

Pupils' Personal Electronic Devices Policy

Date policy reviewed: June 2026

Next Review due: June 2028

Signed by	Date
Headteacher:	
Trust:	

St Thomas' CofE Primary Academy

Jesus said 'I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.' John 10:10

Introduction:

Mobile phones, tablets and other personal electronic devices (including smart watches) have become widely available and accessible to pupils.

St Thomas' C of E Academy accepts that personal mobile phones, smart watches and tablets can be given to pupils by their parents/carers to ensure their safety and personal security but understands that, if in school, such devices pose inherent safeguarding risks and may jeopardise the learning environment.

As a school, we must strike a balance between personal safety and a suitable educational setting. We understand that, as they move into upper Key Stage 2 and develop more independence, parents/carers may wish for their child to carry a mobile phone for their personal safety, whilst pupils may wish to bring additional devices to school for other reasons. Therefore, we have a policy in place to ensure appropriate use.

Acceptable use

Pupils in Years 5 and 6 bringing mobile phones/personal electronic devices into school must make their parents aware of this. Devices brought into school by Year 5 and 6 pupils are to be **switched off at the school gates and stored in the main school office during the school day. No other pupils should be bringing devices to school unless there are exceptional circumstances.**

Unacceptable use

Personal electronic devices (including smart watches) must not be used in any manner or place that is disruptive to the normal routine of the school, or in a manner that may offend or cause upset or breach safeguarding.

Children younger than Year 5 are not permitted to bring personal electronic devices into school under any circumstance, unless express permission is granted by the Principal or there is an exceptional circumstance.

Unless express permission is granted by a member of staff, pupil mobile phones/personal devices will not be used to perform any of the following activities whilst **on school grounds, this includes before and after school:**

- Make phone or video calls
- Send text messages, WhatsApp messages, iMessages or emails
- Access social media
- Play games
- Watch videos
- Take photographs or videos
- Use any other application during school lessons and other educational and pastoral activities

Mobile phones/personal devices are not permitted to be used by pupils in the school building, this includes between lessons and during break and lunchtimes. The school will, however, consider the risks that may be posed to pupils who do not have access to their mobile phone e.g. when organising travel home at the end of the school day.

This also includes after school events when the children are in care of school staff, including school discos and residential. No personal electronic device are permitted in these circumstances for any age of pupil.

Searching pupils

School pupils have a right for their private life to be respected under Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR). This right is not absolute, and the school can interfere with this right as long as it is justified, proportionate, and aligns with the powers to search in the Education Act 1996.

Any required searches will be conducted in line with the school's Safeguarding Policies and relevant Government Guidance/ Legislation.

The Principal, and other authorised staff members, will have the power to search a pupil or their possessions where they have reasonable grounds to suspect that a pupil is in possession of a prohibited item.

Mobile phones, smart watches and similar devices will be deemed as prohibited items that may be searched for in line with school policy.

Sanctions

Mobile phones and personal devices will be confiscated if they are seen, heard or used during the school day or in staff lead after school events, unless a pupil has been given direct permission. The Principal can determine the length of time they deem proportionate or confiscation.

Any pupil caught acting in a manner that contradicts this policy, will have their mobile phone/personal device confiscated. Confiscated items will be locked away securely in with their Principals office or the front office. Confiscated devices will have to be collected by the pupils parents/carer.

Liability and Loss/Damage

- Devices are brought at owner's risk
- School is not liable for loss, theft, or damage
- Pupils are responsible for securing devices
- Staff may confiscate devices in line with behaviour policy

Further information and support

Appendix 1 and 2 are tips for parents and carers around the use of smart phones and personal electronic devices.

For more information, visit <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/children-phones-online-safety/>

Mobile phone safety is everyone's responsibility. We thank you for working with us to protect children and encourage a safe, healthy use

APPENDIX 1

At National Online Safety, we believe in empowering parents, carers and trusted adults with the information to hold an informed conversation about online safety with their children, should they feel it is needed. This guide focuses on one of many devices which we believe trusted adults should be aware of. Please visit nationalcollege.com for further guides, hints and tips for adults.

SMARTPHONE SAFETY TIPS

for young people

7

You may have been lucky enough to have unwrapped a smartphone at Christmas, or you might be eagerly anticipating getting a new one at some point during this year. Whether it'll be your first ever phone or an upgrade on your old model, it's always useful to have a refresher about how to set it up and adjust the settings to keep yourself – and your valuable personal info – safe and secure. We've collected some expert tips to help you enjoy your smartphone in the healthiest way possible.

NEVER SHARE YOUR PASSCODE

Alongside face or fingerprint recognition, your passcode is crucial to unlocking your phone and accessing your apps and personal information. You shouldn't give it out, even to close friends – after all, you wouldn't hand them a key to your house and let them go in for a nosey around! If a friend wants to use your phone, ask them why and make sure you can see what they're doing with it.

RESPECT PARENTAL CONTROLS

If you're allowed to have a smartphone, it's because your parents or carers feel that you're mature and responsible enough to use it safely. They might set controls and boundaries on your device – not to spoil your fun but to help you avoid hazards like too much screen time or costly in-app purchases. Following these rules means you can enjoy using your phone while respecting their wishes.

TALK TO A TRUSTED ADULT

Whether it's to listen to music, play games, create content or chat with friends, using a smartphone should be fun. If you're ever feeling anxious, worried or scared about going on your phone, then something isn't right. It's important not to ignore these feelings; instead, talk to a trusted adult about what's happening and how it's making you feel.

STAY ALERT

Two words: look up. It might sound obvious, but it's so easy to get immersed in what we're looking at or listening to on our phones that we can become unaware of our surroundings – or who might be around us. People often walk with their head down, focusing on their phone, and forget to check for obstacles in their path, cars or other pedestrians coming towards them, which is clearly dangerous.

DEVELOP HEALTHY HABITS

Phones offer a vast amount of content and the chance to chat with friends whenever we feel like it, which can make it difficult to take time away from the screen. If that's something you struggle with, you could try setting time limits on certain apps. Putting our phones down for a while gives us more time to interact with others or do something physical that helps keep us fit and healthy.

IGNORE UNKNOWN NUMBERS

There are some scammers who might call or text asking you to share personal data or to click on a link and provide your details. Some may claim to be from a genuine company, but trustworthy businesses don't spontaneously call or message to ask for your information. It's safest to ignore calls or texts from unknown numbers, and never give your personal details out over the phone.

ONLY USE AGE-APPROPRIATE APPS

Before downloading a new app or game, check what age rating it has. Don't feel pressured into getting a particular game or app just because your friends are using it. If it's intended for older people, there's a definite risk that it could include content (which is violent or frightening, for instance) or language which isn't suitable and may leave you feeling upset or disturbed.

REMOVE TEMPTATION

A good night's sleep is so important for concentration, mood and overall health. Unwinding properly before going to bed – which means not staring at a screen late at night – can often improve sleep quality. Put your phone on charge overnight, but not in your room. This means you'll have a lot less temptation to check any notifications, reply to messages or get caught up scrolling on social media.

THINK ABOUT OTHERS

Watching videos, listening to music or calling someone can all help to pass the time while we're on the bus, waiting in a queue or walking down the street. It's important to remain mindful of other people, though; they might not want to hear your tunes or your conversation. Likewise, if you're calling from a public place then don't forget that anyone could overhear something personal about you.

SWITCH OFF GEOLOCATION

In your phone's settings, you'll be able to disable geolocation for individual apps and photos; this means that people online (including strangers) can't see information about where you are when you share or post a pic. On the subject of images, it's also important to ask permission before taking or sharing a photo of someone – and don't share embarrassing images of your friends with others.

Meet Our Expert

Dr Claire Sutherland is an online safety consultant, educator and researcher who has developed and implemented anti-bullying and cyber safety policies for schools. She has written various academic papers and carried out research for the Australian government comparing internet use and sexting behaviour of young people in the UK, USA and Australia.



The
National
College

NOS
National
Online
Safety
#WakeUpWednesday

@natonlinesafety

/NationalOnlineSafety

@nationalonlinesafety

@national_online_safety

Users of this guide do so at their own discretion. No liability is entered into. Current as of the date of release: 17.01.2024

APPENDIX 2

At National Online Safety, we believe in empowering parents, carers and trusted adults with the information to hold an informed conversation about online safety with their children, should they feel it is needed. This guide focuses on one of many issues which we believe trusted adults should be aware of. Please visit www.nationalonlinesafety.com for further guides, hints and tips for adults.

What Parents & Carers Need to Know about TODDLERS & SCREEN TIME

The toddler years are full of excitement, exploration and energy. It's a critical time in children's development, when brain connections are rapidly forming. Youngsters often begin to discover devices around this age, as they learn to communicate with friends, play games and watch videos (Ofcom recently found, for example, that one in five 3-4-year-olds in the UK uses social media). These activities can make a child happy and relaxed but have a damaging impact if overused. Setting screen time limits for toddlers can be a challenge, so we've pulled together some suggestions for making sure your little one is interacting with the online world in a safe, healthy way.

ONLINE SAFETY CHECKLIST

✓ PARENTAL CONTROLS

Children need to be shielded from content that's not age appropriate. You can do this by adjusting parental controls and safe search settings on the devices, apps and games they use.

✓ ONGOING SUPERVISION

Try to stay engaged and present in what your child is doing digitally. Make time to talk about what they enjoy and how they can stay safe online.

✓ OFFERING HELP

Teach your toddler to ask for help – and that they should always tell a trusted adult if they're unsure about anything to do with a device, or they see or hear something that makes them scared or upset.

✓ COMMUNICATION IS KEY

Emphasise that your child should check with you before they do anything online for the first time – such as watching a new show, playing a new game or exploring a new app.

✓ FACE TO FACE IS ACE

Support toddlers' development of language and other skills by prioritising games or apps that encourage face-to-face interaction – like learning to read or count with an adult.

Advice for Parents & Carers

MODEL IT

Your toddler is watching and learning from you whenever you pick up your phone. Even babies are aware of screens and the attention their parents give to them. By showing you know when to put your phone down and focus on something else, you're modelling an important behaviour for them.

CONTROL IT

Use tech to control tech. Most devices and individual apps have settings that allow you to restrict screen time. Decide on the right length of time and use the settings or a timer to block access. This is especially useful for very young children, who simply see it as the device 'turning off'.

ANNOUNCE IT

When a toddler's screen shuts off suddenly, it can lead to frustration and tears. Let your little one mentally prepare for the end of screen time by announcing they have five minutes left, two minutes left and so on. You could also set an egg-timer, alarm or buzzer to go off just before time's up.

DELAY IT

Try to avoid letting children start their day with screen time. Once they're online, it can be hard to get them back offline – and can set a negative tone for the rest of the day. Routine and structure are important for toddlers, so encourage them to enjoy some other activities before the screens go on.

TRADE IT

You could try offering rewards and alternatives in exchange for screen time – for example, having a device-free day to get a playdate with a friend at the weekend, or skipping screen time one evening in return for a trip to the ice cream parlour tomorrow.

EARN IT

Screen time can definitely be used as a reward. You could opt for the classic "no screen time until you've tidied up your toys" or you could get creative and award screen time in relation to successful tasks: eating all of their vegetables earns 10 minutes on their device, for example.

REMOVE IT

Keep family mealtimes, social gatherings, children's bedrooms and other important occasions and places screen free. Remember to turn off TVs that you aren't watching, because even background noise can distract from you spending quality face-to-face time with your young ones.

SWAP IT

Put together a bag of things that your children love playing with – and get them to help choose what goes in there (items like stickers, pens, small toys, Lego or teddy bears are ideal). Then encourage them to pick something to play with from "the special bag of fun" instead of staring at a screen.

Meet Our Expert

Cayley Jorgensen is the director of FaceUp South Africa: a reporting system currently being used to combat bullying in schools and businesses around the world. FaceUp helps to give a voice to bystanders by encouraging them to speak up against unacceptable behaviour.



<https://www.nationalonlinesafety.com/for-parents/parents-digital-agency> | <https://www.ofcom.gov.uk/data/childrens-media-use-and-attitudes-report-2022.pdf> | <https://blog.kidspotlight.co.uk/10-strategies-for-managing-screen-time/> | <https://www.bbc.com/news/health-56403590> | <https://nat.onlinesafety.com/parents/screen-time-baby-toddler>



www.nationalonlinesafety.com



@natonlinesafety



/NationalOnlineSafety



@nationalonlinesafety

Users of this guide do so at their own discretion. No liability is entered into. Current as of the date of release: 29.04.2022



National
Online
Safety®

#WakeUpWednesday