

Kenilworth Town Schools' Smartphone Use Policy



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Contents

1. Purpose	3
2. Rationale	3
3. Shared Aims	3
4. Scope	3
5. Policy Principles and Expectations	4
5.1 Primary Schools	4
5.2 Secondary Schools	4
5.3 Exceptions.....	4
5.4 Staff Expectations	4
5.5 Visitors and Contractors	5
6. Support for Families.....	5
7. Review and Monitoring	5
8. Conclusion	5

1. Purpose

Kenilworth schools are committed to supporting children's wellbeing, mental health, concentration, and social development. Growing national and local concerns around childhood smartphone use highlight the need for a consistent, supportive, and research informed approach across the town.

This policy sets out a shared, agreed framework for managing smartphone use across all Kenilworth primary and secondary schools and for supporting families in making informed decisions about delaying smartphone use.

2. Rationale

Schools across Kenilworth have collectively observed:

- Increasing levels of distraction, reduced focus, and higher levels of anxiety linked to smartphone use
- Earlier exposure to social media, online conflict, and inappropriate content
- Impact on sleep, face to face social development, and emotional wellbeing
- Parental pressure to provide smartphones at younger ages due to social expectations

Research from organisations such as Smartphone Free Childhood, the Warwickshire Online Safety Hub, and Papaya Talks suggests that delayed smartphone use, reduced screen time, and clear boundaries at school contribute significantly to improved wellbeing and safer digital habits.

This policy aims to create a shared, town-wide culture that supports these outcomes.

3. Shared Aims

Across all Kenilworth schools, we commit to:

1. Raising awareness of key risks and issues related to early smartphone use
2. Supporting families who wish to delay smartphone ownership by creating consistent expectations across schools and connecting like-minded parents
3. Reducing overall smartphone use among children and young people in order to minimise negative impacts on wellbeing
4. Ensuring a consistent experience as children transition from primary to secondary school
5. Providing clear guidance that is supportive, realistic, and aligned with local and national safeguarding expectations

4. Scope

This policy applies to:

- All pupils aged 2 to 16 across Kenilworth primary, infant, junior, and secondary schools
- All staff, visitors, and volunteers in relation to use of personal devices around pupils
- All school environments including classrooms, corridors, playgrounds, clubs, and trips unless otherwise stated

For the purposes of this policy, smart devices include smartphones, smartwatches with communication or internet capability, and similar wearable technology.

Individual school rules may add detail for local context but must align with this shared framework.

5. Policy Principles and Expectations

5.1 Primary Schools

- Children are not permitted to bring smartphones into school unless there are exceptional, pre-agreed safeguarding circumstances
- Where a phone is required, for example for complex travel arrangements, the device must be:
 - A simple phone with call and text functions
 - Handed in to the school office or designated adult on arrival
 - Collected at the end of the day
- Smartphones must not be used on school premises before or after school hours

5.2 Secondary Schools

Secondary schools will adopt a smartphone free school day, meaning:

- All students must place their smartphone into their school issued locking pouch on arrival at school
- Once placed inside, the pouch must be locked using the school's designated system, for example magnetic locking stations, and kept closed throughout the entire school day
- The locked pouch must be stored in the student's bag and remain sealed and inaccessible until the end of the school day
- Students may only unlock their pouches at authorised unlocking stations when they leave the school site
- Smartphones must not be used at any point during the school day, including:
 - Lesson times
 - Social times such as break and lunch
 - Movement between lessons
 - Clubs, study sessions, detentions, or interventions

Students must not attempt to open, tamper with, or damage the pouch.

Any attempt to do so will be treated as a behaviour issue and sanctions will apply according to each school's behaviour policy.

Where students need to contact home, they must request access to a school managed phone.

Where parents need to contact their child, they must do so via the school office.

5.3 Exceptions

Exceptions may be granted for:

- Medical needs requiring specific apps or monitoring
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities where technology supports learning

These exceptions will be agreed in advance.

5.4 Staff Expectations

- Staff should model positive and professional device use by ensuring personal phones are not visible during lessons or when supervising pupils unless in emergencies or as part of a designated role (whereby there is a prior agreement with the Headteacher).

5.5 Visitors and Contractors

Visitors must avoid using smartphones in front of pupils unless essential to their work or authorised by the school.

6. Support for Families

To reduce pressure on families, the collection of schools will work together to:

- Promote alternatives to smartphones such as simple call and text phones
- Connect families wishing to delay smartphone introduction to relevant organisations
- Host smartphone awareness sessions annually for year 5 children
- Inform parents in transition meetings at Kenilworth school about the rationale described in the document for why smartphones will not be allowed on site
- Provide digital guidance for managing online risks
- Share how children will be during transition from primary to secondary with regard to smartphone use.

7. Review and Monitoring

- This policy and its impact will be reviewed annually across all Kenilworth schools in their January head's meetings
- Any updates will be communicated town wide to maintain a unified approach

8. Phased Cohort Approach

The parents of the cohort born in 2015–2016, who will transition to secondary school in 2027, will be the first to be directly encouraged by primary schools not to buy their children smartphones. Where communication is necessary, families will instead be encouraged to use simple, non-smart communication phones.

When this cohort moves into secondary school, smartphones and other smart devices will not be permitted on the secondary school site. Kenilworth School will also actively encourage families to continue delaying smartphone ownership outside of school.

This approach will then apply to each subsequent year group as they progress through the education system, creating a consistent, sustainable, and long-term approach across the town.

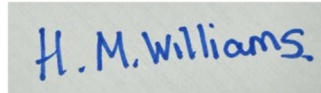
9. Conclusion

Kenilworth schools share a collective responsibility to protect and promote children's wellbeing.

This policy reflects our joint commitment to reducing smartphone related harms, supporting families, and building a safe, thoughtful digital culture from early childhood through adolescence.



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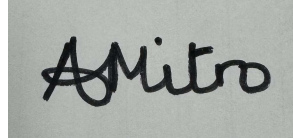
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