Hindley J and I School

Mobile Phone Policy

September 2026

Review date: September 2027

Signed on behalf of the School: Miss A Mckeever

Signed on behalf of the Governors: Mr Haskayne

1. Policy Identification and Governance

This policy establishes the mandatory regulatory framework for the management of personal electronic devices at Hindley Junior and Infant School. The strategic necessity of this document lies in maintaining institutional order and ensuring that all stakeholders—pupils, staff, and parents—remain compliant with the 2026-27 statutory requirements. By removing digital distractions, the school secures a focused environment that prioritizes the developmental and safety needs of every child.

2. Purpose and Statutory Context

The school's strategic commitment to pupil mental health is reflected in our alignment with national wellbeing initiatives which seeks to remove barriers to achievement by mitigating the psychological harm and digital distractions inherent in mobile technology.

Hindley Junior and Infant School maintains a "phone-free by default" status, a position justified by the following legal and statutory mandates:

- Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act 2026: This Act grants formal statutory backing to device prohibition by inserting section 550C into the Education Act 1996, effectively making "phone-free" the national standard.
- National Wellbeing Initiatives: This policy specifically addresses the Secretary of State's new powers to regulate "compulsive design" and "addictive features" of digital services, protecting pupils from documented online harms.
- Ofsted Inspection Standards: Effective enforcement of a distraction-free environment is a critical metric in the evaluation of school behavior and leadership.
- Safeguarding Duties: Under section 175 of the Education Act 2002, the school carries a statutory duty to promote the welfare of children.

This statutory alignment is essential for pupil safety. By eliminating the presence of devices, the school actively reduces the risk of cyberbullying and exposure to compulsive digital environments, thereby fostering academic focus and psychological resilience.

Clear legal purpose necessitates precise definitions regarding the scope and technology covered by this policy.

3. Scope and Definitions

Consistency in policy enforcement requires absolute clarity in definitions. These standards ensure that every individual on the school site understands their obligations, thereby preventing inequity or confusion in disciplinary application.

This policy is binding for:

- Pupils and Staff.
- Parents, Carers, and Volunteers.
- Visitors and Contractors.

Personal Electronic Devices (PEDs): PEDs covered by this policy include:

- Mobile phones and all varieties of smartphones.
- Smartwatches (specifically those with communication, internet, or cellular capabilities).
- Tablets and portable gaming consoles.
- Communication-enabled fitness trackers.

To ensure multi-agency consistency in line with the 2026 Act, any safeguarding incidents involving the misuse of PEDs shall be recorded using CPOMS. T

4. Pupil Rules and Year Group Restrictions

The school implements age-specific restrictions based on the developmental readiness of children and the necessity of robust safeguarding.

Reception to Year 4

There is an absolute prohibition of all personal electronic devices. Pupils in these year groups must not bring PEDs onto the school premises under any circumstances.

Year 5 and Year 6

A narrow exception is permitted for pupils who travel to and from school independently. This exception is strictly for safeguarding during transit and is subject to the following Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs).

Standard Operating Procedure (SOP)

Arrival & Hand-in:

1. Power Status: All devices must be switched off completely before a pupil crosses the school perimeter.
2. Submission: Devices must be handed to the class teacher or designated staff member immediately upon arrival.
3. Security: Devices must be stored in named bags or protective wallets and shall be kept in a secured, locked location.

Departure & Collection:

1. End-of-Day Return: Devices will be returned to pupils at the final bell.
2. Off-Site Power: Devices must remain switched off until the pupil has fully departed from the school grounds.

Physical device management protocols are supplemented by specific restrictions regarding wearable technology.

5. Smartwatches and Wearable Technology

In accordance with the 2026 Act's focus on online harms, the following permissions apply:

Wearable Technology Permissions

Device Feature/Type	Policy Status
Devices with messaging, cellular, internet, or camera capabilities (e.g., Apple Watch)	Strictly Prohibited For Pupils
Basic step-counters or fitness trackers without communication/camera functions	Permitted at School Discretion
Devices capable of recording audio or capturing images	Strictly Prohibited For Pupils

6. Graduated Response Model for Misuse

The school shall utilise a transparent, fair, and incremental approach to disciplinary measures. This model ensures that education on responsible technology is balanced with institutional accountability.

- Level 1: First Breach
    - 1.1 Formal verbal warning issued to the pupil.
    - 1.2 Device confiscated and locked away..
    - 1.3 Return of the device to the pupil at the end of the school day.
- Level 2: Second Breach
    - 2.1 Formal written notification to parents/carers.
    - 2.2 Mandatory confiscation and locked away.
    - 2.3 Device shall only be released to a parent or carer in person.
- Level 3: Repeated or Serious Misuse
    - 3.1 Permanent revocation of the privilege to bring a device onto school grounds.
    - 3.2 Application of behaviour sanctions as per the School Behaviour Policy.
    - 3.3 Safeguarding referrals initiated if misuse involves prohibited content or harassment, with data logged via the Single Unique Identifier.

7. Staff Conduct and Professional Expectations

Staff play a critical strategic role in modeling the school's "phone-free" culture. To reinforce these professional standards, the following mandates apply:

- The "Out of Sight" Rule: Personal devices must be kept out of sight and switched off or silenced during directed time and in all areas where pupils are present.
- Communication Mandates: Staff must not use personal devices for any contact with pupils, parents, or carers unless via the usual school communication channels e.g. Dojo..
- Designated Usage: Use of personal devices is permitted out of sight of pupils during non-directed time.
- Statutory Exceptions:
    - 2-Factor Authentication (2FA): Brief use is permitted to facilitate secure login to institutional systems.
    - Emergency Response: Personal devices may be used during emergency lockdowns or critical incidents where primary school lines are compromised.

Staff compliance ensures the school remains a safe, supervised environment, a requirement that also extends to visitors.

8. Visitors, Volunteers, and Contractors

The school's duty of care extends to the regulation of all adults on site. Visitors and contractors must adhere to the following rules:

- Restricted Use: Personal devices must not be used in any area where pupils are present.
- Photography Prohibition: The capture of images, video, or audio is strictly prohibited unless specifically authorised by the Headteacher for school-related purposes.
- Communication Protocols: All necessary personal or professional communications must be conducted in the main school office or designated non-teaching areas.

9. School Trips, Visits, and Residentials

Off-site activities require specialised protocols to maintain safety and the school's phone-free ethos.

- Staff Protocols: Staff can use mobile devices for emergency management and group communication.
- Pupil Prohibitions: Pupils are prohibited from bringing devices on day trips.
- Residential Rules: For overnight residentials, no devices are permitted for pupils.
- Volunteer Restrictions: Parent volunteers are strictly prohibited from posting updates, locations, or photographs of pupils to personal social media accounts.

While these rules are universal, the school provides for reasonable adjustments where statutory duties overlap.

10. Reasonable Adjustments and Medical Exemptions

The school balances its universal policy with the statutory duty to support pupils with verified needs under SEND and medical frameworks.

- Medical Monitoring: Exemptions shall be granted for pupils requiring devices for verified monitoring, such as Continuous Glucose Monitors (CGMs).
- SEND and Young Carers: Adjustments may be made for pupils with specific SEND profiles or those identified as Young Carers.
- Documentation: All exemptions must be supported by clinical or professional documentation and shall be recorded in the pupil's Individual Healthcare Plan (IHP).

These adjustments ensure the policy remains inclusive without compromising the school's broader security architecture.

11. Safeguarding Integration and Policy Review

This policy is a critical pillar of the school's holistic safeguarding framework and must be read in conjunction with:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE).
- School Behaviour Policy.
- School Safeguarding Policy.
- School Anti-Bullying Policy.

To ensure this document remains responsive to the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act 2026, the Governing Body will conduct an annual review. This process will include "annual monitoring" of the policy's effectiveness in reducing online harm and psychological distraction, ensuring Hindley Junior and Infant School remains at the forefront of legislative compliance. The next review is scheduled for September 2027.