

## PLYMSTOCK SCHOOL

### Electronic Device Policy 2025/2026

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Reviewed:	July 2025
Next Review:	July 2026

#### Our Ambition

Through consistently delivering the best possible curriculum and unlocking its potential for all learners, we aim to empower young people to have the knowledge and skills they need to be successful in life and make a positive difference to their communities.

#### Our Vision

Achieve Excellence through Curriculum and Culture.

#### Our Values

Be Kind - We **value and respect every person equally**; always **treating others with courtesy and consideration** and **displaying empathy, tolerance and kindness** in all that we do.

Work Hard - We **demonstrate a commitment to our school and wider community, making the most of opportunities available** and are **dedicated and willing to apply great effort to achieve our very best**.

Aim High - We **act with courage** and **value integrity above all**. We have **high ambition of ourselves and others, demonstrating determination, resilience and grit** in the face of opportunity and challenge. **We never give up!**

#### Aims

This policy aims to create a school environment free from the distraction and disruption caused by mobile devices. As stated in research reports, mobile phones present significant classroom management challenges, negatively impact pupil focus, and can facilitate cheating and inappropriate behaviours. By prohibiting use, we foster an environment optimised for pupil learning and social interaction.

Research literature states, 'Screens degrade attention, learning community and mental health. Ensuring extended spans of time when students are reliably screen free- not merely not using them but with screen actually not present- is necessary to rebuilding attention, optimizing learning and maximising social well-being.' (*Reconnect by Lemov, Lewis, Williams, Frazier p.16*)

#### Purpose

- To support a culture of disruption free classrooms and maximise pupil learning, this means pupils being able to focus fully on tasks and to maintain that focus
- Attention is central to every learning task and quality of attention paid by learners shapes the outcome of the learning endeavour. Learning tasks require sustained concentration and focus, often for significant periods of time

- By restricting electronic device use within school time, supports pupils to have the capacity for sustained periods of intense concentration because mobile phones socialise pupils to fracture their own attention
- To support pupils arriving to lessons on time
- To encourage a learning environment where pupils positively and respectfully engage with each other and build positive relationships, without the distraction of electronic devices
- To encourage pupils to be responsible for their own actions and belongings
- To create a safe environment where online behaviour and conduct is meeting the school expectations
- To provide opportunities for social interaction where communication and the building of relationships contribute towards developing a sense of belonging to the school community

### **Electronic Device Expectations**

Plymstock School is a no electronic devices school. Once pupils have entered the school site, in the morning, electronic devices are not permitted to be used  
Electronic devices should be **turned off and in bags** before pupils enter the school and not used until they have left the school site.

Our policy follows a, '**We see it, We hear it, You lose it**' approach. This includes being visible in blazer, coat, shorts and trouser pockets.

#### **1<sup>st</sup> occasion per half term:**

Staff issue a negative point on Class Charts (electronic device breach)

Staff will instruct the pupil to hand in their device. (Confiscation)

The item will be safely stored in the pastoral hub and pupils are expected to collect it at the end of the school day.

Parent/carers will be made aware of the electronic device breach by Class Charts

#### **2<sup>nd</sup> occasion per half term:**

Staff issue a negative point on Class Charts (electronic device breach)

Staff will instruct the pupil to hand in their device. (Confiscation)

The item will be safely stored in the pastoral hub and pupils are expected to collect it at the end of the school day.

Parent/carers will be made aware of the electronic device breach by Class Charts

#### **Further occasions:**

Staff will continue to issue a negative point on Class Charts (electronic device breach) and will instruct the pupil to hand in their device. (Confiscation). Parent/carers will be made aware of the electronic device breach by Class Charts

These further occasions could result in further outcomes for failure to meet the school expectations and the electronic device could be requested to be collected by a parent/carer or handed in at the start of each school day for a set period of time.

### **Persistent misuse of electronic devices – Safety Plan**

Where there are concerns regarding persistent or inappropriate misuse of electronic devices which are linked to safeguarding pupils and staff, it may be necessary to implement a safety plan. This is a agreed plan between the school, pupil and parent/carers which clearly identifies actions that will be taken to mitigate any known risks. It is likely that failure to adhere to the plan will result in a consequence.

If pupils adhere to the guidelines in this policy, there will be no further outcome for using an electronic device other than confiscation.

### **Sixth Form**

Sixth Form pupils' electronic devices will only be confiscated should they use it outside their designated areas. In this instance the electronic device will be taken to the Sixth form Office. Parent/carer collection or a requirement to hand it in at the start of each School day for a set period of time is unlikely to be necessary. However, we reserve the right to review this for repeat cases.

### **Refusal to cooperate**

If a pupil refuses to hand over an electronic device that has not met the 'We see it, We hear it, You lose it' approach, a member of the Pastoral or Senior Leadership Team will then follow this up. This can lead to a further consequence for non-compliance - Internal Reflection.

### **Electronic devices must not be used to**

- Contain files or data which relate to an offence, or which may cause harm to another person. This includes, but is not limited to, indecent images of children, pornography, abusive messages, images or videos, or evidence relating to suspected criminal behaviour.
- Store and/access inappropriate/undesirable imagery or material, including those which promote pornography, violence or bullying of any description;
- Record, take or share images, video and audio on any electronic device (unless otherwise explicitly agreed by the Headteacher or a member of the Senior Leadership Team);
- Record, take or share any images, video and audio of other pupils or staff at the school.

The school will search electronic devices should they be led to believe or consider the content to be related to any of the above points.

It is the responsibility of pupils who use electronic devices in connection with School learning or School business to abide by the guidelines outlined in this document. It is a privilege to use such devices on the school premises and for School purposes and therefore, pupils who contravene these guidelines will lose the right to use any electronic devices on School premises or for School use outside the School.

As with all prohibited items, staff should first consider the appropriate safeguarding response if they find images, data or files on an electronic device that they reasonably suspect are likely to put a person at risk. Designated staff may examine any data or files on an electronic device they have confiscated because of a search, as defined in paragraph 57 of the Search and Screening guidance 2022, if there is good reason to do so.

### **Emergency situations**

In case of an emergency, a pupil will be given permission to use their mobile phone under direct supervision only and this will take place in an office area where possible, but always under direct supervision

Pupils may be granted access to school telephones via the school offices should they need to contact a parent/carer or in the event of an emergency but always under direct supervision of a staff member

Parents/carers are requested, in cases of emergency, to contact the school first so the School are aware of any potential issue and can make or support the necessary arrangements. The School Reception remains a vital and appropriate point of contact and can ensure your child is reached quickly and assisted in any relevant way. Passing on messages through School Reception also reduces the likelihood of inadvertently disrupting lessons and can ensure appropriate supervision.

Electronic devices that are found in the school and whose owner cannot be located should be handed to the School Reception. The school accepts no responsibility for replacing lost, stolen or damaged electronic devices. The school accepts no responsibility for pupils who lose or have their electronic devices stolen or damaged while travelling to and from School.

### **Residential Trips**

Residential trips are an extension of the school's learning environment, and as such, all existing behaviour expectations and policies continue to apply throughout the duration of the trip. Pupils are permitted to bring mobile phones and electronic devices for use during travel to and from the residential venue. Devices may also be used during the day while on the residential, at appropriate times. However, all devices must be handed in to a designated member of staff each evening for safekeeping and will be returned the following morning. This is designed to support student engagement, promote positive social interaction, and ensure the safety and wellbeing of all pupils.

### **Searching electronic devices**

Headteachers and staff they authorise have a statutory power to search a pupil or their possessions where they have reasonable grounds to suspect that the pupil may have a prohibited item or any other item that the school rules identify as an item which may be searched for.

The list of prohibited items is:

- knives and weapons;
- alcohol;
- illegal drugs;
- stolen items;
- any article that the member of staff reasonably suspects has been, or is likely to be used: to commit an offence, or to cause personal injury to, or damage to property of; any person (including the pupil).

Electronic devices, including mobile phones, can contain files or data which relate to an offence, or which may cause harm to another person. This includes, but is not limited to, indecent images of children, pornography, abusive messages, images or videos, or evidence relating to suspected criminal behaviour.

As with all prohibited items, staff should first consider the appropriate safeguarding response if they find images, data or files on an electronic device that they reasonably suspect are likely to put a person at risk.

Staff may examine any data or files on an electronic device they have confiscated as a result of a search, as defined below, if there is good reason to do so.

An authorised staff member carrying out a search can confiscate any item that they have reasonable grounds for suspecting:

- poses a risk to staff or pupils;
- is prohibited, or identified in the school rules for which a search can be made or
- is evidence in relation to an offence.

If the member of staff conducting the search suspects they may find an indecent image of a child (sometimes known as nude or semi-nude images), the member of staff should never intentionally view the image, and must never copy, print, share, store or save such images. When an incident might involve an indecent image of a child and/or video, the member of staff should confiscate the device, avoid looking at the device and refer the incident to the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy) as the most appropriate person to advise on the school's response.

If a member of staff finds any image, data or file that they suspect might constitute a specified offence, then they must be delivered to the police as soon as is reasonably practicable.

In exceptional circumstances members of staff may dispose of the image or data if there is a good reason to do so. In determining a 'good reason' to examine or erase the data or files, the member of staff must have regard to the following guidance issued by the Secretary of State below.

In determining whether there is a 'good reason' to examine the data or files, the member of staff should reasonably suspect that the data or file on the device has been, or could be used, to cause harm, undermine the safe environment of the school and disrupt teaching, or be used to commit an offence.

In determining whether there is a 'good reason' to erase any data or files from the device, the member of staff should consider whether the material found may constitute evidence relating to a suspected offence. In those instances, the data or files should not be deleted, and the device must be handed to the police as soon as it is reasonably practicable.

If the data or files are not suspected to be evidence in relation to an offence, a member of staff may delete the data or files if the continued existence of the data or file is likely to continue to cause harm to any person and the pupil and/or the parent refuses to delete the data or files themselves.

### **Online Behaviour Incidents**

The way in which pupils relate to one another online can have a significant impact on the culture of the school. Plymstock School believes the same standards of behaviour should occur online and everyone should be treated with kindness, respect and dignity, and this is underpinned by KCSIE 2025 and the schools Online Safety policy (WeST). The school will apply a consequence to pupils when their behaviour online poses a threat or causes harm to

another pupil, and/or could have repercussions for the orderly running of the school, when the pupil is identifiable as a member of the school or if the behaviour could adversely affect the reputation of the school and school community.

**Confiscation as a disciplinary penalty**

Schools' general power to discipline enables a member of staff to confiscate, retain or dispose of a pupil's property as a disciplinary penalty, where reasonable to do so.

The law protects members of staff from liability in any proceedings brought against them for any loss of, or damage to, any item they have confiscated, provided they acted lawfully.

**Further information**

- Searching, screening and confiscation advice for Schools, July 2022