

Mobile Phone Policy

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Note	This policy must not be amended without prior approval of the Education Director		

Table of Contents

Section

- 1 **Supporting Documents**
- 2 **Introduction**
- 3 **Aim & Scope**
- 4 **Abbreviations/Definitions**
- 5 **Policy Content**
- 6 **Responsibilities**
- 7 **Training Requirements**
- 8 **Equality Impact Statement**
- 9 **Sources of Information / References**
- 10 **Version Control (where else is this policy located, ie. Circle, Nourish, Radar)**
- 11 **Appendices**

1. Supporting Documents

This policy should be read alongside our:

- Behaviour Policy (EDU.POL.027)
- Safeguarding Children in Education Policy (EDE.POL.002)
- Online Safety Policy (EDU.POL.009)
- Anti-Bullying Policy (EDU.POL.007)
- Searching, Screening and Confiscation Policy (EDU.POL.035)
- SEND Policy (EDU.POL.022)
- Medical Conditions and Medication Policy (EDU.POL.030) and Allergy Safety Policy (EDU.POL.044)
- Staff Code of Conduct (EDU.POL.039)

Related policies are held within RADAR in the School's policy folder.

2. Introduction

Keys

New Ways School is a special school, and many of our pupils have experienced trauma, educational disruption or exclusion from previous settings. While we know that phones and personal devices can be a source of distraction, anxiety and conflict, and that for some of our pupils they are also a lifeline to home. This policy sets out how we keep the school day calm, focused and safe while treating every pupil as an individual.

3. Aim & Scope

This policy applies to all pupils at New Ways School, and to all staff, parents and carers, and visitors. It covers the whole school day, including lessons, the time between lessons, breaktimes and lunchtime, and it covers school activities, educational visits and the journey to and from school where relevant. It aims to:

- keep the school day free from the distraction, disruption and conflict that mobile phones can cause, so that every pupil can learn and feel settled
- protect pupils from the online harms that can reach them through a phone, including bullying, harmful content and the sharing of images
- set a single, clear and consistent expectation that pupils, staff and families all understand
- make fair and lawful adjustments for pupils who need access to a device because of a disability, a medical condition or their individual circumstances
- meet our duties under the Independent School Standards and current statutory guidance, and follow the Department for Education mobile phones guidance as best practice.

4. Abbreviations and Definitions

This policy uses the following terms:

- Mobile phone: any mobile telephone belonging to or used by a pupil.
- Personal device: any other personal communication or smart technology with similar functions to a phone, for example a smartwatch, tablet or device that can send or receive messages or notifications, or record audio or video.
- School day: the time between the start of the first school session and the end of the last session on the same day.
- Mobile-phone-free by default: pupils do not have access to or use a phone or personal device at any point in the school day, unless an agreed adjustment is in place.
- Reasonable adjustment: a change we make to avoid putting a disabled pupil at a substantial disadvantage, as required by the Equality Act 2010.

5. Policy Content

5.1 Principles and Approach

At New Ways School we are a mobile-phone-free school by default. Pupils do not use mobile phones or personal devices during the school day. We hold this line firmly and fairly, and we make reasonable adjustments where a pupil genuinely needs access to a device for a medical, safeguarding or special educational need.

Keys

Our approach is grounded in Keys Connect, our relational and trauma-informed model. We explain the reasons for the policy to all our pupils and their families, and we teach pupils why a phone-free environment helps them, working with families so that the policy is supported at home.

At New Ways School the starting point for every pupil is that phones and personal electronic devices are not used during the school day. We make adjustments based on pupil need and not exceptions of convenience or habit. Where a pupil needs a device for a medical, safeguarding or special educational need then we agree a clear, individual arrangement and record it with regular reviews.

We explain, we do not just enforce. Pupils and families understand why the policy exists and how it helps. We are calm and consistent. Every member of staff applies the policy in the same way, and a phone is never a reason for a confrontation that could be avoided. Safety comes first. Pupils can contact home using the school phone, and we would not prevent pupils from contacting families where this is an important needs or concern.

In addition, this policy does not replace any safeguarding policy around use of mobile technology - any concern that a phone is being used to harm a pupil, or that a child is using a phone to put themselves at risk is treated as a safeguarding matter.

5.2 Mobile Phones in Practice

Our mobile-phone-free position

At New Ways School pupils do not use mobile phones or personal devices at any point during the school day, this includes during lessons, transitions between lessons, or during break and lunchtimes. This applies to phones and to any other smart technology with similar functions, for example smartwatches and devices that send or receive messages or record audio or video. Devices that the school provides for learning are not covered by this policy and are used under our Online Safety and acceptable use arrangements.

How phones are stored during the day

Pupils may bring a phone to school so that they are safe on the journey to and from school. On arrival, phones and personal devices are handed in to staff or stored securely in accordance with the school's local arrangements, and they are returned at the end of the day. The way we do this at New Ways School is set out in the appendices of this policy.

Staff use of mobile phones

Staff do not use their own mobile phones for personal reasons in front of pupils during the school day. There may be occasions when it is appropriate for a member

Keys

of staff to use a device for a professional purpose, for example to support a lesson, record a reward or use secure log-in. Where the school provides early years provision, staff use of personal phones and cameras is also governed by the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) statutory framework and all Keys schools are also bound by Keys Safeguarding Children in Education Policy (EDE.POL.002) and Staff Code of Conduct (EDU.POL.039).

Smart glasses and emerging wearable technologies will be treated in the same way as mobile phones where they can record, communicate or access the internet.

Adaptations and reasonable adjustments

At New Ways School we treat every pupil as an individual. We will allow a pupil access to a device during the school day where this is a reasonable adjustment for a disability, where it is needed to manage a medical condition, for example continuous glucose monitoring for a pupil with diabetes, or where the pupil's individual circumstances, such as being a young carer, mean access is genuinely needed. Many of our pupils have special educational needs, and we consider each case on its own merits.

An agreed adjustment does not mean a pupil is exempt from all restrictions. We set out when, where and how the device may be used, we record the arrangement in the pupil's plan and in Appendix B, and we review it. Any adjustment is agreed with the pupil and family and with the Designated Safeguarding Lead where there is a safeguarding dimension.

Site-specific exceptions

- If a pupil is collected late from school, they can access their mobile in Reception area only, and only if risk assessed as safe to do so. The mobile may not be taken anywhere beyond this area and the pupil will remain under supervision of staff members.
- If a pupil has high anxiety around leaving their phone and it impacts attendance, another agreed locked space can be used in the proximity of their base room, however this has to be risk assessed and agreed with SLT and home in a written agreement which will be monitored regularly and any breaches may impact the ongoing use of this arrangement.
- A student may have differing arrangements, if risk assessed to do so, if they are post-16 and attend a session with other post-16 pupils. This will be decided on an individual basis and risk assessed accordingly in partnership with parents/carers. Any inappropriate use may impact the ongoing use of this agreement.

Searching, screening and confiscation

Phones and personal devices are identified in this policy as items that may be searched for. Staff authorised by the headteacher may search a pupil or their

Keys

possessions where they have reasonable grounds to suspect the pupil has a phone or device in breach of this policy, or any prohibited item, following the Department for Education guidance on searching, screening and confiscation. Reasonable force may be used to search only for a prohibited item such as a weapon, alcohol, illegal drugs or a stolen item, never for an item identified only in the school rules. Where a search or a phone raises a safeguarding concern, the Designated Safeguarding Lead is informed without delay. Detailed search procedures are set out in our Searching, Screening and Confiscation Policy (EDU.POL.035).

Sanctions for breaching the policy

Where a pupil breaches this policy, we respond proportionately and in line with our Behaviour Policy (EDU.POL.027). A member of staff may confiscate a phone or device as a sanction and hold it securely for a reasonable period. In deciding what is proportionate we consider the pupil's age and special educational needs and any individual circumstances. We always consider whether a breach suggests a pupil may be at risk of harm, and if so we follow our child protection procedures.

Online safety and misuse

Misuse of a phone or device, including bullying, sharing or creating sexual or intimate images, including images made or altered using artificial intelligence, or accessing harmful content, is treated seriously and dealt with under this policy together with our Safeguarding Children in Education and Online Safety policies (EDU.POL.009). Our filtering and monitoring systems are kept in place and reviewed regularly to help protect pupils from harmful or inappropriate content.

Communicating the policy and contacting pupils

We explain this policy and the reasons for it to pupils at the start of each year and at regular points, and to families when a pupil joins and whenever the policy changes. The policy is published so that pupils and parents can read it. Where a parent or carer needs to contact their child during the day, they should call the school office, and we will pass on the message or arrange contact.

Mobile phones outside the school day and on visits

On educational visits and activities outside the normal school day, we decide in advance how phones are managed so that the pupils' experience is not disrupted, and we make sure pupils can raise a concern or contact staff where they need to. Arrangements for any residential provision are set out separately.

5.3 Recording, Monitoring and Reporting

Confiscations and significant incidents involving phones or devices are recorded on Arbor. Any safeguarding concern arising from a phone is recorded and managed through CPOMS and reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead. Leaders monitor the impact of this policy, including any patterns affecting pupils with SEND

or other vulnerable pupils, and report to the Proprietor and Governors on a regular cycle. Filtering and monitoring are reviewed at least once each academic year.

5.4 Equality and Inclusion

At New Ways School this policy is applied fairly and without discrimination, in line with the Equality Act 2010. Many of our pupils have special educational needs or disabilities, and we make reasonable adjustments so that the policy is fair for every pupil. We monitor the impact of this policy on pupils with protected characteristics and adapt our practice to remove disadvantage. Any concern that this policy disadvantages a pupil or group should be raised with the headteacher.

6. Responsibilities

6.1 Pupils

Hand in or store their phone or personal device as the school requires, and not use it during the school day. Tell a trusted adult, rather than use their phone, if something online is worrying them.

6.2 Staff

Apply the policy calmly and consistently, and model it by not using their own phone for personal reasons in front of pupils during the school day. Follow the agreed individual arrangement for any pupil who has one, and pass any safeguarding concern to the Designated Safeguarding Lead without delay.

6.3 Leadership

Set and uphold the phone-free culture, decide how phones are stored, and make sure staff are clear on their responsibilities. Agree and review individual adjustments, and make sure the policy is published and communicated to families.

6.4 Governance

Hold leaders to account for the policy and its impact, and make sure appropriate filtering and monitoring are in place and regularly reviewed.

6.5 Parents and carers

Support and reinforce the policy at home, and contact their child during the day through the school office rather than directly on a phone.

6.6 Named leads

The Executive Headteacher is Louise Reeks. The Headteacher is Sarah Gould. The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) is Louise Reeks, supported by Vicky Jones at the Corbett House site and Violet Watson at the New Ways School site. All safeguarding concerns must be reported without delay in line with the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

7. Training Requirements

Keys

All staff are briefed on this policy at induction and at the start of each year, so that they apply it calmly and consistently. Staff receive training in online safety and in supporting pupils to stay safe online, in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education. Staff are supported to challenge breaches without escalation, in line with our Keys Connect and de-escalation training.

8. Equality Impact Statement

All policies will be developed and implemented in a manner that promotes equality, diversity, and inclusion, ensuring fair and equitable treatment for all individuals. Policies must align with relevant equality legislation and reflect the expectations and standards set by our regulatory bodies. They will demonstrate a commitment to eliminating discrimination, advancing equality of opportunity, and fostering an inclusive environment that respects and values the diverse needs, backgrounds, and experiences of those we support, as well as our workforce.

9. Sources of Information / References

This policy reflects current legislation and statutory guidance, including:

- The Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act 2026, section 36, which places a duty to have regard to the Department for Education guidance on pupils having and using mobile phones during school hours and on school premises. This statutory have-regard duty applies to state-funded schools, so as an independent school we are not bound by it and we follow the guidance as best practice
- The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, Part 3, Standard 9 (a written behaviour policy that is implemented effectively)
- The Independent School Standards: Guidance for independent schools, Department for Education, April 2026 (Standard 9, paragraphs 3.21 to 3.23 on mobile phones)
- Mobile phones in schools, Department for Education, updated 19 January 2026 (the guidance we follow as best practice)
- Behaviour in Schools: advice for headteachers and school staff, Department for Education, February 2024
- Searching, Screening and Confiscation: advice for schools, Department for Education, July 2022, with section 550ZA of the Education Act 1996 and The Schools (Specification and Disposal of Articles) Regulations 2012
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025, and Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 from 1 September 2026
- The Equality Act 2010 (the duty to make reasonable adjustments for disabled pupils)
- The Children and Families Act 2014, section 100 (supporting pupils with medical conditions)
- The Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework, paragraph 3.6, where the school has early years provision (staff use of mobile phones and cameras)

10. Version Control

Keys

This policy is held centrally in Radar and will be amended as required. All schools will ensure they are using the most up-to-date version and will amend any locally held copies accordingly.

This policy is reviewed annually, or sooner if legislation or statutory guidance changes. The next review date and version history are recorded in the control table above. The named owner for review at New Ways School is the headteacher.

11. Appendices

At New Ways School and Corbett House the following local arrangements apply:

How phones and devices are stored during the day:

Mobiles handed in at Reception into a named pouch and placed into a secondary pouch which is secured in a locked cupboard.

Where and to whom phones are handed in and collected:

Staff on arrival at reception, at end of the day when transport arrives

How parents contact a pupil during the day:

Via main Reception

Any arrangement for older or sixth-form pupils, if the school has them:

A student may have differing arrangements, if risk assessed to do so, if they attend the sixth form. This will be decided on an individual basis and risk assessed accordingly.

Local online safety and pastoral contacts:

DSL support - Vicky Jones (Corbett House) and Violet Watson (School site)

Vicky.Jones@keyseducation.ac.uk and Violet.Watson@keyseducation.ac.uk

Pastoral support - Mary Hood (Corbett House site) and Anna Pickering (School site)

Anna.pickering@keyseducation.ac.uk and Mary.Hood@keyseducation.ac.uk

11.2 Appendix B: Individual Mobile Phone Adjustment Record

This record sets out an agreed adjustment for a pupil who needs access to a device during the school day. It is completed with the pupil and family, agreed by the headteacher, and reviewed regularly. Complete one record for each pupil.

Section	Details
Pupil name	
Year and class	
Reason for the adjustment	Disability, medical condition, young carer or other individual circumstance
What is agreed	The device, and when, where and how it may be used
Conditions and limits	What the pupil must not do, and what counts as a breach
Safeguarding considerations	Any safeguarding points and DSL involvement
Agreed by	Pupil, parent or carer, and headteacher
Date agreed	
Review date	