Smartphone Free School Policy

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Introduction

At King's Cross Academy, we are committed to creating a learning environment that is focused, respectful, and inclusive for all. In an age where digital connectivity is ever-present, we recognise the growing concerns around the impact of smartphone use on young people's wellbeing, concentration, and social development—both in and beyond the classroom.

This policy sets out our approach to ensuring that smartphones do not distract from learning, disrupt the school environment, or compromise the safety and wellbeing of our pupils. By becoming a smartphone-free school, we aim to foster stronger face-to-face relationships, reduce unnecessary distractions, and promote healthy digital habits that align with our school values.

Our commitment is not to reject technology, but to use it purposefully and at the right time, in the right way. This policy has been developed in consultation with pupils, staff, and families and reflects our shared responsibility to help children thrive academically, socially, and emotionally.

Objectives

The objectives of this policy are:

- To minimise distractions and maximise learning time by ensuring classrooms remain focused, calm, and free from unnecessary digital interruptions.

- To promote face-to-face social interaction and strengthen pupils' interpersonal skills, empathy, and collaboration.

- To safeguard pupils' wellbeing by reducing exposure to online pressures, social media, and inappropriate content during the school day.

- To support digital boundaries and healthy habits that children can carry with them beyond the school environment.

- To maintain a safe and respectful school culture, where all pupils feel secure and free from the potential risks associated with mobile phone misuse.

- To ensure clarity and consistency for pupils, staff, and families regarding expectations around phone use during the school day.

- To model responsible technology use by encouraging purposeful and age-appropriate engagement with digital tools under adult guidance.

Safeguarding and Online Safety

This policy is underpinned by the school's commitment to safeguarding all pupils. By

becoming a smartphone-free school, we reduce the risk of pupils being exposed to inappropriate content, online bullying, image-sharing, or grooming—either on the school site or during school hours.

The policy aligns with our statutory safeguarding responsibilities under Keeping Children Safe in Education and is consistent with our wider curriculum provision, including:

- **Online safety education** delivered through computing and PSHE
- **Anti-bullying and peer relationship work**, including the use of social media
- **Digital literacy** development, including safe searching and age-appropriate content
- **Support for vulnerable pupils**, who may be at greater risk of exploitation or online harm

We recognise that the digital world can present both opportunities and risks. This policy helps pupils develop healthier digital habits while ensuring that school remains a safe, focused, and inclusive space.

Mobile Phone Agreement

We recognise that some families may wish their child to carry a mobile phone for safety when travelling to and from school. In line with our smartphone-free policy, this is permitted only under the following conditions:

- The device must not be a smartphone and should have no access to mobile data, internet browsing, or social media. We recommend basic models such as those which can be found here: https://smartphonefreechildhood.co.uk/alternatives

- The phone must be clearly labelled with the pupil's full name.

- Upon arrival, the phone must be switched off before entering the school grounds and handed in to the Deputy Headteacher's office.

- Phones may only be used after school, off-site and away from school entrances.

Please note that mobile phones are not permitted under any circumstances on school trips or residential visits.

Pupils found with smartphones or using a mobile phone during the school day will have the device confiscated. Confiscated phones will be held securely by the Senior Leadership Team and returned only to a parent or carer at the end of the respective half term.

Parental Agreement

At the start of each academic year, as part of our Home School Agreement, we will ask families to reaffirm their support for our commitment to a smartphone-free environment. We believe that a consistent partnership between home and school is essential in promoting

safe, focused, and connected learning spaces. By signing the Home School Agreement, families acknowledge the importance of limiting smartphone use during the school day and agree to uphold the expectations set out in this policy.

The section of the Home School Agreement relating specifically to our smartphone policy is included below:

Smartphone-Free Commitment
I understand that King's Cross Academy is a smartphone-free school. If my child needs to bring a phone to school for safety reasons, I will ensure it is a basic, non-smart device with no internet access. I agree that it will be clearly labelled with my child's name, switched off before entering the school premises, and handed to the Deputy Headteacher upon arrival. I support the school's stance that smartphones are not permitted on school trips or residential visits, and I understand that any smartphone brought to school will be confiscated and returned at the end of the half term.

Supporting pupils at KCA

We recognise that fostering pupil understanding and ownership of our smartphone-free approach is crucial to ensuring its success. To this end, we will take a proactive, age-appropriate, and inclusive approach to educating children about the reasons behind the policy and what it means for them.

Clear Communication in Assemblies and Class Discussions
We will introduce the policy to pupils through assemblies and class-based conversations, using language appropriate to their age and understanding. These sessions will explore the rationale behind the policy, including topics such as online safety, social interaction, and mental well-being. Children will be encouraged to ask questions and contribute their views.

Integration into the PSHE Curriculum
As part of our personal, social, health, and economic (PSHE) education, we will explore themes such as digital responsibility, the impact of screen time, and the value of face-to-face communication. These lessons will support children in understanding not just the "what" of the policy, but the "why"—helping them to develop lifelong digital habits.

Visible Reminders and Expectations
Classrooms and shared spaces will display age-appropriate reminders about the school's smartphone expectations. Staff will regularly reinforce the policy in a consistent and supportive manner, helping pupils to internalise the norms and routines associated with device use.

Peer Leadership and Role Modelling
Where appropriate, older pupils will be invited to take part in promoting the policy through pupil leadership roles, such as digital ambassadors or school council representatives. These pupils can help model positive behaviours and act as champions for the school's values.

Through this multi-layered approach, we aim to ensure that all pupils not only understand the smartphone-free policy but feel supported and empowered to thrive within it.