

Every Student Thriving



Mobile Phone and electronic devices procedure

Sept: 2024

Review: Sept 2026

Ready - Respectful - Responsible

Mobile Phone and Electronic Devices Procedure - SMG (April 24)

1. Guidance mobile phones in schools

- Consulted DFE '[Guidance for schools on prohibiting the use of mobile phones throughout the school day](#)' February 2024
- This policy meets the requirements of the Department for Education's non-statutory [mobile phone guidance](#) and [behaviour guidance](#)
- Further guidance that should be considered alongside this policy is [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#).

2. The aim of this procedure is

- To maintain school discipline and behaviour
- To reduce potential conflict situations
- To promote safe and responsible phone use
- To set clear guidance for pupils, staff parents/carers visitors and volunteers

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; risk of theft, loss, or damage

Note: throughout this procedure, '**mobile phones**' refers to **mobile phones and similar devices**. This procedure applies to all electronic devices not explicitly permitted that may contravene the aims of the procedure as set out above, definition is at the discretion of the headteacher and does include (air pods and headphones)

- **Smart watches can be worn during the school day but the camera, messaging and call services must be disabled. They will be confiscated if their use contravenes the aims of the procedure as listed above.**

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The School Day

We have not implemented an outright ban of mobile phones or electronic devices (such as tablet computers, kindles and so on). We are aware that students have phones for emergency reasons but have preferred a "**No use, No See, No Hear**" approach. It is required that mobile phones/electronic devices are switched off whilst at school including during lessons, in the time between lessons, at break-times and at lunch-times This is a **gate to gate** policy from arriving on school premises until leaving school premises. **Mobile phones are not required to support teaching and learning**. Any Mobile phone use must be occasional and for specific circumstances that are sanctioned explicitly by a member of staff.

3.2 Sanctions

John Colet School chooses to adopt a policy where pupils keep possession of their mobile phones only on the strict condition that they are **never used, seen or heard**. The consequences for breaching this are sufficient to act as an effective deterrent for the benefit of the individual and community. It is important that the school enforces this policy vigorously, consistently and visibly, to the effect that mobile phone use is prohibited throughout the school day. It is also important that parents and carers work with us to support our aims over the use of mobile phones. Mobile phones should be switched off and unseen in the school bag; otherwise confiscation will be an immediate consequence. (Schools are permitted to confiscate phones from pupils under [sections 91](#) and [94](#) of the Education and Inspections Act 2006). If they are confiscated, parents/carers can collect them after school from the school office. (Headteachers can confiscate mobile phones and similar devices for the length of time they deem proportionate, according to the [DfE's guidance on mobile phones in schools](#))

Staff have the power to search pupils' phones in specific circumstances, as set out in the [DfE's guidance on searching, screening and confiscation](#). The DfE guidance allows the school to search a pupil's phone if there is a good reason to do so (such as having reason to believe the phone contains pornographic images, or if it is being/has been used to commit an offence or cause harm to another person).

Certain types of conduct, bullying or harassment can be classified as criminal conduct. The school takes such conduct extremely seriously and may 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

If a mobile phone/electronic device is used, seen or heard in school (including break and lunchtime) then the item will be confiscated and put in a secure place in the school office until a parent/carer is able to come in to collect it. Staff will not be able to look after mobile phones/electronic devices. Persistent breaches will lead to further consequences in line with school policy.

4. Sixth Form

Pupils in the Sixth Form are permitted access to their mobile phone **only when they are in the Sixth Form Study Centre** and it is only to be used then in ways which support the students' learning.

This reflects this period of education as one of increased independence and responsibility, without compromising the school's policy on the use of mobile phones for other pupils. Sixth Form Students are permitted to use their mobile phones in the Sixth Form courtyard area during break and lunchtimes, but nowhere else around the school. The use of mobile phones by Sixth Form pupils in front of younger pupils is prohibited.

Any confiscated Sixth Form mobile phone will be kept in the Sixth Form Office and returned to the student at the end of the school day by the Assistant to the Head of Sixth Form.

Mobile phones/electronic devices (other than calculators) must never be taken into public examinations. The school will provide secure storage for these items during the examination.

If there is a whole school emergency which may cause the school to close then students will be allowed (with permission) to use their mobile phones to contact a parent/carer and to rearrange transport.

5. School Trips

Our aim is to ensure the educational experience on a school trip is not disrupted by the presence of mobile phones and therefore their use will be restricted. Students are able to take mobile phones to help with communication if travel arrangements are changed at short notice. Permission to use phones for certain specific reasons is **at the discretion of the trip leader**, for example use at certain times to take photographs where appropriate, or use of apps and QR codes at places of interest where this supports learning. The default position is as in school, No use; No see; No hear. On residential trips the trip leader may designate periods of 'free time' where the phone can be used, this is at the discretion of the trip leader.

For residential visits, parents/carers will be given the school mobile phone number which the group leader will have and any contact with the trip should be through this number. Other electronic devices must not be taken on school trips unless permission is given by the trip leader. Parents/carers/students must be aware that it is highly unlikely that secure storage for such devices will be available at any centre/hotel/hostel and that staff will not be able to look after them. As they would not be stored securely they would not be covered by the trip insurance and so are taken completely at the student's own risk.

6. Safeguarding students

General Mobile phones/electronic devices have many positive uses. However, they can also be abused, for example, the unsuitable use of a mobile phone or other electronic device would include:

- taking photographs or making recordings (other than where authorised by a teacher for academic purposes)
- Sending sexually explicit photographs, videos or messages to another person (sexting)
- placing photographs or recordings on the internet (e.g. on social networking sites), or circulating them without the permission of those in the photograph
- any activity connected with text / cyber-bullying
- gaining access to inappropriate internet sites. These are not acceptable at John Colet. If a member of the staff of the school has any suspicion that a mobile phone/electronic device has unsuitable material stored on it (this does not cover illegal material), students will be required to hand over the phone to a member of staff and the content looked at (only in the United Kingdom and not on overseas trips as covered by the Education Act 2010). In such instances the student concerned will be dealt with accordingly. In some cases, the Police may become involved. Where the material on a mobile phone/electronic device may be illegal then the device will be confiscated, the contents will not be looked at by staff with the Police contacted. The device will remain confiscated until Police advice is given to the school. Parents/carers need to be aware that mobile phones/electronic devices are not covered by school or school trip insurance. Any item brought into school is at the student's own risk
- In line with Keeping Children Safe in Education (2023) all forms of abuse can manifest on digital devices

7. Communication

The school will ensure that all staff, pupils and parents are familiar with the procedure and how it is implemented. Schools should publish details of the school's procedure on prohibiting the use of mobile phones on the school website.

All pupils should be reminded of the procedure, and the consequences and sanctions for not following it, at the start of each school year and again, where appropriate, at regular intervals.

Pupils will be taught the risks that are associated with the use of mobile phones, both in school and more broadly, to ensure they understand the decision being taken by their school to prohibit the use of mobile phones throughout the school day. These risks can include a loss of focus in lessons, classroom disruption and an increase in bullying. Pupils will also be taught the benefits of having a mobile phone-free environment and be encouraged to see such an environment as desirable and valuable.

8. The role of parents/carer

On a number of occasions in lessons when a mobile phone has gone off, the caller has been a parent/carer contacting their child. **If a parent/carer needs to contact their child then they must phone the school office.** The message will then be passed on to the child. If a student needs to phone home, then they can go to the school office to seek to use their phone in the office supervised by a member of staff. Permission will be granted at the school's discretion.

There have been circumstances where a student, following an incident, has contacted a parent/carer during the school day using their mobile phone. The parent/carer has then come straight into school demanding to see a member of staff. Very often, the school has not been aware of any issue at this point or has been in the process of investigating it prior to contacting the parent/carer. We wish to work in partnership with parents, but a parent/carer coming into school and demanding to see someone straightaway is not acceptable. Any parent/carer who comes into school during the school day following mobile phone contact with their child will be asked to leave the premises and to phone the school to make an appointment. In line with the school's behaviour policy the student's mobile phone may also be confiscated as it has been used during the school day and other sanctions applied as appropriate.

Parents have an important role in supporting the school's policy on prohibiting the use of mobile phones and are encouraged to reinforce and discuss the procedure at home as appropriate, including the risks associated with mobile phone use and the benefits of a mobile phone-free environment. We ask parents to support the schools aim by cooperating with picking up mobile phones if they are confiscated.

9. Reasonable adjustments

There may be other exceptional circumstances where the school will consider making adaptations to the procedure for specific pupils. This guidance does not provide an exhaustive list of exceptional circumstances, The School recognises that it has a duty under the Equality Act 2010 to take such steps as is reasonable to avoid substantial disadvantage to a disabled pupil caused by the school's policies or practices. For example, allowing a disabled pupil access to their mobile phone during the school day, where it is necessary due to the nature of their disability, may be considered a reasonable adjustment.