Holmer Green Junior School

We inspire, we enable, we achieve. Together.

HOLMER GREEN JUNIOR SCHOOL

SMARTPHONE FREE POLICY

Aims and purpose

At Holmer Green Junior School, we are committed to supporting our pupils' academic success, mental health and wellbeing. We recognise the potential risks associated with smartphone ownership and social media use, and we aim to provide a safe, positive and focused learning environment for all pupils.

We educate pupils about the responsible use of technology, online safety and the potential harms associated with social media. We are proud to maintain a smartphone and smartwatch-free school site.

As of September2025 we have become a smartphone/watch-free school. The introduction of this policy is designed to keep all our pupils safe and happy.

Our policy aims to:

- Promote safe and responsible phone use
- Set clear guidelines for the use of mobile phones for pupils, staff, parents/carers, visitors and volunteers
- Support the school's other policies, especially those related to child protection and behaviour

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

Relevant guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the Department for Education's statutory mobile phone guidance. Further guidance that should be considered alongside this policy is Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026

Exceptions

Exceptions will only be considered in exceptional circumstances where a device is essential to an agreed medical, special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), or safeguarding plan. Prior permission must be granted by the Headteacher.

Pupils who regularly travel independently to and from school may bring a basic mobile phone or a parent-owned location tracker, subject to the conditions set out in the school's online safety policy.

Basic mobile phones must be handed into the school office on arrival and collected at the end of the school day. Approved location trackers must remain silent, concealed inside the pupil's school bag and must not be removed or used by the pupil.

Personal mobile phones

Staff (including volunteers, contractors and anyone else otherwise engaged by the school) are not permitted to use their personal mobile phone, while children 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-case basis whether to allow for special arrangements. If special arrangements are not deemed necessary, school staff can use the school office number 01494 713000 as a point of emergency contact.

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).

Safeguarding

• Staff must not give their personal contact details to parents/carers 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/carers or pupils.
• 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.
• Mobile phones may be required for multi-factor authentication; in these instances, a phone may be used and then immediately packed away.

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 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 the school office

Sanctions

Staff that fail to adhere to this policy may face disciplinary action. See the school's conduct and discipline policy for more information.

Use of mobile phones by pupils

The DfE's statutory mobile phone guidance says that pupils should not use mobile phones throughout the school day. At HGJS, smartphones are banned from the school premises. Children who walk to and from school independently are permitted to bring in a non-smart phone / brick phone. These will be handed in to the school office, locked away and collected at the end of the school day.

Use of smartwatches by pupils

The DfE's statutory guidance: Mobile phones in schools includes in the term 'mobile phones' all devices with communications and smart technology that the school chooses to include in their 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 smart watches have wellness and health-related features. At HGJS, smartwatches are banned from the school premises.

Breaches of the policy

If a pupil brings a smartphone into school in breach of the school rules it will be confiscated and retained for a period of two school weeks. School weeks means term-time weeks only; any school holidays (including INSET days) that fall within the retention period will not count towards the two weeks.

- Parents will be informed by the end of the school day on which the device is confiscated and told the date on which it will be returned.
- Confiscated devices will be stored securely and logged with the pupil's name, date and time of confiscation, and the expected return date.
- On the day the retention period ends, the device will be collected by a parent/carer, as appropriate.

Any concerns about confiscation should be raised with the headteacher in line with the school's complaints procedure.

Safeguarding Concerns

Where a mobile phone or other device is linked to a safeguarding concern, staff must report the matter immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and follow the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding and Online Safety policies. Such concerns must be managed as safeguarding matters rather than solely as breaches of the school's behaviour or confiscation procedures.

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

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:

- Switching the phone to silent whilst on site.
- 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 classrooms, or when working with pupils

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

Photography and Recording at School Events

Parents and carers may take photographs or recordings of their own children at school events where permission has been given by the headteacher. Such images and recordings must be for personal or family use only and must not be shared on social media or other publicly accessible online platforms.

Parents and carers must not deliberately photograph or record other children without the school's permission. The school reserves the right to restrict or prohibit photography and recording at particular events where necessary to safeguard pupils.

Parents/carers or volunteers supervising trips are also responsible for enforcing the school's policy for pupils using their phones, as set out in section 5 above, but must refer any 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.

Monitoring and review

The 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 consider:

- Feedback from parents/carers and pupils
- Feedback from staff
- Records of behaviour and safeguarding incidents

• Relevant advice from the Department for Education, the local authority and any other relevant organisations

Working in partnership with parents and carers

We ask parents and carers to support this policy by ensuring that pupils do not bring prohibited devices onto the school premises. If parents need to contact their child during the school day, they should do so through the school office.

Through working together, we aim to promote healthy digital habits, protect pupils' wellbeing and ensure that school remains a safe and focused environment for learning.