Houghton Primary School

*Working hard to achieve our best*

Mobile Phone and Devices Policy

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| Date reviewed and adopted: | September 2026 |
| Reviewed and adopted by: | FGB |
| Signed:<br>Chair of governors | Briony Rice |
| Signed:<br>Headteacher | Andrew Spencer |
| Date of next review: | September 2028 |

## 1.0 Introduction and aims

It is widely recognised that many children and staff will have access to personal communication devices including mobile phones, smart phones and smart watches. Children using these devices are likely to have unlimited and unrestricted access to the internet via mobile networks such as 4G/5G, Airdropping and 'Nearby Share' (see Annex 1 for more details). For many these devices can provide security and reassurance; however there also associated risks. Safeguarding of children within the school is paramount.

Effective guidance is in place to avoid the use of mobile, smart phone and smart watches causing unnecessary disruptions and distractions within the workplace, and to ensure effective safeguarding practice is promoted to protect against potential misuse.

The terms 'phone' or 'mobile phone' in this guidance denotes mobile phones, smart phones, airpods, iPods, iPads, MP3 players, MP4 players and smart watches.

There is a separate section covering Air Tags.

### 1.1 The guidance aims to:

- Set out clear guidance for the use of mobile phones for staff (including supply staff), pupils and volunteers
- Set out clear guidance for visitors and contractors.
- Ensure robust safeguarding
- Support schools' other policies relating to child protection and behaviour

## 2.0 Staff responsibilities

All staff (including teachers, support staff, and supply staff) may wish to have their personal mobile phones at work for use in case of emergencies, however, there is a clear expectation that all personal use is limited to areas and times when there are no children present or likely to be present.

### 2.1 All staff:

- The school expects staff to lead by example and therefore should not make or receive personal calls, or texts (via mobile phone or smart watch), whilst children are present or during contact time.

- Staff (including volunteers and supply staff) should only use their mobile phones and smart devices for personal contact in designated areas (staffroom and office areas).

- Other than in agreed exceptional circumstances, mobile phones should be switched off or on silent and left in a safe place and smart watches silenced during lesson times.

## 2.2 Safeguarding

- Staff should not contact pupils or parents from their personal mobile phone in or out of school time or give their mobile phone number to pupils or parents. If a member of staff needs to make telephone contact with a pupil, a school telephone should be used.
- Staff should not share personal contact details through social media and messaging apps.
- Staff should regularly monitor and update their privacy settings on social media sites
- Staff should never accept a 'friend request' or respond to any posts that may deliberately or inadvertently include them but inform their line manager or Senior Leader of the contact.
- Staff should never send to, or accept from, colleagues or pupils, texts or images that could be viewed as inappropriate.
- Staff are not permitted to take photos or videos of pupils or anything else (e.g., work) that might identify the pupil.
- If photos or videos are being taken as part of the school curriculum or for promotional purposes, then school equipment must be used. Staff should not allow themselves to be photographed by a pupil(s).

## 2.3 Using a personal mobile for work purposes

In some circumstances, it may be appropriate for staff to use a personal mobile phone for work purposes. Where possible this should always be agreed with a line manager or Senior Leader in advance. Such circumstances may include, but are not limited to:

- Emergency evacuations
- Parental contact in emergency's (mobile phones setting that allow for the number not to be identified should be used)

This guidance should be seen as a safeguard for members of staff and the school. Any breach of school policy may result in disciplinary action against that member of staff.

## 3.0 Pupils

- Pupils must not bring mobile phones to school. The only exception is where a phone is required for safeguarding purposes because the pupil travels independently to and/or from school.
- In the above instance, the pupil must hand their phone to the class teacher on arrival.

- Pupils should not use their mobile phone on school site.
- Pupils should not take unsolicited photos of staff or other pupils.
- Pupils may wear a standard wristwatch for timekeeping purposes. Smart watches that can take photographs, record audio or video, send or receive messages, access the internet, make calls or receive notifications are not permitted during the school day. Where such devices are brought onto the school site, they must be handed to the class teacher on arrival and collected at the end of the day.
- Pupils are not permitted to take mobile phones, smart watches or digital cameras on school trips or residentials.

## 4.0 Parents, visitors and contractors:

Parents, visitors and contractors are respectfully requested not to use their mobile phones at all on the school site/in any area where children/young people are present.

- Should phone calls and/or texts need to be taken or made, use is restricted to those areas not accessed by children to avoid any unnecessary disturbance or disruption to others. Staffroom and office areas are the only permitted spaces for calls and texts.
- Photos of children must not be taken without prior discussion with a member of the Senior Leadership Team and in accordance with the UK *General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018*
- Any individual bringing a personal device into the school must ensure that it contains no inappropriate or illegal content.

## 5.0 Apple Air Tags and other tracking devices

Such devices are designed to help people locate personal belongings but have been known to be used to track individuals.

Apple have released the statement below which can be found on their website

“AirTag was designed to help people locate their personal belongings, not to track people or another person’s property, and we condemn in the strongest possible terms any malicious use of our products.”

Therefore, we do not allow the use of Air Tags or any other form of tracking device in relation to a pupil, either while in school or when on school trips or residential visits.

All consent slips which parents sign prior to taking part in a trip will state that such devices will not be allowed under any circumstances and must not be hidden in pockets/bags etc.

If any tracking devices are found on pupils they will be removed by school staff and the Senior Leadership Team will be informed where the decision could be made to return the pupil from the trip.

## 6.0 Inappropriate or illegal content:

Where there is a suspicion that the material on a mobile phone may be unsuitable and may constitute evidence relating to a criminal offence, the allegations process will be followed (please refer to the school's 'Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy').

## 7.0 Filtering of Personal Devices:

School cannot be held responsible for the filtering of material on users' personal devices when they access the internet using their personal 4G/5G data plan. Any individual, staff or pupil, found to have been accessing material which contravenes the school's Acceptable Use Policy applicable to them during school hours will be subject to action under the terms of the school Behaviour Policy/Code of Conduct.

**For schools using JISC internet connectivity via the ICT Service:**

Anyone using a personal device to access the internet using the school network connection will have the web content on that device filtered by Netsweeper at the strictest level in use at that school. Schools can view logs of activity that have occurred on specific devices and action may be taken where user activity raises a safeguarding concern.

## 8.0 Loss, Damage and Liability

- For both staff (including supply staff), pupils, visitors and contractors the school retains no liability for any device that is brought into school which is either lost, stolen or damaged
- For both staff (including supply staff), pupils, visitors and contractors, the school retains no liability for any device that is used in a manner that is against the owner's consent.

## Related Policies and guidance:

Model Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy (September 2026)

Guidance for Safer Working Practice for Adults who work with Children and Young People in Education Settings February 2022 - Safer Recruitment Consortium training information

Keeping Children Safe in Education (September 2026)

Taking photographs: data protection advice for schools | ICO

Data Protection: Data protection in schools - Guidance - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

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## Annex 1- Airdrop and Nearby Share

Airdrop.

- AirDrop is a wireless feature available on Apple devices.
- It allows physically close Apple devices to share files, photos, websites etc.
- There are no size limits on files.
- It uses Bluetooth and Wi-Fi to transmit the files.
- AirDrop automatically detects nearby supported devices within a maximum distance of 30 feet.
- When a receiver of content is selected, they will be notified and offered the option to accept or decline the incoming file.

Quick Share/Nearby Share

- Both are available on Android 6.0+ phones.
- Like AirDrop, it allows users to instantly share files, links and pictures with people around them.
- It also works through Bluetooth or WiFi.
- When Nearby Share/Quick Share are turned on, a list of devices available within sharing proximity is visible.
- When a receiver of content is selected, they will be notified and offered the option to accept or decline the incoming file.

Safeguarding risks posed by both Airdrop and Nearby Share/Quick Share.

- Being exposed to age-inappropriate sexualised and/or violent content.
- Photo sharing as a form of cyberbullying, with the person featured in the image being the target.
- The sharing of self-generated sexual imagery, with or without the permission of the original image/video creator.
- Images of teachers or other staff members shared as part of teacher targeted bullying, including ‘upskirting’ images (the practice of taking an illegal photo of someone’s genitals or genital area, without consent).

If a member of staff or a pupil report receiving inappropriate content then the school must follow their Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and procedures, Behaviour Policy and/or Code of Conduct.