



## Mobile Phones

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## 1. Aims

At Stoke Newington School and Sixth Form, we recognise that mobile phones and similar devices, including smartphones, are an important part of everyday life for 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

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 [mobile phone guidance](#) and [behaviour guidance](#). Further guidance that should be considered alongside this policy is [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#).

From 29<sup>th</sup> June 2026, under Section 36 of the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act 2026, the school is required by law to have regard to the DfE's published guidance on mobile phones. Prior to this date, the guidance was non-statutory.

## 3. Roles and Responsibilities

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 monitoring the policy every year, reviewing it, and holding staff and pupils accountable for its implementation.

## 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, while students 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 is 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 241 9600, 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 detailed information can be found in our Data Protection 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.

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:

- 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.



#### 4.5 Work phones

In some cases, such as off-site trips and residential visits, 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

#### **5. Use of smartwatches by pupils**

The DfE's [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.

Smart watches are not permitted to be worn at SNS and will follow the same sanction as mobile phone devices.

#### **6. Sixth Form Students**

Sixth-form pupils are allowed access to their mobile phones during the school day within the Sixth Form Common Room only. This reflects their increased independence and responsibility, but they must not compromise our policy on the use of mobile phones for other pupils.

Sixth-form pupils must not be used outside of the Sixth Form Common Room, including corridors, classrooms and outside areas.

#### **7. Exceptions for Special Circumstances**

Under the Equality Act 2010, the school has a duty to take reasonable steps to avoid substantial disadvantage to a disabled pupil caused by this policy. Under the Children and Families Act 2014, the school also has a duty to support pupils with medical conditions, which may in some circumstances involve the use of a mobile phone (for example, continuous glucose monitoring linked to a mobile phone).

Where a smart phone is required for these reasons, a parent/carer must request this in writing to the Head of School and School Nurse. Requests will be considered on a case by case basis. The school reserved the right to revoke permission if a pupil does not abide by the policy.

#### **8. Sanctions**

##### Students Years 7 – 11 - Smart Mobile Phones

Any smartphone brought onto school premises from Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> July 2026 will be confiscated immediately for **15 school days**. It will not be returned to the student. **The device will only be returned to a parent/carer.**



The confiscation period is as a strong deterrent. Whilst there are benefits to the use of a smartphone, the dangers of the use on children are well-documented. There is urgent need for schools to seek to be mobile-free environments, and in particular, smartphone free.

Refusal to hand in a device will result in a serious sanction.

#### Students Years 7 – 11 - Non-Smart Mobile Phones

Any non-smart phone seen or heard by staff from Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> July 2026 will be confiscated immediately. It will not be returned to the student. **The device will only be returned to a parent/carer.**

Refusal to hand in a device will result in a serious sanction.

#### Sixth Form Students

If a smartphone is used by a Sixth Form Student outside of the Sixth Form Common Room, it will be confiscated immediately for **5 school days**. The device will be returned to the student after the 5<sup>th</sup> school day, or earlier if collected by a parent/carer.

### **9. Search and Screening**

#### Random Bag Searches

Students' bags may be subject to random spot-check searches by staff for the purpose of enforcing this policy. Spot-checks of this kind do not require individual suspicion, but will be conducted consistently, proportionately, and without targeting individual pupils unfairly.

#### Screening

The school uses a handheld screening device to scan pupils for mobile phones and similar prohibited items. Screening may be carried out on all pupils, or on any group of pupils, without requiring individual suspicion. Pupils and parents/carers will be informed in advance of when and how screening will take place and the reasons for it. Where a pupil has a disability, the school will make reasonable adjustments to the screening process where required.

#### Searches Based on Reasonable Grounds

Separately, Headteachers, or staff they authorise, have a statutory power to search a pupil or their possessions, without consent, where there are reasonable grounds to suspect that the pupil is in possession of a prohibited item, or any item identified in this policy as an item that may be searched for. Mobile phones and similar devices are identified as such an item. Any search will be carried out in line with the DfE's Searching, Screening and Confiscation guidance and the law in force at the time.

### **10. Loss, Theft or Damage**

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. Any lost mobile phones are to be returned to the main office in which staff will attempt to contact the owner.

Confiscated phones will be stored in the main office in the school safe. Due to the school confiscating the mobile phone, it becomes responsible for the phone and can be held responsible for loss, theft or damage.