:

- Updated DfE guidance
- Safeguarding developments
- School improvement priorities

Summary Statement

Our approach is simple and evidence informed.

Mobile phones have no place in the school day. By working together—staff, pupils and parents—we ensure a safe, focused and positive environment where children can thrive.