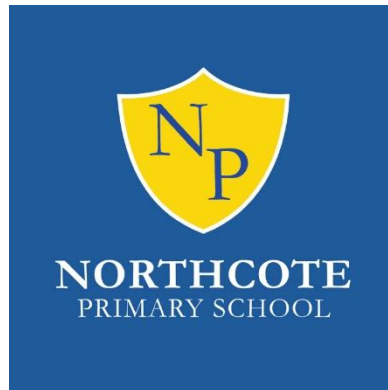


Northcote Primary School



Mobile Phone Policy

Written: October 2026

NORTHCOTE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Mobile Phones and Smart Devices Policy

2026-2027

Great things happen every day.

Policy owner	Headteacher - Gary Anders
Version	October 2026
Approved by governors	_____
Review date	October 2027, or earlier following updated guidance
Core principle	Mobile phone-free throughout the school day

NOT SEEN. NOT HEARD. NOT USED.

1. Rationale and purpose

At Northcote Primary School, the welfare, safeguarding, wellbeing and learning of pupils are paramount. We want children to enjoy a calm, safe and purposeful school day in which technology supports learning rather than distracts from it. This policy establishes Northcote as a mobile phone-free environment for pupils throughout the school day, while allowing proportionate, individually agreed exceptions where these are necessary.

This policy replaces the school's previous Mobile Phone Policy and updates the school's arrangements to reflect the Department for Education's statutory guidance 'Mobile phones in schools', updated 29 June 2026 and to be followed from 1 September 2026.

protect pupils from distraction, disruption, bullying and inappropriate recording or communication

support safeguarding, privacy and professional conduct

set clear and consistent expectations for pupils, staff, parents, visitors, volunteers, governors and contractors

provide sensible arrangements for independent travel, medical needs, disability, SEND and other exceptional circumstances

2. Scope and definitions

This policy applies on the school site during the school day and, where stated, to educational visits, sporting fixtures, residential activities and other school-organised activities.

For this policy, "mobile phone" includes a mobile telephone and any personally owned smart or communication device with similar functionality, including devices capable of sending or receiving messages or notifications, accessing mobile networks or the internet, or recording audio, photographs or video. This includes communication-enabled smart watches where those functions are active.

School-owned devices used for authorised educational, operational or safeguarding purposes are not treated as personal devices under this policy.

3. Related policies and guidance

Behaviour and Relationships Policy

Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

Online Safety / Acceptable Use Policy

Anti-Bullying Policy

Staff Code of Conduct

Educational Visits Policy

Data Protection and UK GDPR arrangements

Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy

SEND Policy

National guidance: Department for Education, Mobile phones in schools (statutory guidance, updated 29 June 2026); Behaviour in schools; Searching, screening and confiscation; Keeping Children Safe in Education; Equality Act 2010; Children and Families Act 2014.

4. The Northcote rule for pupils

Northcote is mobile phone-free throughout the school day: not seen, not heard and not used.

Pupils must not use a mobile phone or covered smart device at any point during the school day, including lessons, transitions, breaktimes and lunchtime.

Pupils should not normally bring a mobile phone to school.

Where a pupil has authorised permission to bring a device, it must be switched off before entering the school site and handed to the agreed member of staff/place for secure storage. It must not remain accessible to the pupil during the school day unless an agreed exception applies.

A device set to silent, airplane mode or "do not disturb" is not sufficient if it remains accessible to a pupil contrary to this policy.

Pupils must not photograph, video or audio-record another person using a personal device on the school site or during school activities.

Parents who need to contact their child during the school day should contact the school office. Pupils who need to contact home should do so through school staff and agreed school procedures.

5. Authorised exceptions

5.1 Independent travel

The Headteacher may authorise an older pupil to bring a phone where this supports safe independent travel to or from school. Permission is an exception, not an entitlement. The device must be handed in immediately on arrival, securely stored during the day and returned at the end of the school day. The school may review or withdraw permission if the arrangements are not followed.

5.2 Disability, SEND and medical needs

Northcote will make reasonable adjustments and appropriate arrangements where access to a mobile phone or smart device is necessary because of disability, SEND or a medical condition. This may include technology used to monitor a medical condition. Any arrangement will be

agreed with the pupil and parent/carer, documented, limited to its intended purpose, and reviewed as appropriate.

5.3 Other exceptional circumstances

The Headteacher may agree an individual adaptation where a pupil's circumstances make access necessary, for example specific home or caring circumstances. The school will consider each request on its merits. An exception for a particular purpose does not create unrestricted permission to use the device.

6. Smart watches and other connected technology

A watch or wearable used only as an ordinary watch may be permitted under normal school rules. Where a smart watch or other wearable can communicate, receive notifications, access online services, take photographs, make recordings or otherwise operate like a mobile phone, the relevant restrictions in this policy apply. The school may require communication or recording functions to be disabled, or require the device to be stored securely.

7. Educational visits, sporting events and residential activities

The default position is that pupils do not use personal mobile phones during school trips or sporting fixtures. The visit leader, with the Headteacher, will determine whether any exception is appropriate for the nature and timing of a particular trip, including activities outside the normal school day or residential provision. Expectations will be communicated in advance. School staff will use school-approved communication arrangements for emergency contact wherever practicable.

8. Staff use of personal mobile phones

Staff personal phones must be switched off or on silent and kept out of sight during pupil-contact time, unless there is an authorised operational or exceptional reason.

Staff must not use a personal mobile phone for personal reasons in front of pupils during the school day.

Staff must not use personal devices to photograph, film or audio-record pupils, or routinely store pupil personal data.

School-approved equipment and systems should be used for school photographs, recordings and communication with families.

Where an urgent family or personal circumstance requires a staff member to remain contactable, a proportionate arrangement should be agreed with the Headteacher or senior leader.

There may be legitimate school purposes for device use, such as multi-factor authentication or another authorised operational task. Such use must be brief, professional and consistent with safeguarding and data-protection expectations.

The school may provide or designate a school device for educational visits, sporting fixtures and emergency contact.

9. Parents, carers and visitors

Parents and carers are asked to avoid unnecessary mobile phone use while on the school site and to model safe, courteous use.

Personal devices must never be used to photograph, film or audio-record pupils in classrooms, corridors, toilets, changing areas or other circumstances where the school has not expressly authorised photography or recording.

At performances, celebrations or sporting events, the school will provide event-specific instructions about photography and recording. Safeguarding arrangements and the privacy of other children must be respected.

Visitors, volunteers, governors and contractors must keep devices on silent and must not use them in areas where pupils are present unless use is necessary for an authorised purpose.

Visitors must not use personal devices to take photographs, video or audio recordings of pupils.

10. Breaches by pupils and confiscation

Breaches will be dealt with calmly, consistently and proportionately in line with the Behaviour and Relationships Policy and the pupil's individual circumstances.

A phone or smart device that is seen, heard or used contrary to this policy may be confiscated by an authorised member of staff.

The device will be stored securely and the pupil will be told how and when it will be returned. Depending on the circumstances, return may be to the pupil or directly to a parent/carer.

Repeated or serious breaches may lead to further proportionate sanctions under the Behaviour and Relationships Policy and may result in permission to bring a phone to school being withdrawn.

Where behaviour gives cause to suspect that a pupil is suffering, or may be at risk of, harm, staff must follow the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead or deputy.

The school will consider age, SEND, disability, medical need and other relevant individual circumstances when deciding an appropriate response.

11. Searching a pupil or device

Mobile phones and smart devices covered by this policy are identified in the school rules as items that may be searched for where the legal requirements for a search are met. Any search of a pupil or their possessions will be undertaken only by the Headteacher or an authorised member of staff and in accordance with current Department for Education guidance on searching, screening and confiscation.

The previous policy wording describing a general "right to view files" on a confiscated phone is not retained. Any examination of data or files on a device must have a lawful basis and follow the applicable statutory powers, DfE guidance and safeguarding procedures. Where criminality or a serious safeguarding concern is suspected, the school will preserve relevant evidence appropriately and seek advice or involve the police or other agencies where necessary.

12. Unacceptable and safeguarding-related use

Examples of use likely to be treated as serious include:

bullying, harassment, intimidation or threatening communication

taking or sharing photographs, video or audio without appropriate permission

recording in toilets, changing areas or other places where privacy is expected

accessing, creating or sharing harmful, abusive or otherwise inappropriate material

using a device to facilitate behaviour that places a pupil or member of staff at risk

refusing a reasonable instruction to hand over a device following a breach of this policy

Online behaviour outside school may still require school action where it affects safeguarding, pupils' welfare, behaviour within school or the orderly running of the school. The response will follow the school's safeguarding, behaviour and anti-bullying procedures and the scope of the school's lawful responsibilities.

13. Support following an incident

Where misuse has harmed, distressed or victimised another person, Northcote will prioritise safeguarding and appropriate support. This may include contact with families, pastoral support, safety planning, support with reporting or removal of online material, restorative work where appropriate and safe, and education for pupils about the impact of their actions. Serious concerns will be referred through safeguarding procedures and to external agencies where appropriate.

14. Loss, theft and damage

Personal devices are brought to school only where permitted and at the owner's risk. The school will take reasonable care of devices handed in or confiscated and will store them securely. Any concern about loss, theft or damage should be reported promptly to the school office or a senior leader.

15. Communication, curriculum and implementation

The policy will be published and communicated to pupils, staff and parents/carers.

Pupils will be reminded of the rules and consequences at the start of each school year and at appropriate points thereafter.

Online safety education will help pupils understand risks associated with mobile phones and the benefits of a mobile phone-free school environment.

Staff will apply the policy consistently and leaders will address questions or concerns from families in a timely way.

16. Monitoring and review

The Headteacher is responsible for day-to-day implementation. Governors will oversee the policy as part of their responsibilities for safeguarding and behaviour. The policy will normally be reviewed annually and sooner where legislation, statutory guidance, safeguarding practice or the school's circumstances change.

Monitoring may include relevant behaviour, safeguarding and wellbeing information, together with feedback from pupils, staff and parents/carers where appropriate.

Appendix 1 - Quick guide

Who	Expectation	If a phone is needed
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Pupils	Not seen. Not heard. Not used.	Authorised exceptions only; hand in for secure storage unless an agreed adjustment requires access.
Staff	No personal use in front of pupils; no pupil images/recordings on personal devices.	Authorised operational use or agreed exceptional circumstances.
Parents/carers	Contact pupils through the school office; avoid unnecessary phone use on site.	Follow event-specific instructions and school safeguarding expectations.
Visitors/volunteers	Silent and not used around pupils; no pupil images/recordings.	Only for an authorised purpose.

Appendix 2 - References

Department for Education, Mobile phones in schools: statutory guidance (updated 29 June 2026; schools should begin following from 1 September 2026).

Department for Education, Behaviour in schools.

Department for Education, Searching, screening and confiscation in schools.

Department for Education, Keeping Children Safe in Education.

Equality Act 2010.

Children and Families Act 2014 and statutory guidance on supporting pupils with medical conditions at school.