

NEWLANDS GIRLS' SCHOOL

POLICY DOCUMENT



NEWLANDS GIRLS' SCHOOL
COURAGE COMMITMENT COMPASSION

Mobile Phone Policy

LAST UPDATED	April 2026
--------------	------------

POLICY TYPE	Non-Statutory
REVIEW DATE	Annual – April 2027

RESPONSIBLE	
Leadership Team	Deputy Headteacher
Governing Committee	Resources

APPROVED		
Approved by:	Headteacher	April 2026
Meeting Date:	Approved by Chair of Governors	March 2026

Courage Commitment Compassion

To be read in conjunction with:

- Mobile phones in schools: Guidance for schools on prohibiting the use of Mobile Phones in Schools, Department for Education, February 2026
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025
- Searching, Screening and Confiscation Advice for schools, July 2022

Scope:

This policy applies to all Newlands Girls' School students.

Rationale:

Over the past two years a significant number of studies have been completed providing robust evidence of the harm caused by smartphones on the learning, behaviour, wellbeing and safety of children when provided with access at an early age.

In our 2025 survey of Newlands parents and carers, almost half of parents and carers said they were worried about their daughter's smart phone use. 41% of parents and carers said that they would consider buying their child a basic device (without camera or internet access) referred to in this policy as a 'brick' phone, delaying purchase of a smartphone until they were older.

When surveyed, 48% of the student population of Newlands said their screen time is more than three hours per day. Students reported that they are worried about the amount of time they spend on their device, social media addiction, the negative impact on their mental health, taking time away from their hobbies and the effect smartphones have on their concentration.

The school is responsible for safeguarding students during the school day; this job has become increasingly difficult due to students coming into school with smart devices that potentially have harmful or inappropriate content on them and functions which enable inappropriate behaviours or cyberbullying e.g. access to social media, photo and video capability and distracting notifications.

Aims:

Our goal is to remove barriers that prevent our students from being safe, happy, and academically successful.

We aim to ensure the maximum level of safeguarding, health and wellbeing of students on the school site and in our wider community.

By removing the reliance on mobile phones, students will be:

- Less likely to see harmful content.
- Free from pressures including cyber bullying and online harassment.
- Less likely to lose out on valuable childhood experiences and better able to develop social and inter-personal skills.
- Better able to develop resilience and good mental health.
- Better able to concentrate and less likely to be distracted by the highly addictive design patterns seen in mobile apps and the many notifications they face every day.

Policy Statements:

- We are a smartphone free school.
- We make a clear distinction between a brick phone (without the potential for internet access) and a smartphone or **any** smart device (with internet or potential internet access).
- Students in Years 7 – 11 are prohibited from bringing any smartphone or smart devices into school.
- The policy mitigates the safeguarding, health and safety risks related to early access to smart devices and supports the school site in being a safe environment for all students.
- The policy supports families to make their own decision about when it is appropriate for their child to have access to smart technology.
- The policy is enforced with significant consequences for students who bring smartphone devices into school.
- Teaching and learning activities will never require students to use a mobile phone of any sort.
- Parents are always able to contact the school reception if they need to contact their daughter in an emergency.
- If a student is unwell, or in the case of an emergency, the school medical team will contact parents / carers as soon as possible.
- We will ensure students are educated in the risks and harms of smartphones but also in the safe and responsible use of technology. This is to ensure they are ready for adult life.

Please note that throughout this policy, “smartphone” refers to any electronic device with potential access to the internet. This includes Kindles, tablets, smart watches and smart glasses.

Smartphones and other pocket smart devices that access the internet are prohibited at Newlands Girls' School. This policy has been introduced to minimise disruption to the school environment and to help tackle cyber bullying, sexting, sharing of indecent images, online grooming, exposure to harmful content, reliance on technology and device addiction. The negative impact of smartphones on children's mental health and development is well documented. Excessive exposure to social media platforms can increase anxiety, depression and even lead to suicidal ideation.

Year 7 - 11 Students:

- Smart phones are prohibited for all students in Years 7 –11. This includes on the way to and from school.
- If it is discovered that a student has or has had a smartphone, or any smart device while at school, it will automatically be confiscated (please see consequences section for information on confiscation periods).

- Parents / carers who wish their child to carry a mobile phone to school must adhere to the following:
 - The phone must have:
 - No potential to access the internet
 - No photo or recording capability
 - No access to any apps
 - Examples of this type of phone include: Nokia or HMD 105 4g (2023 edition)* (approx. £23), Samsung E1200* (approx. £59) or Alcatel 10.16G* (approx. £20)
 - Any phone that meets these requirements is known as a “brick phone”.
 - The list of suggested phones will be reviewed periodically.

*All phones may be purchased from Amazon and prices listed above are accurate as of April 2026.

Rules which apply to bringing a brick phone to school

- The phone should be clearly marked with the student’s name.
- The phone must be switched off before the student enters the school site and placed in their school bag or locker.
- The phone must not be brought out of their bag or locker at any point during the school day and should only be used after school outside the school gates or in the designated student waiting area.
- The phone remains the responsibility of the student at all times and the school will not take action if it is lost or stolen.
- Any phone that is seen outside of a school bag or locker or heard during the school day (school approved or otherwise) will automatically be confiscated (please see consequences section for information on confiscation periods).
- Airtags or the equivalent are permitted if parents or carers want to track their child’s location.

Reasonable adjustments and flexibility will be made for certain disabilities or medical conditions. In each instance this needs to be prearranged with the school. The school will work with parents and carers to determine the specific needs of each student on an individual basis. Only the Headteacher may exempt a student from this policy. Students who are exempt will carry with them an exemption card, signed by the Headteacher.

Searching for devices:

- There may be occasions where a member of staff is required to search a student’s personal belongings to look for a mobile phone or other banned item, if this is deemed necessary to maintain high standards of behaviour and a safe environment. Any such, searches will be conducted in accordance with the DfE guidance on searching and screening.
- If during a search an ‘approved phone’ is found it will not be confiscated provided it does not contain any evidence relating to an investigation AND when it is found it is switched off.
- All prohibited items will automatically be confiscated as part of a search. This confiscation will follow the consequence process below.

- Any approved phones that are found not to be switched off will also automatically be confiscated as part of a search. This confiscation will follow the consequence process below.

Immediate confiscation:

Any phone that is seen outside of a school bag or heard during the school day (approved or otherwise) will automatically be confiscated.

- Any prohibited phone which is seen within sight of the school entrances before or after school, will automatically be confiscated.

Consequences for Students in Years 7-11

- Any phone that is seen outside of a school bag or heard during the school day (school approved or otherwise) will automatically be confiscated. This includes phones that have been heard from within a student's uniform or bag.
- When a phone is confiscated, it will be handed in to Reception or the Pastoral Office and be safely locked away.
- When an approved phone is confiscated, it will be securely locked away until collection by a parent at the end of the day.
- Prohibited phones will be securely locked away and returned after **four weeks** of term time.
- If the four-week period ends during a school holiday, students will receive their phone back on return to school, and not before.
- There will be no option for the SIM card to be removed – it will be confiscated and kept along with the phone.
- On confiscation, parents or carers will be contacted to inform them that their child's phone has been confiscated.
- If needed, the student will be allowed to contact their parents/carers by visiting Reception.

Non-Compliance with Staff Requests:

Should a student fail to comply with a member of staff's request to confiscate their smartphone or 'brick' phone, the school will follow its behaviour policy.

Trips and Residential:

This policy applies to all trips and residential. Students are permitted to take a brick phone on school trips and residential. Students can have access to their non-smartphone during social times.

Extra-curricular after school activities/events:

Smartphones are prohibited at all extra-curricular clubs or activities. Any student attending an extra-curricular club or activity outside of school hours; 8.40am – 3.10pm will be allowed to use their brick phone (not smartphone) to contact parents / carers where this is necessary.

To help support our policy aims as well as reinforcing safeguarding, no recording or photography will be permitted by audience members at after school events.

Sixth Form Students:

We recognise that as young adults, Sixth Form students are at a stage where they can use smartphones and associated technology responsibly while being aware of the risks. We also acknowledge that Sixth Formers often require a smartphone for work, applying for and securing employment, driving and preparing for university and apprenticeships.

Sixth Form students are permitted to bring a smartphone or 'brick' phone to school and use this on site and during the school day in the Sixth Form Centre and designated Sixth Form areas.

These designated areas will be reviewed periodically and published in the Sixth Form Handbook.

Any type of mobile phone must be switched off and placed in students' bags during lesson time and when in any other non-designated areas on site. Sixth Form students who do not adhere to this expectation will incur sanctions set out in the Sixth Form Handbook.

Appendix 1: Consequence Flow Diagram

Mobile phone consequences flow chart



- Student is seen with phone
- Student's phone goes off in the bag or pocket
- Student is caught checking or looking at their phone for any reason
- A bag search finds a smart phone
- A bag search finds a brick phone that is turned on

