

St John Henry Newman Catholic School Mobile Phone Policy



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1. Introduction and aims

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

Our policy aims to:

- Align with the Department for Education (DFE) directives around mobile phone use
- Promote safe and responsible phone use
- Set clear guidelines for the use of mobile phones for students, staff, parents/carers, visitors and volunteers
- Support the school's other policies, especially those related to child protection, anti-bullying and behaviour

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 phones in schools - GOV.UK](#) 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 Deputy Headteacher – Pastoral is responsible for monitoring the policy annually, reviewing it, and holding staff and students 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 ratify this policy upon its inception and then annually at the Local Governing Body Meeting which falls immediately after the review date.

4. Use of mobile phones by staff

In accordance with the Staff Code of Conduct in place at St John Henry Newman Catholic School, Keeping Children Safe in Education and the DfE's non-statutory mobile phone guidance – staff must not use their own mobile phone for personal reasons in front of students 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 must be restricted to non-contact time, and to areas of the school where students 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 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 02476332382 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)

More detailed guidance around data protection at St John Henry Newman Catholic School can be found in the MAC policies – Data Protection section of the school website.

4.3 Safeguarding

Staff must not give their personal contact details to parents/carers or students, 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 students.

Staff must not use their personal mobile phones to take photographs or recordings of students, their work, or anything else that could identify a student. 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

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 students, their work, or anything else that could identify a student
- Refrain from using their phones to contact parents/carers. If necessary, contact must be made via the school office

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, accessing the school's MIS, or using the internet
- Ensure that communication or conduct linked to the device is always appropriate and professional, 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 students

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

At St John Henry Newman Catholic School we operate a 'Not Seen, Not Heard' policy (in line with one of the options provided by the DfE), meaning students should not use their mobile phones during the school day, including during lessons, at lesson changeover, and during social times.

Students are reminded about the rules regarding mobile phones with the image below throughout the school day and at opportunities throughout the school year.



Students are permitted to bring their mobile telephone to school with them. They must then switch off the mobile telephone and place them into their bags.

If a student's mobile phone is seen or heard during the school day, either during lesson, at lesson changeover or during social time, then staff will confiscate the mobile phone.

The phone is placed in student reception, into an envelope with the details of the confiscation included and placed in a restricted area for safe keeping.

On the first occasion that the mobile phone is confiscated the student is permitted to collect this at the end of the school day and the parent is informed by a letter. Any future confiscations will result in the parent having to collect the mobile phone from the school. Repeated confiscations will result in further restrictions and sanctions being imposed on the student – in line with the school's behaviour policy.

Students are permitted to bring their mobile phones with them when completing educational visits or school trips, the same rules regarding their use apply when students are not on school site but are engaging in any activity under the supervision of a member of staff.

There are no exceptions to the mobile phone rules for students in Years 7 to 11, unless medically necessary and this is outlined below.

5.1 Use of smartwatches by students

The school's approach to the use of smartwatches aligns with the DfE's classification of smartwatches under the guidance for mobile phones. As such these items are not permitted for students at St John Henry Newman Catholic School.

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.

Students are permitted, in line with the uniform policy, to wear a wristwatch. If a student wears a smartwatch, this will be confiscated and retained in the same manner as a mobile phone, as outlined above.

5.2 Exceptions and Sixth Form Students

At St John Henry Newman Catholic School, we understand that some students will require their mobile phones throughout the school day. As an inclusive Catholic school there will be some reasonable adaptations and exceptions which are required for certain students. For example:

- Students with diabetes who use their phones to monitor their blood sugar
- Students with other medical conditions, where the use of smart technology aids the management of the condition

These students will be permitted to use their phones, upon receiving permission from their Head of Year or other Pastoral members of staff who are aware of their circumstances. These students will still be required to use their mobile phones in specified designated areas (such as the Head of Year office or First Aid office).

Any student with permission to use their mobile phone when at school, will adhere to the expectations regarding their mobile phone.

At St John Henry Newman Catholic School Sixth-form students 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 students.

Therefore, they are only permitted to use their mobile phones out of sight of younger students inside of the designated sixth form areas and never in the main school building. Misuse of mobile phones by students in the sixth form will lead to sanctions according to our behaviour policy.

Sixth Form students are not exempt from the rules regarding confiscation.

5.3 Sanctions

If the mobile phone policy at St John Henry Newman Catholic School is breached, the following sanctions are in place:

- The mobile phone, AirPods, Earphones or smartwatch is confiscated by a member of staff (Schools are permitted to confiscate phones from students under [Sections 91](#) and [94](#) of the Education and Inspections Act 2006)
- The device is placed in an envelope with the students' details displayed on the front and handed in at student reception
- The device is then securely stored in a restricted area until the end of the school day.
- The student is then permitted to collect the device at the end of the school day following the first confiscation.

- The student signs the mobile phone agreement upon collection of the device and a letter is sent to the family of the student informing them of the confiscation.
- Future confiscations result in parents having to collect the mobile phone and repeated confiscations result in further restrictions and sanctions in line with the behaviour policy.

Students who have their phone, AirPods, headphones or smartwatch repeatedly confiscated may have to hand in their device each morning for a period deemed necessary.

When confiscating any device from students, it is likely that it would be returned to the student at the end of the school day. However, the Headteacher has the power to confiscate the for a period of time they deem necessary.

In all cases of confiscation, the removal of a student's device will be reasonable and proportionate and in response to a breach of the policy. At St John Henry Newman Catholic School we are aware that many of our students use their mobile phone to travel on public transport via an electronic travel pass – we would never confiscate a student's mobile device beyond the end of the school day if it hampered their travel or placed them at risk.

Safeguarding Risks surrounding Mobile Phones

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

Students are not permitted to use audio or visual recording facilities on their mobile phones, or any other device, at any point or in any location on school premises.

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 students, unless it's at a public event (such as a school fair), or of their own child
- Only 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 students

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. Upon signing in at main reception, all visitors are handed an overview of St John Henry Newman Catholic School's safeguarding arrangements, the rules around mobile phones are included within this information. Further rules around the use of mobile phones are provided to all visitors (Appendix 1)

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 students, their work, or anything else that could identify a student

Parents/carers or volunteers supervising trips are also responsible for enforcing the school's policy for students 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.**

Parents/carers, volunteers or visitors are not permitted to use audio or visual recording facilities on their mobile phones, or any other device, when meeting with members of school staff.

7. Loss, theft or damage

If students choose to bring their mobile phones to school, it is the responsibility of the parent/carer to ensure that the phone is easily identifiable as their child's and it is the responsibility of the student to ensure the phone is stored securely when on school site.

Students 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.

St John Henry Newman Catholic 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 students are travelling to and from school.

Information regarding loss, theft or damage to their mobile phones is shared through this policy, and as part of the home school agreement which is available within the student's personal organiser.

Confiscated phones will be placed in Student Reception and stored securely in a restricted lockable area.

Lost phones should be returned to student reception or the nearest member of permanent school staff. The school will then attempt to contact the owner and share communications with all staff regarding a mobile phone that has been handed in.

8. Monitoring and review

St John Henry Newman Catholic School is committed to ensuring that this policy has a positive impact on our students' education, behaviour and welfare. When reviewing the policy, we will take into account:

- Feedback from parents/carers and students
- 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 Mr T Lowe, Deputy Headteacher & DSL.

1. Appendix 1: 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 students are present. If you must use your phone, you may go to Main Reception
- Do not take photos or recordings of students (unless it is your own child), or staff
- Do not use your phone in lessons, or when working with students

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 or on our school website.