



St John's C of E Primary School

Mobile Phones, Smart Devices and Image Capture Policy

School Policy	Headteacher
School Staff were consulted on this document	Summer 2026
It was adopted by the Full Governing Body	Summer 2026
To be reviewed	Summer 2027

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St John's C of E Primary School

Mobile Phones, Smart Devices and Image Capture Policy

Our Vision

Learn Together • Achieve Together • Celebrate Together
'and let your light shine' – Matthew 5:16

Our Mission Statement

To enable all children to achieve their true potential in a caring and inclusive community based on Christian values

Our Values

Respect • Responsibility • Kindness • Perseverance • Truthfulness

1. Introduction

At St John's C of E Primary School, our priority is to provide a safe, calm and focused learning environment where all pupils can flourish.

We recognise that mobile phones and smart devices are now part of everyday life for many families. However, pupils do not need access to personal phones or smart devices during the school day. These devices can create risks linked to distraction, online safety, bullying, inappropriate contact, image sharing, recording, safeguarding and data protection.

St John's is therefore a **phone-free school site for pupils**.

This policy also sets out expectations for staff use of mobile phones and smart devices, including the use of school-owned devices to take photographs and videos of pupils. Staff must not use personal devices to take, store or share images or recordings of pupils, except in exceptional emergency circumstances.

This policy also sets out expectations for Parents, Carers and visitors, including volunteers and contractors.

2. Aims of this policy

This policy aims to:

- keep pupils safe;
- protect pupils, staff and other adults from safeguarding and online safety risks;
- reduce distractions and disruption during the school day;
- support positive behaviour and respectful relationships;
- ensure a consistent approach for pupils, parents/carers, staff and visitors;
- clarify which devices are and are not permitted on the school site;
- prevent pupil images and recordings being stored on personal staff devices;
- provide staff with a realistic and safe alternative for capturing learning and school events;
- ensure any exceptions are agreed, recorded and managed safely.

3. Scope of this policy

This policy applies to:

- all pupils;
- all staff;
- volunteers;
- visitors, including contractors;
- parents and carers while on the school site or attending school events.

It applies during:

- the school day;
- arrival and departure while pupils are on the school site;
- breaktimes and lunchtimes;
- before-school and after-school provision;
- clubs and activities on the school site;
- educational visits;
- residential visits;
- sporting events;
- school performances, celebrations and community events;
- any activity where pupils are under the care of the school.

This policy applies to:

- mobile phones;
- smartphones;
- smart watches;
- internet-enabled watches;
- tablets;
- gaming devices;
- cameras;
- devices that can take photographs, record video or audio;
- devices that can send or receive calls, messages, notifications or images;
- devices that can access the internet, apps, social media or games;
- devices that can share content through Bluetooth, AirDrop or similar functions;
- any similar communication, internet-enabled or recording device.

For the purposes of this policy, these are referred to as **phones and smart devices**.

4. School position

St John's C of E Primary School is a **phone-free school site for pupils**.

Pupils are not permitted to bring smartphones, smart watches, internet-enabled watches, tablets, gaming devices or other smart communication/recording devices onto the school site.

Where a pupil genuinely needs a phone for travel or safety reasons, this must be a **basic call-and-text phone only**. This means a phone without internet access, apps, social media, messaging apps, smart functionality or camera use.

A basic phone may only be brought to school where:

- there is a genuine travel or safety reason;
- the parent/carer has completed the school agreement;
- the school has agreed that the phone may be brought in;
- the phone is switched off before the pupil enters the school site;
- the phone is handed in on arrival;
- the phone is collected at the end of the school day.

Permission to bring a phone to school is a privilege, not an automatic right. The school may refuse or withdraw permission where this policy is not followed.

Appendix 1 is to be completed, in order for permission to be considered, in line with this policy. Permission is only granted once the authorisation process has been completed.

5. Pupils in different year groups

Pupils in Reception to Year 4 should not bring a mobile phone or smart device to school.

Pupils in Year 5 and Year 6 may bring a basic call-and-text phone only in accordance with the criteria defined in paragraph 4.

Any request for a pupil in another year group to bring a phone must be discussed with the Headteacher in advance and will only be agreed in exceptional circumstances and following authorisation via completion of **Appendix 1**.

6. Smartphones and smart devices

Smartphones and smart devices are not permitted for pupils at St John's unless there is an exceptional circumstance agreed and authorised in advance by the Headteacher **via completion of Appendix 1**.

This includes, but is not limited to:

- iPhones or Android smartphones;
- smart watches;
- internet-enabled watches;
- tablets;
- gaming devices;
- devices with cameras;
- devices that can access apps, games, social media or the internet;
- devices that can send or receive messages through mobile networks, Wi-Fi, Bluetooth, AirDrop or similar functions;
- devices that can record audio, take photographs or record video.

6.1 Exceptional circumstances

The school will consider individual exceptions where there is a specific need. This may include:

- a medical need;
- a SEND-related reasonable adjustment;
- a safeguarding reason;
- young carer responsibilities;
- another exceptional family circumstance.

Any exception must be discussed with the school in advance. The agreement will be recorded and will set out:

- what device is permitted;
- why it is needed;
- when and where it may be used;
- who will supervise or support its use;
- how the arrangement will be reviewed.

An exception does not mean a pupil has unrestricted access to a device. Any agreed use will be limited to the specific purpose agreed by the school.

7. Daily procedure for pupils with agreed basic phones

Where a pupil has permission to bring a basic phone to school, the following procedure must be followed:

1. The phone must be switched off before the pupil enters the school site.
2. The phone must not be used anywhere on the school site.
3. The phone must be handed in to the school office or agreed member of staff immediately on arrival.

4. The phone will be stored securely during the school day.
5. The phone may only be collected at the agreed time at the end of the school day.
6. The phone must remain switched off until the pupil has left the school site.

Pupils must not keep a phone or device in their pocket, bag, tray, locker, cloakroom, classroom or any other personal space during the school day.

8. Contact during the school day

If a parent/carer needs to contact their child during the school day, they should contact the school office.

If a pupil needs to contact a parent/carer during the school day, this will be arranged through the school office.

Pupils must not use a personal phone or device to contact parents/carers during the school day. This includes calling, messaging, using apps or using smart watch functions.

9. Educational visits, residential visits and school events

Mobile phones and smart devices are not permitted on school trips, educational visits, sporting events or residential visits unless the school has given specific permission.

Where separate arrangements are needed for a particular visit or event, these will be communicated to parents/carers in advance.

The school may decide that phones are not permitted on a visit, even where a pupil would normally bring a basic phone to school for travel reasons.

Where staff need devices for communication, safeguarding, photographs, maps, registers or emergency contact during visits, school-owned or school-approved devices should be used wherever possible.

10. Before-school and after-school provision

This policy applies to pupils attending before-school or after-school provision on the school site.

Pupils must not use phones or smart devices during wraparound care, clubs or activities unless a specific exception has been agreed by the school.

Any phone brought for travel or safety reasons must be handed in and stored safely in line with the school's arrangements.

11. Misuse of phones or smart devices by pupils

The following are examples of misuse:

- bringing a smartphone or smart device to school without permission;
- using a phone or device on the school site;
- keeping a phone or device instead of handing it in;
- using a phone or device in the toilets, cloakrooms, corridors, playground, classrooms or any other part of the school site;
- taking photographs or videos;
- recording audio;
- sending or receiving messages;
- accessing the internet, apps, games or social media;
- using Bluetooth, AirDrop or similar sharing functions;
- contacting parents/carers directly during the school day;
- sharing unkind, inappropriate or harmful content;
- bullying, threatening or intimidating others using a device;

- refusing to hand over a phone or device when asked by a member of staff.

This list is not exhaustive. Any use of a phone or smart device that compromises safety, behaviour, safeguarding, privacy or learning may be treated as misuse.

12. Confiscation and sanctions

Where a pupil breaches this policy, staff may confiscate the phone or device.

The device will be stored securely and parents/carers will be contacted. Depending on the circumstances, the device may be returned to the pupil at the end of the day or may need to be collected by a parent/carer.

Sanctions will be applied in line with the school's Behaviour Policy. These may include:

- a reminder of expectations;
- parent/carer contact;
- loss of permission to bring a phone to school;
- confiscation of the device;
- a behaviour consequence;
- further action for serious or repeated misuse.

Repeated misuse may result in the pupil no longer being allowed to bring any phone or device onto the school site.

Serious misuse, including taking or sharing images, recording others, bullying, harassment, intimidation, accessing inappropriate content, or refusing to hand over a device, may be treated as a serious breach of the Behaviour Policy and/or Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

13. Safeguarding concerns linked to pupil devices

Where there is a safeguarding concern linked to a phone or smart device, staff must report this immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or a Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead.

This may include concerns about:

- inappropriate images;
- nude or semi-nude images;
- bullying or harassment;
- threats;
- grooming;
- harmful or sexualised content;
- peer-on-peer abuse;
- recordings made without consent;
- evidence of a possible criminal offence.

Staff should not view, forward, copy or share any potentially illegal or harmful content unless this is unavoidable in order to safeguard a child. The DSL will decide the appropriate next steps in line with the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

Where necessary, the school may seek advice from the local authority, police, children's social care or other appropriate agencies.

14. Searching, screening and confiscation

The Headteacher and SLT members may search for phones or smart devices where they have reasonable grounds to suspect that a pupil has a device that is prohibited by the school rules or that may be linked to a safeguarding or behaviour concern.

Any search will be carried out in line with the school's Behaviour Policy and relevant DfE guidance on searching, screening and confiscation.

Where a device may contain evidence of a safeguarding concern or criminal offence, it may be retained and passed to the appropriate agency.

15. Loss, damage or theft

Phones and devices are brought to school at the pupil's and parent/carer's own risk.

The school will take reasonable care of phones that have been handed in according to this policy. However, the school accepts no responsibility for loss, damage or theft of phones or devices brought onto the school site.

Phones and devices must be clearly named.

Staff Use of Phones, Smart Devices and Image Capture

16. Staff use of personal mobile phones and smart devices

Staff are expected to support and model the school's phone-free culture for pupils.

Staff should not use personal mobile phones, smart watches or smart devices in front of pupils during the school day, except in urgent or exceptional circumstances.

Personal mobile phones and smart devices should be kept securely and should not distract from supervision, teaching, safeguarding or professional duties.

Staff using smart watches must ensure that notifications, messages or calls are not visible to pupils and do not interrupt teaching, supervision or professional duties.

Staff should not use mobile phones or smart devices in pupil areas unless there is a clear professional reason. Personal use should be limited to staff-only areas and non-contact time.

Staff must not contact pupils or parents/carers using personal mobile phones, personal email accounts, personal social media accounts or personal messaging apps. Communication with parents/carers must take place through agreed school systems.

Any breach of these expectations may be addressed through the Staff Code of Conduct, Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, Data Protection Policy and, where appropriate, the school's disciplinary procedures.

17. Staff use of devices for photographs, videos and recordings

Staff must not use personal mobile phones, personal tablets, personal smart devices, personal cameras or personal accounts to take, store or share photographs, videos or audio recordings of pupils.

Photographs, videos and recordings of pupils may only be taken using school-owned or school-approved devices and systems, and only for agreed school purposes.

These purposes may include:

- learning evidence;
- assessment;
- classroom displays;
- school newsletters;
- school website content;
- communication with parents/carers through approved school systems;
- educational visits;
- school events;

- safeguarding records;
- medical or behaviour records where appropriate.

Images and recordings must not be taken in areas where pupils have a heightened expectation of privacy, such as toilets, changing areas or similar spaces, unless there is an urgent safeguarding or health and safety reason and this has been agreed by the Headteacher or DSL.

Images and recordings must not be uploaded to personal cloud storage, personal email accounts, personal messaging apps, personal social media or personal devices.

Staff must check and follow the school's photo consent and opt-out arrangements before using images for newsletters, the website, social media, publicity or any other external communication.

18. School-owned image capture devices

The school will provide school-owned devices for staff to capture learning, school events and other agreed school activities.

The school's intended arrangement is to provide one school-owned tablet or similar device per class. Where this is not immediately possible, the school may use a phased approach, beginning with one device per phase.

School-owned image capture devices will be:

- clearly labelled by class or phase;
- kept in an agreed secure location when not in use;
- charged regularly and available for staff use;
- protected with a passcode;
- linked only to school-approved accounts;
- restricted to approved school apps and systems;
- used only for agreed school purposes;
- set up with a simple route for uploading images to the approved school storage area.

The purpose of this arrangement is to ensure staff can continue to capture learning, celebrate school life and record agreed school activities without using personal devices or creating unnecessary workload.

The school's preferred approach is that staff use school-owned tablets or similar devices rather than traditional digital cameras, as tablets are easier to use, allow images to be reviewed quickly, and support direct upload to approved school systems.

19. Approved storage and upload system

Images and recordings of pupils must be stored in the approved school system.

The school will maintain an agreed digital storage structure, for example:

- Staff Shared Area;
- Pupil Photos;
- relevant academic year;
- class or year group folders;
- trips and events folders;
- website/newsletter approved folders;
- safeguarding or confidential folders where appropriate.

Staff should upload images to the approved school system as soon as reasonably practicable. Images should not remain on school-owned devices for longer than necessary.

Once images have been uploaded and checked, they should be deleted from the device in line with the school's agreed routine.

Staff should not be expected to rename or individually catalogue every image unless there is a specific reason to do so. The system should be simple enough to avoid unnecessary workload.

20. Practical workflow for staff

The school will use a simple workflow so that staff can capture learning without relying on personal devices.

The preferred routine is:

1. Staff use the class or phase school-owned device.
2. Staff take photographs or videos only for agreed school purposes.
3. Staff upload images to the relevant school folder.
4. Staff place any images for newsletters, website or social media into an agreed approval folder.
5. Staff delete images from the device once they have been uploaded and are no longer needed on the device.
6. Office staff or SLT will check consent before images are used externally.

Where possible, staff should take photographs directly through the approved school app or upload them directly from the device to the approved folder.

The school will aim to keep the process simple, consistent and manageable so that staff are not required to use personal devices and workload is not increased unnecessarily.

21. Exceptional use of a personal device by staff

In exceptional circumstances, a personal device may be used only where:

- no school-owned device is available;
- the use is necessary and proportionate;
- there is an urgent safeguarding, medical, health and safety or off-site emergency reason;
- delay would create an additional risk.

Examples may include:

- a medical emergency;
- an urgent safeguarding concern;
- an off-site emergency during a visit;
- a situation where immediate evidence is needed to protect a child, member of staff or the school community.

Where a personal device has been used in exceptional circumstances, the member of staff must:

1. inform the Headteacher, DSL or senior leader as soon as possible;
2. transfer the image, video or recording to the approved school system at the earliest opportunity;
3. delete the image, video or recording from the personal device;
4. delete it from any recently deleted folder;
5. ensure that it has not been uploaded to personal cloud storage or shared through personal accounts.

This exception must not be used to justify routine use of personal devices.

22. Staff communication with parents and carers

Staff communication with parents and carers must take place through agreed school channels, in line with the Online Safety and Acceptable Use Policy and Code of Conduct.

Staff must not use personal phones, personal messaging apps, personal email accounts or personal social media accounts to communicate with parents/carers about school matters or to share photographs, videos or recordings of pupils.

Parents, Carers and Visitors

23. Parents and carers

Parents and carers are expected to support the school's phone-free approach.

Parents and carers must not contact pupils directly on personal devices during the school day. All urgent messages should go through the school office.

Parents and carers should not encourage pupils to bring smartphones or smart devices to school.

Where a pupil has a genuine travel or safety reason for bringing a basic phone to school, parents/carers must complete the school agreement and ensure their child understands the expectations.

24. Parent and visitor use of phones at school events

The school recognises that parents and carers may wish to take photographs or videos at school events.

The school will make clear at events whether photography or filming is permitted.

Where photography or filming is permitted, parents and carers must be considerate of others and must not share images or videos publicly, including on social media, if they include other children without appropriate permission.

The school may restrict or prohibit photography and filming at particular events where there is a safeguarding, privacy or operational reason.

Visitors, volunteers and contractors must not use mobile phones or smart devices in pupil areas unless this has been agreed by the school and is necessary for their role.

Any concerns about inappropriate use of mobile phones or smart devices by parents, carers or visitors should be reported to the Headteacher or DSL.

Safeguarding, Data Protection and Monitoring

25. Consent and use of pupil images

The school will maintain records of parent/carer preferences and restrictions regarding the use of pupil images.

Before using images externally, including newsletters, website, social media, publicity or press, staff must check the school's consent and opt-out arrangements.

Images used externally should be appropriate, respectful and in keeping with the school's values.

The school will avoid publishing unnecessary personal information alongside pupil images.

Images used for internal educational purposes, safeguarding, assessment or school records must still be handled securely and stored in approved systems.

26. Data protection

Photographs, videos and recordings of identifiable pupils are personal data.

The school will handle such data in line with its Data Protection Policy and privacy notices.

This includes ensuring that images and recordings are:

- taken only for legitimate school purposes;

- stored securely;
- accessed only by appropriate staff;
- shared only through approved systems;
- retained only for as long as necessary;
- deleted securely when no longer required.

Any suspected data breach involving pupil images or recordings must be reported immediately in line with the school's data protection procedures.

27. Online safety education

Pupils will be taught about safe, responsible and respectful use of technology through the curriculum and wider school life.

This may include learning about:

- online safety;
- respectful communication;
- bullying and online bullying;
- privacy and consent;
- image sharing;
- the risks of recording others;
- healthy technology habits;
- where to get help if something goes wrong online.

The school will help pupils understand why a phone-free school environment supports safety, wellbeing, focus and learning.

28. Roles and responsibilities

Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- ensuring this policy is implemented consistently;
- ensuring staff, pupils and parents/carers and other adults understand expectations;
- authorising exceptional arrangements;
- ensuring staff have a realistic alternative to personal device use;
- monitoring compliance;
- reporting significant issues to governors where appropriate.

Designated Safeguarding Lead

The DSL is responsible for:

- responding to safeguarding concerns linked to phones, devices, images or recordings;
- advising staff on safeguarding risks;
- ensuring concerns are recorded appropriately;
- seeking external advice where necessary.

Staff

Staff are responsible for:

- following this policy;
- modelling appropriate device use;

- not using personal devices for pupil images or recordings;
- using school-owned devices and systems appropriately;
- reporting concerns promptly.

Parents and carers

Parents and carers are responsible for:

- supporting the school's phone-free approach;
- ensuring pupils do not bring smartphones or smart devices to school;
- completing the agreement where a basic phone is needed;
- contacting the school office rather than contacting pupils directly during the school day.

Pupils

Pupils are responsible for:

- following school rules;
- not bringing prohibited devices to school;
- handing in agreed basic phones on arrival;
- using school technology responsibly.

Governors

Governors are responsible for:

- approving and reviewing the policy;
- monitoring the effectiveness of the policy through safeguarding, behaviour and leadership reporting;
- ensuring the school has considered practical implementation and staff workload.

29. Monitoring and review

The Headteacher will monitor the implementation of this policy.

The policy will be reviewed annually, or sooner if there are changes to statutory guidance, safeguarding expectations, technology, or local school circumstances.

Governors will monitor the effectiveness of the policy through safeguarding, behaviour and leadership reporting.

Appendix 1: Pupil and Parent/Carer Mobile Phone Agreement

Pupil agreement

I understand that St John's is a phone-free school site for pupils.

If I am allowed to bring a basic phone to school, I agree that:

1. I will only bring the phone if I have permission from my parent/carers and the school.
2. I will not bring a smartphone or smart device unless the school has agreed this as an exceptional arrangement.
3. I will switch my phone off before entering the school site.
4. I will hand my phone in as soon as I arrive.
5. I will not keep my phone in my pocket, bag, tray, locker, cloakroom or classroom.
6. I will not use my phone anywhere on the school site.
7. I will not take photographs, record videos or record sound.
8. I will not send or receive messages, calls or notifications.
9. I will not use the internet, apps, games, social media, Bluetooth or AirDrop.
10. I will collect my phone only at the agreed time at the end of the school day.
11. I understand that if I break these rules, my phone may be confiscated and my parent/carers will be contacted.
12. I understand that I may lose permission to bring a phone to school.

Pupil name: _____

Class: _____

Pupil signature: _____

Date: _____

Parent/carers agreement

I understand that St John's C of E Primary School is a phone-free school site for pupils.

I understand that my child may only bring a phone to school where there is a genuine travel, safety or exceptional reason agreed by the school.

I agree that:

1. My child will not bring a smartphone or smart device to school.
2. If my child needs a phone for travel or safety reasons, this will be a basic call-and-text phone only.
3. The phone will be switched off before my child enters the school site.
4. The phone will be handed in on arrival and collected at the end of the school day.
5. My child will not use the phone anywhere on the school site.
6. If I need to contact my child during the school day, I will contact the school office.
7. If my child needs to contact me, this will be arranged through the school office.
8. I understand that the school may confiscate a phone or device if this policy is not followed.
9. I understand that repeated or serious misuse may result in my child losing permission to bring a phone to school.
10. I understand that phones are brought to school at my child's and my own risk.

Parent/carers name: _____

Parent/carers signature: _____

Date: _____

Device information

Reason for bringing a phone to school:

Type of phone agreed:

- ☐ Basic call-and-text phone only
- ☐ Other device agreed as an exceptional arrangement

If other device, agreed reason and conditions:

Headteacher Authorisation: _____

Date: _____

Appendix 2: Staff Quick Guide

Staff must not:

- use personal phones to take pupil photographs;
- use personal phones to record pupils;
- store pupil images on personal devices;
- send pupil images through WhatsApp or personal messaging apps;
- upload pupil images to personal cloud storage;
- email pupil images from personal email accounts;
- contact parents/carers through personal devices or personal accounts;
- use personal phones in front of pupils unless there is an urgent or exceptional reason.

Staff should:

- use school-owned devices for pupil photos and videos;
- upload images to the approved school system;
- delete images from the school-owned device once uploaded and no longer needed;
- check photo consent before images are used externally;
- report safeguarding or data protection concerns immediately;
- model appropriate device use for pupils.

Appendix 3: Summary for Pupils

At St John's, we are a phone-free school.

This means:

- no smartphones;
- no smart watches;
- no internet-enabled devices;
- no tablets or gaming devices;
- no using phones on the school site.

If it is agreed that you need a phone for travelling to or from school, it must be a basic call-and-text phone.

You must:

- switch it off before you come onto the school site;
- hand it in straight away;
- not use it during the school day;
- collect it at the end of the day;
- keep it switched off until you have left the school site.

If you use a phone or device at school, it may be taken from you and your parent/carer will be contacted.