



Nexus Education Schools Trust

Mobile Phone and Smart Technology Policy

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1. Introduction

At Nexus Education Schools Trust (NEST), we are committed to creating calm, safe and purposeful environments where pupils can learn, develop positive relationships and achieve their full potential. This policy supports the Trust's commitment to creating calm, safe and predictable environments where positive relationships, motivation and learning can flourish.

This policy supports the NEST Behaviour Policy and reflects our commitment to safeguarding, respect, responsibility and positive conduct. It should be read alongside the Trust's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, Online Safety Policy, Data Protection Policy and Staff Code of Conduct.

2. Aims

This policy aims to:

- Promote calm, safe and predictable learning environments.
- Ensure the safe, responsible and lawful use of mobile phones and smart technology.
- Protect pupils, staff and visitors from risks associated with inappropriate use of technology.
- Support positive behaviour, wellbeing and learning.
- Provide clear expectations for pupils, staff, parents, carers, visitors and volunteers.
- Promote responsible digital citizenship and online safety.

For the purposes of this policy, references to mobile phones include smartphones, smart watches, tablets with communication capability, AI-enabled communication devices and any device capable of messaging, internet access, photography, recording or communication.

3. Trust Principles

In line with the NEST Behaviour Policy, all NEST schools will uphold the following principles.

2.1 Relationships First

Positive relationships are at the heart of our schools. Technology should support positive relationships and never be used in ways that cause harm, distress or conflict.

2.2 Clear and Consistent Expectations

Expectations relating to mobile phones and smart technology are part of each school's behaviour expectations. Expectations should be clear, consistently applied and understood by all members of the school community.

2.3 Calm, Safe and Predictable Environments

Technology use should contribute to environments where pupils feel safe, secure and ready to learn. Mobile phone use must not undermine teaching, learning, wellbeing or safety.

2.4 Restorative and Learning-Focused

Where concerns arise, schools will seek to support pupils to understand the impact of their actions, take responsibility, repair relationships where appropriate and make positive choices moving forward.

4. Roles and responsibilities

4.1 Headteacher

Headteachers will:

- Implement this policy consistently.
- Ensure staff understand and apply the policy.
- Ensure safeguarding concerns are managed appropriately.

- Monitor the impact and effectiveness of the policy.
- Address breaches fairly and consistently.

4.2 Staff

All staff will:

- Model responsible technology use.
- Apply this policy consistently.
- Challenge inappropriate use of mobile phones or smart technology.
- Follow the expectations set out in the NEST Staff Code of Conduct.
- Report safeguarding concerns immediately.

4.3 Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- Follow all school expectations relating to mobile phones and smart technology.
- Use technology responsibly and respectfully.
- Follow staff instructions regarding devices.
- Report concerns relating to inappropriate use of technology.

4.4 Parents/carers

Parents and carers are expected to:

- Support the aims of this policy.
- Reinforce safe and responsible use of technology.
- Communicate any concerns with the school.
- Work in partnership with schools where concerns arise.

5. Staff Use of Mobile Phones and Smart Technology

Staff are expected to model the highest standards of professionalism and conduct at all times.

5.1 Personal Mobile Phones

In line with the NEST Staff Code of Conduct:

- Staff must not use their personal mobile phones for personal reasons in front of pupils during the school day.
- Personal mobile phones must be switched off or placed on silent and kept out of sight during contact time.
- Use of personal mobile phones should be restricted to non-contact time and areas where pupils are not present.
- Staff must ensure personal devices cannot be accessed by pupils.

5.2 Exceptional Circumstances

In exceptional circumstances, permission may be granted by the Headteacher for a member of staff to carry or use a personal mobile phone where there is a legitimate professional or personal need. Where permission is granted, the Headteacher and member of staff will agree the circumstances under which the device may be used, including any designated locations and restrictions that apply.

5.3 Safeguarding

Staff must not:

- Give personal mobile numbers to pupils.
- Communicate directly with pupils using personal devices.
- Connect with pupils through personal social media accounts.
- Use personal devices to photograph or record pupils.
- Use personal devices in ways that could compromise professional boundaries.

Any concerns regarding online communication or technology use must be reported immediately in line with safeguarding procedures.

6. Data Protection and Confidentiality

Staff must protect personal data and confidential information at all times.

Staff must not:

- Store pupil information on personal devices.
- Photograph or record pupils using personal devices.
- Process confidential school information using personal devices unless authorised.
- Upload confidential information or personal data to AI platforms, chatbots or unauthorised applications.
- Share confidential information using personal messaging applications.

All personal data must be handled in accordance with UK GDPR, Trust policies and school procedures.

7. Work Phones

Some members of staff may be provided with a mobile phone by the Trust or school for work purposes. Work phones must be clearly identifiable to distinguish them from personal devices, for example through a distinctive case, lanyard or label.

Only authorised staff are permitted to use Trust or school-issued mobile phones, and access to the device must not be provided to anyone without appropriate authorisation.

Staff must:

- Only use Trust or school-issued mobile phones for authorised work purposes.
- Ensure that communication, conduct and content linked to the device are appropriate and professional at all times.
- Use the device in accordance with the NEST Staff Code of Conduct, Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, Online Safety Policy and Data Protection requirements.
- Keep the device secure and protected from unauthorised access.
- Report any loss, theft or misuse of a Trust-issued device immediately.

Trust-issued mobile phones may be used for activities such as site management, safeguarding duties, educational visits, residential visits and other operational purposes where authorised by the Headteacher or Trust.

Staff using Trust-issued mobile phones remain subject to all expectations within the NEST Staff Code of Conduct.

8. Use of Mobile Phones and Smart Technology by Pupils

Mobile Phone-Free Environment

In line with statutory Department for Education guidance, NEST schools operate as mobile phone-free environments during the school day. Pupils should not have access to mobile phones or smart technology throughout the school day, including during lessons, transitions, breaktimes and lunchtimes, except where a specific exception has been agreed due to SEND, medical needs or other

exceptional circumstances. Schools may determine the operational arrangements used to implement this expectation.

Mobile phone expectations form part of each school's behaviour expectations and pupils are expected to follow them at all times. In line with the NEST Behaviour Policy, these expectations help create calm, safe and predictable environments where all pupils can learn successfully.

Pupils must follow staff instructions relating to the use, storage, handover or surrender of mobile phones and smart devices during the school day.

Pupils must not use mobile phones or smart technology in ways that:

- Disrupt teaching, learning or the learning of others.
- Interfere with the calm, safe and predictable environment of the school.
- Cause harm, distress, intimidation or humiliation to others.
- Involve bullying, cyberbullying, harassment or discriminatory behaviour.
- Involve photographing, filming or recording others without permission.
- Involve the sharing, viewing or creation of inappropriate, harmful or illegal content.
- Place themselves or others at risk.
- Undermine the values, expectations and positive relationships promoted by NEST schools.

Where a pupil does not follow expectations relating to mobile phones or smart technology, schools will respond in line with the NEST Behaviour Policy. Responses will be proportionate, consistent, fair, educational and restorative where appropriate, taking account of individual circumstances, SEND and safeguarding considerations.

9. Bring your Own Device (BYOD)

The Trust does not regard mobile phones as Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) learning devices.

Where schools permit the use of laptops, tablets or other devices for educational purposes, these arrangements will be managed through separate ICT, Online Safety and Acceptable Use procedures.

Any BYOD arrangements must not undermine the expectation that NEST schools remain mobile phone-free environments during the school day.

10. Smart Watches and Emerging Technology

References to mobile phones throughout this policy include smart watches, tablets, AI-enabled communication devices and other devices capable of communication, recording or internet access.

11. Safeguarding and Online Safety

The use of mobile phones and smart technology must never compromise the safety or wellbeing of pupils.

The Trust will maintain appropriate filtering and monitoring arrangements in accordance with Keeping Children Safe in Education, national online safety standards and Trust procedures. The effectiveness of filtering and monitoring arrangements will be reviewed regularly to ensure they remain effective in safeguarding children from harmful content and online risks.

Any misuse involving the following will be managed in accordance with the Trust's safeguarding procedures:

- Cyberbullying
- Child-on-child abuse

- Harmful sexual behaviour
- Sexual harassment
- Online exploitation
- Sharing of indecent images
- AI-generated intimate images
- Deepfake images, audio or video
- AI-enabled harassment, bullying or impersonation
- Inappropriate online content
- Recording or sharing images without permission

Where concerns arise, staff will:

- Report concerns immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).
- Follow Trust safeguarding procedures.
- Preserve evidence where appropriate.
- Prioritise the safety and wellbeing of all pupils involved.

12. Searching, Screening and Confiscation

Schools have legal powers to search for, confiscate and retain mobile phones and smart devices in accordance with the Education Act 2006 and Department for Education guidance on Searching, Screening and Confiscation.

Where a school reasonably believes that a mobile phone or smart device has been used in breach of this policy, appropriate action may be taken, including confiscation of the device.

Any searches will be conducted lawfully, proportionately and with appropriate regard to safeguarding, privacy, dignity and the age and needs of the pupil.

Where material is discovered that raises safeguarding concerns, staff will immediately follow the Trust's Child Protection and Safeguarding procedures and seek advice from the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

13. Parents, Visitors and Volunteers

Parents, visitors and volunteers are expected to use mobile phones responsibly, respect safeguarding arrangements, follow staff instructions, and avoid photographing, filming or recording pupils without appropriate permission.

Parents and carers should use the school office as the first point of contact if they need to get a message to their child during the school day.

Where photographs or recordings are taken at public events, they are for personal use only and should not be shared publicly without appropriate consent.

Parents and carers are encouraged to discuss the responsible use of mobile phones, social media and online technology with their children and to support the Trust's mobile phone-free approach. Working in partnership with families helps promote healthy digital habits, online safety and positive behaviour both in and beyond school.

14. Responding to Concerns and Breaches

Breaches of this policy will be addressed in accordance with:

- The NEST Behaviour Policy
- The NEST Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- The NEST Staff Code of Conduct

- Relevant disciplinary procedures
- DfE guidance where applicable

Pupils

Responses will be:

- Proportionate
- Consistent
- Fair
- Educational
- Restorative where appropriate
- Responsive to safeguarding concerns, SEND and individual circumstances

Staff

Failure to follow this policy will be dealt with in line with Trust procedures and may result in:

- Management action
- Safeguarding procedures
- Disciplinary action

Visitors and Volunteers

Visitors or volunteers who fail to follow this policy may:

- Be instructed to stop using a device.
- Be asked to leave the premises.
- Be refused future access to Trust sites.
- Be reported to relevant authorities where safeguarding concerns arise.

15. Links to other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- NEST Behaviour Policy
- NEST Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- NEST Staff Code of Conduct
- NEST Online Safety Policy
- NEST Data Protection Policy
- DfE Mobile Phones in Schools Guidance
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE)