ST. JOHN'S WALHAM GREEN
CE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Mobile phone and smart device policy

LAST REVIEWED: November 2026

Date of next review: November 2027 (or sooner if statutory guidance changes)

St. John's Walham Green Church of England Primary School is an exciting Christian school where everyone flourishes. We celebrate difference: learning from each other, we grow into our best selves.
We enjoy the adventure, challenging each other through learning and play. We rejoice with our church and community, building for a better world. Confident in ourselves, we thrive together in care and love.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES STATEMENT
St John's School is committed to the principle of equal opportunity for all pupils, staff and members of our school community, irrespective of race, religion/belief, gender, disability, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, pregnancy/maternity and marriage/civil partnership. We believe that equal opportunity is at the heart of good educational practice and challenge any form of discrimination. All staff and governors are responsible for ensuring that we implement this policy.

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1. Introduction and aims

At St. John's Walham Green, we recognise that mobile phones and similar devices, including smartphones, are an important part of everyday life for some of 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

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" includes smartphones and other communications or smart technology selected by the school, including devices able to send or receive notifications or messages, connect to mobile networks, or record audio or video. This includes smartwatches and similar wearable devices.

2. Relevant guidance

Mobile phone guidance
Behaviour guidance
Keeping Children Safe in Education
This policy has been updated with regard to the Department for Education's statutory guidance Mobile phones in schools (updated 29 June 2026 and to be followed from 1 September 2026). It should be read alongside Behaviour in schools, Searching, screening and confiscation, Keeping children safe in education 2026, the school's Behaviour Policy, Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, Online Safety Policy, Data Protection Policy, Staff Code of Conduct and ICT Acceptable Use Policy.

The school is a mobile phone-free environment by default. Mobile phones and included smart technology must not be used by pupils at any point during the school day, including lessons, movement between lessons, breaktimes, lunchtimes, clubs operating within the school day and educational visits during school hours, unless an individual, documented exception applies.

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 Headteacher is responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented consistently, communicated clearly to staff, pupils and parents/carers, and reviewed at least annually. The governing body will provide appropriate oversight of the school's compliance with statutory guidance and safeguarding duties.

Staff will address questions or concerns from parents/carers promptly and explain the educational, behavioural, wellbeing and safeguarding reasons for maintaining a mobile phone-free school day. Staff will model the expectations set out in this policy.

4. Use of mobile phones by staff

4.1 Personal mobile phones

Staff, volunteers, contractors and others engaged by the school must not use personal mobile phones while supervising or working with pupils. Personal use is limited to non-contact time in designated areas where pupils are not present, such as the staffroom, except for an emergency or a specific arrangement authorised by the Headteacher.

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 0207 7315454

4.2 Data protection

Staff must not use personal mobile phones to create, access, store, transmit or process personal data or confidential school information. Personal or confidential data must not be entered into generative artificial intelligence services or other unapproved applications. Only school-approved devices, accounts, systems and AI tools may be used, in accordance with the school's Data Protection Policy, ICT Acceptable Use Policy and information security arrangements.

More detailed guidance on data protection can be found in the school's data protection policy and ICT acceptable use policy.

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 have existing relationships with parents/carers, there must be no communication surrounding school life on social media or 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 personal mobile phones to photograph, film or make audio recordings of pupils, pupils' work or information that could identify a pupil. School-approved equipment and systems must be used. Any exceptional use must be authorised in advance by the Headteacher or Designated Safeguarding Lead, have a clear lawful and safeguarding purpose, and ensure that content is transferred securely to an approved school system and permanently deleted from the personal device without delay.

It is necessary for staff mobile phones to have access to the school wi-fi network to enable staff to use their phones for professional use.

4.4 Using personal mobiles for work purposes

Personal mobile phones may be used for work only where this is necessary, proportionate and authorised by the Headteacher. Personal phones must not *normally* be used for registration, behaviour records, homework, rewards, sanctions or direct communication with pupils or parents/carers.

Examples of appropriate use of personal devices may include:

- Registration of pupils where a school device is not present
- 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
- Avoid using their phones to take photographs or recordings of pupils, their work, or anything else that could identify a pupil where an alternative school device is available
- Refrain from using their phones to contact parents/carers. If necessary, contact must be made via the school office. In an emergency, staff should withhold their number from the call.

If authorised exceptional use results in pupil information being held temporarily on a personal device, it must be transferred promptly and securely to an approved school system and permanently deleted from the device, including from recently deleted folders and cloud backups where applicable. Any loss, unauthorised disclosure or suspected breach must be reported immediately under the school's data breach procedure.

Staff will be advised to:

- Keep personal mobile and smart technology devices in a safe and secure place (locked in a locker/drawer) during lesson time.
- Keep personal mobile phones and devices switched off or set to 'silent' or 'do not disturb' modes during lesson times.
- Ensure that Bluetooth or other forms of communication, such as 'airdrop', are hidden or disabled during lesson times.
- Not use personal mobile or smart technology devices during teaching periods, unless permission has been given by SLT
- Ensure that any content bought onto site via personal mobile and smart technology devices is compatible with their professional role and our behaviour expectations.

4.5 Work phones

Staff are provided with a mobile phone by the school for school trips and residentials.

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

- Pupils in Early Years, Key Stage 1 and Years 3 and 4 must not bring a mobile phone or included smart device to school unless the Headteacher has agreed a documented individual exception.
- Where an exception is agreed for a pupil in Nursery to Year 4, the arrangements, storage, access and review date will be recorded in an individual acceptable use or support plan agreed with the pupil and parent/carer.
- Pupils in Years 5 and 6 may bring a mobile phone to school where this is needed for travel or communication before or after school. Bringing a phone is a privilege subject to full compliance with this policy.
- Pupils must not use or access mobile phones or included smart devices at any point during the school day. Devices must remain switched off and stored securely from arrival until dismissal. Any exception must be necessary, proportionate, documented and regularly reviewed, for example to support a medical need, disability or special educational need.
- Pupils permitted to bring a device must switch it off and hand it in at registration. The school will record and store the device securely in accordance with local arrangements.
- Pupil mobile phones are then locked away in the classroom. The class teacher or leading adult in the classroom have access to the key.
- Mobile phones and smart devices are returned to pupils at the point of dismissal by the lead adult in the classroom.

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.

- Smartwatches and other included smart devices must not be brought to school. Where the Headteacher agrees a documented exception, the device must be switched off and handed in at registration unless the agreed adjustment requires access during the day.

- The school may permit a pupil to use a mobile phone or smart device only as an individual exception. Decisions will be made by the Headteacher, with advice from the Designated Safeguarding Lead and SENCO or medical staff where relevant, and will take account of the Equality Act 2010, safeguarding duties, medical needs, disability, special educational needs and the pupil's individual circumstances.

Any exception will be documented in an individual plan agreed with the pupil and parent/carer. The plan will specify the purpose, times, locations, supervision, storage, permitted functions, review date and action to be taken if the arrangements are not followed.

5.2 Sanctions

- DfE's guidance on searching, screening and confiscation
  If staff have reasonable grounds to suspect that a pupil possesses a device contrary to this policy, an authorised member of staff may search, screen or confiscate only in accordance with the school's

Behaviour Policy and the Department for Education's Searching, screening and confiscation guidance. The pupil's dignity, age, special educational needs, disability and safeguarding circumstances will be considered, and searches will be recorded and parents informed where required.

- Data or files on an electronic device will be examined, deleted or passed to the police only where the statutory power and the Department for Education guidance permit this and the action is necessary and proportionate. Safeguarding concerns must be referred promptly to the Designated Safeguarding Lead. Staff must not conduct investigative searches of a device beyond their authority or view suspected indecent images unnecessarily.

- A device used or possessed in breach of this policy may be confiscated as a disciplinary penalty under sections 91 and 94 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006. The length and conditions of confiscation will be reasonable, proportionate, clearly communicated and consistent with the school's Behaviour Policy. The school will consider safeguarding, medical, SEND, disability and other relevant circumstances and will normally arrange return to a parent/carer rather than to the pupil.Education and Inspections act relevent sections 9194

- Confiscated devices will be labelled, recorded and stored securely in the school office safe. Parents/carers will be told why the device was confiscated, how long it will be retained and the collection arrangements.

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

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:

- Consensual and non-consensual sharing of nude or semi-nude images or videos, including AI-generated or manipulated sexual imagery
- 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 photographs, videos or audio recordings of pupils on the school site unless the school has expressly authorised this for a specific event. Any authorised images must be limited to the adult's own child and used in accordance with the school's event notice and privacy expectations.
- Not publishing or sharing images or recordings containing other children or staff on social media, messaging services or other platforms without the appropriate consent and school authorisation.
- 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 must ensure that the phones are appropriately labelled and are 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, 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 and from school.

- New families to the school will be signposted to this policy
- Confiscated phones will be stored in the safe in the school office.
- Lost phones should be returned to the school office. The school will then attempt to contact the owner.

8. Monitoring and review

The school will monitor whether this policy is understood and implemented consistently and whether it supports pupils' education, behaviour, safeguarding and wellbeing. The review will take place at least annually and sooner where statutory guidance, technology, safeguarding risks or school circumstances change. The school will consider:

- 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 the Headteacher, in a timely manner.

9. Appendix : Template mobile phone information slip for visitors

Use of mobile phones and similar devices in our school

- Please keep your mobile phone switched off or on silent and out of sight while pupils are present.
- Please do not use a phone or smart device where pupils are present. If use is essential, ask the school office for a suitable location.
- Do not take photographs, videos or audio recordings of pupils or staff unless the school has expressly authorised this for a specific event.
- 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 and smart device policy is available from the school office.

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