

Thames View Junior School

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Mobile Phone Policy

Updated by C. Woodington



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Approved by:	Sandy Sanghera	Date: September 2026
Last reviewed on:	September 2026	
Next review due by:	September 2027	

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1. Introduction and aims

At Thames View Junior our policy aims to:

- Ensure our environment is mobile phone-free by default
- Ensure the safe, responsible and lawful use of mobile phones, where applicable
- Provide clear guidelines for the use of mobile phones for pupils, staff, parents/carers, visitors and volunteers
- Support the school's other policies including
 - Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
 - Behaviour Policy
 - Staff code of conduct
 - Data Protection Policy
 - Cyber Security and Data Security Policy

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
- Appropriate use of technology for learning purposes

Note: throughout this policy, 'mobile phones' refers to mobile phones and similar devices.

2. Relevant guidance

This policy meets the requirements of section 36 of the [Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act 2026](#), and the Department for Education (DfE)'s [mobile phone guidance](#) and [behaviour guidance](#). Further guidance that should be considered alongside this policy includes [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#), which sets out the expectation that all schools should be mobile phone-free environments by default.

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 Staff

All staff (including teachers, support staff and supply staff) are required to actively enforce this policy and challenge any breach of mobile phone restrictions immediately and consistently.

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

Staff will address any questions or concerns from parents/carers quickly, and clearly communicate the reasons for prohibiting the use of mobile phones.

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 during the school day, while pupils 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's 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 02045119240 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).

4.3 Safeguarding

Staff must not give their personal contact details to parents/carers or pupils, including by connecting through social media and messaging apps.

Further guidance on the use of personal data, confidential school information and digital devices can be found in the School Data Protection Policy, Cyber Security and Data Security Policy and Workforce privacy notice, available on the schools SharePoint.

Staff must avoid publicising their contact details on any social media platform or website, to avoid unwanted contact by parents/carers or pupils.

This requirement should be read alongside the school's Online Safety Policy, Acceptable Use Policy and Staff Code of Conduct, which provide further guidance on professional communication, social media and contact with pupils and parents/carers.

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 or a similar device during the school day in front of pupils 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 a school device.

4.5 Sanctions

Staff that fail to adhere to this policy may face disciplinary action.

See the school's staff disciplinary policy for more information.

5. Use of mobile phones by pupils

Pupils must not use their mobile phones during the school day, including during lessons, in the time between lessons, at breaktimes and at lunchtimes, unless explicitly authorised by a member of staff (for example, for a specific medical reason).

On arrival at the school gate, all pupils who bring a mobile phone onto the school premises must put their phone directly in the phone box. Phones must be **clearly labelled with the pupil's name and switched off** before being handed in. Phones will be placed in a secure, designated storage box which will be monitored and stored by Miss Woodington, **Deputy Headteacher and Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)**, throughout the school day. The storage box will be kept securely and will not be accessible to pupils during the school day. At the end of the school day, the storage box will be taken to the school exit, where pupils may collect their labelled phone as they leave the school premises. Pupils are responsible for ensuring that their phone is clearly labelled and switched off when handed in.

Pupils will be taught the risks that are associated with the use of mobile phones, both in school and more broadly, to make sure they understand the decision 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 be encouraged to see a mobile-phone free environment as desirable and valuable.

5.1 Use of smartwatches by pupils

The DfE's statutory [mobile phones guidance](#) includes in the term 'mobile phones' all devices with communications and smart technology that the school chooses to include in its 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 smartwatches have wellness and health-related features.

Smart watches are not permitted to be worn by pupils at any time on the school premises. This is a non-negotiable school rule.

Pupils must not wear or use smart watches that have communication, internet, messaging, camera, recording, gaming or other smart functionality.

Only a basic watch with no smart or communication functionality may be worn in school.

5.2 Sanctions

The school operates a non-negotiable policy regarding mobile phones and smart watches.

If a pupil is found to be in possession of, using or wearing a mobile phone or smart watch during the school day, the device will be confiscated immediately by a member of staff.

Confiscated mobile phones and smart watches will be placed securely in Miss Woodington's designated storage cupboard for the remainder of the school day.

The device will not be returned to the pupil. It must be collected by a parent or carer from the school at the end of the school day.

Any refusal to hand over a device when instructed by a member of staff will be treated as a failure to follow a reasonable instruction and will be addressed in accordance with the school's Behaviour Policy.

Repeated breaches of this policy will be managed in accordance with the school's Behaviour Policy and may result in further appropriate sanctions.

Where a mobile phone or smart watch is suspected to contain inappropriate or harmful content, or has been used to cause harm to another pupil, the matter will be referred to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and dealt with in accordance with the school's safeguarding procedures and relevant Department for Education guidance.

All sanctions will be reasonable and proportionate, and the school will consider any relevant individual circumstances, including special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), disability or formally agreed exceptional circumstances.

In accordance with Department for Education guidance on *Searching, Screening and Confiscation*, mobile phones, smart watches and other prohibited smart devices are identified as items that may be searched for under the school's behaviour rules.

The Headteacher, or a member of staff authorised by the Headteacher, may search a pupil or their possessions where there are reasonable grounds to suspect that the pupil is in possession of a mobile phone, smart watch or other prohibited device.

Searches will be carried out in accordance with the Department for Education's *Searching, Screening and Confiscation* guidance and the school's Behaviour Policy. Staff will use their statutory searching powers appropriately, reasonably and proportionately.

Where a search identifies a mobile phone, smart watch or other prohibited device, the item will be confiscated and placed securely in Miss Woodington's designated storage cupboard. The device will be returned only to a parent or carer at the end of the school day.

Where a search identifies inappropriate, harmful or potentially illegal content, the device will be secured and the matter referred to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), who will determine the appropriate safeguarding response. Staff will follow the school's safeguarding procedures and relevant Department for Education guidance.

Parents/carers will be informed where a search has been undertaken in accordance with the school's procedures, particularly where a prohibited device or concerning material has been identified.

Searches will be conducted respectfully and in accordance with the legal requirements governing searches of pupils. The school will consider any relevant individual circumstances, including age, SEND, disability and any reasonable adjustments that may be required.

6. Use of mobile phones by parents/carers, volunteers and visitors

Parents and carers are encouraged to reinforce and discuss this policy at home as appropriate, including the risks associated with mobile phone use and the benefits of a mobile phone-free environment.

Parents/carers, visitors and volunteers (including governors and contractors) must adhere to this policy as it relates to staff if they are on the school site during the school day.

This means:

- Not taking pictures or recordings of pupils, unless it's at a public event (such as a school fair), or of their own child
- Using any photographs or recordings for personal use only, and not posting on social media without consent
- Not using phones in lessons, when working with pupils or while children are present

Parents/carers, visitors and volunteers will be informed of the rules for mobile phone use when they sign in at reception or attend a public event at school.

Parents/carers or volunteers supervising school trips or residential visits must not:

- Use their phone to make contact with other parents/carers
- Take photos or recordings of pupils, their work, or anything else that could identify a pupil

Parents/carers or volunteers supervising trips are also responsible for enforcing the school's policy for pupils using their phones, but must refer any proposed sanctions to a member of staff, as they do not have the power to search or confiscate devices.

Parents/carers must use the school office as the first point of contact if they need to get in touch with their child during the school day. They must not try to contact their child on their personal mobile during the school day.

7. Loss, theft or damage

Pupils bringing mobile phones to school must make sure that their phones are appropriately labelled, ready to be stored away securely in Miss Woodington's box when not in use during the school day.

Pupils must secure their mobile 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 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 or from school.

Lost phones should be returned to Miss Woodington's office.

The school will then attempt to contact the owner.

8. Monitoring and review

The school is committed to making sure 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/carers and pupils
- Feedback from staff
- Records of behaviour and safeguarding incidents
- Relevant advice from the DfE, the local authority and any other relevant organisations

9. Appendix 1: Template mobile phone information slip for visitors

Use of mobile phones and similar devices in our school

Our school is a mobile phone-free environment.

- Please keep your mobile phone on silent/vibrate while on the school grounds
- Please do not use phones where pupils are present.
- Do not take photos or recordings of pupils or staff
- Do not use your phone in lessons, when working with pupils or while children are present

The 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.

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