



Mobile Phone Policy

Policy Written	August 2026
Agreed by Governors and Staff	September 2026
Review Date	August 2028 (or earlier if DfE guidance changes)

1.Introduction and Aims

Neston Primary school recognises that mobile phones, including smart phones, are an important part of everyday life for our pupils, parents and staff, as well as the wider school community. From January 2026, the Department for Education expects all schools to be mobile-phone-free environments by default throughout the entire school day, including lessons, transitions, breaktimes, and lunchtimes. Our policy below sets out how we adhere to this guidance.

Our policy aims to:

Promote, and set an example for safe and responsible phone use.

Set clear guidelines for the use of mobile phones for pupils, staff, parents and volunteers.

Support the school's other policies, especially those related to child protection and behaviour.

Reduce risks linked to online harm, bullying, inappropriate content and mental health concerns.

This policy also aims to address some of the challenges posed by mobile phones in school settings:

Risks to child protection.

Data protection issues.

Potential for lesson disruption.

Risk of theft, loss, or damage.

Appropriate and safe use of technology in the classroom.

2. Roles and responsibilities

2.1 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 Schools, 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 2 years, reviewing it, and holding staff and pupils accountable for its implementation.

3. Use of mobile phones by staff and governors

3.1 Personal mobile phones (including Smart Watches)

To align with the DfE expectation of a phone-free environment, staff must not use their personal mobile phones:

- During contact time
- In areas where pupils are present
- In any way that interrupts learning

Use is restricted to non-contact time, in staff-only areas. Where exceptional circumstances require temporary access (e.g., medical call-back), the headteacher may approve this on a case-by-case basis.

3.2 Data protection

Staff must not use their personal mobile phones to process personal data, or any other confidential school information. More detailed guidance can be found in the Schools' Data Protection and ICT Acceptable Use Policy. All photos or recordings must be taken using school devices only, and never on personal phones.

3.3 Safeguarding

Staff must refrain from giving their personal contact details to parents 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 or pupils as detailed in the Schools' Social Media Policy, ICT Acceptable Use, and E-Safety Policy.

Staff must not use their mobile phones to take photographs or recordings of pupils, their work, or anything else which could identify a pupil. If it's necessary to take photos or recordings as part of a lesson/trip/activity, this must be done using the schools' resources eg: iPad.

In exceptional circumstances, teachers may capture photos of children at offsite activities, but these photos must be uploaded to Facebook for other communication forms immediately; this can only take place if another member of staff is there to witness the correct deletion of photographs from the handset after they have been sent. If staff are concerned that the deletion procedure is not being followed, it should be reported to the Headteacher.

3.4 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 aren't limited to: emergency evacuations, supervising off-site trips supervising residential visits. Staff may use personal mobile phones when supervising residential visits or school trips, in case of emergencies.

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 which could identify a pupil.

Refrain from using their phones to contact parents. If necessary, contact must be made via the school office.

3.5 Work phones

Only authorised staff are permitted to use school phones, and access to the phone must not be provided to anyone without authorisation.

Staff must:

Ensure that communication or conduct linked to the device is appropriate and professional at all times, in line with our staff code of conduct.

3.6 Sanctions

Staff that fail to adhere to this policy may face disciplinary action. See the Schools' Staff Disciplinary Policy for more information.

4. Use of mobile phones by pupils

4.1 DfE expectation

The 2026 DfE guidance states: "All schools should be mobile-phone-free environments by default; anything other than this should be by exception only."

Exceptions may be made for:

If pupils are travelling to and from the schools by themselves.

Pupils are young carers who need to be contactable.

Pupils are attending a different family home after school than before the school day began.

Medical needs or disability adjustments (Equality Act 2010 considerations).

Where exceptions apply, phones must be switched off on arrival, handed to staff, and stored securely in the classroom cupboard until the end of the day. Phones must not be carried by pupils during the school day under any circumstances unless explicitly required for a SEND/medical exception.

4.2 Sanctions

If a pupil is in breach of this policy: The phone will be confiscated. (Schools are permitted to confiscate phones from pupils under sections 91 and 94 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006.) If they are confiscated, the Headteacher will collect the phone and inform the parent that it needs to be collected from the school office at home time. The schools behaviour policy sanctions will be applied.

Staff have the power to search pupils' phones, as set out in the DfE's guidance on searching, screening and confiscation. The DfE guidance allows school to search a pupil's phone if you have reason to believe the phone contains pornographic images, or if it is being/has been used to commit an offence or cause personal injury. If inappropriate content is found on the phone which is a serious cause for concern in regard to the pupil's conduct, bullying, child-on-child abuse, it can be classified as criminal conduct. Neston Primary School takes such conduct extremely seriously and will involve the police or other agencies as appropriate. Such conduct includes, but is not limited to:

Sexting, 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.

5. Use of mobile phones by parents, volunteers and visitors

To maintain a phone-free environment:

- Phones must not be used in classrooms, corridors or areas where pupils are present.

- Photos or recordings of pupils are not permitted unless at a public event, and even then must not be shared online without consent.
- Volunteers and trip supervisors must not contact parents directly or take photos of pupils. The school will provide visitors with a summary of these rules on arrival.

6. Loss, theft or damage

Pupils bringing phones into the schools must ensure that phones are stored securely in the classroom cupboard. Pupils must secure their 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 schools accept no responsibility for mobile phones that are lost, damaged or stolen on the schools' premises or transport, during school visits or trips, or while pupils are travelling to and from either of the schools.

A copy of the schools' policy and disclaimer is made available to new parents and pupils. If either of the schools confiscate a phone from a pupil, they will be stored in the Headteacher's office in a secure location. Neston Primary School is committed to ensuring that this policy has a positive impact on pupils' education, behaviour and welfare.

When reviewing the policy, the school will take into account:

Feedback from parents and pupils.

Feedback from teachers.

Records of behaviour and safeguarding incidents.

Relevant advice from the Department for Education, the local authority or other relevant organisations.

Notice to be shared with all visitors in entrance

Use of mobile phones at Neston Primary School

Please keep your mobile phone on silent/vibrate while on the school grounds.

Please do not use phones where pupils are present. If you must use your phone, you may go to the school office entrance or offsite.

Do not take photos or recordings of pupils (unless it is your own child), or staff. Do not use your phone in lessons, or when working with pupils.

Neston Primary 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 policy is available from the school office