St Mary's Catholic Primary School
Mobile Phone Policy 2026 - 2027

Approved by:		Date: Autumn Term 2026
Last reviewed on:	Autumn Term 2026	
Next review due by:	Autumn Term 2027	

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1.Introduction and aims

At St Mary's Catholic Primary School, our policy aims to:

- Ensure our environment is mobile phone-free by default
- Ensure the safe, responsible, and lawful use of mobile phones, where applicable
- Provide clear guidelines for the use of mobile phones for pupils, staff, parents/carers, visitors, and volunteers
- Support the school's other policies, especially those related to child protection and behaviour

This policy also aims to address some of the challenges posed by mobile phones in school, such as:

- Risks to child protection
- Data protection issues
- Risk of theft, loss, or damage
- Appropriate use of technology for learning purposes

Note: Throughout this policy, 'mobile phones' refers to mobile phones and similar devices.

2. Relevant guidance

This policy meets the requirements of section 36 of the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act 2026, and the Department for Education (DfE)'s mobile phone guidance and behaviour guidance. Further guidance that should be considered alongside this policy is Keeping Children Safe in Education.

3. Roles and responsibilities

Staff

All staff (including teachers, support staff, and supply staff) are required to actively enforce this policy and challenge any breach of mobile phone restrictions immediately and consistently. Volunteers, or anyone else otherwise engaged by the school, must alert a member of staff if they witness, or are aware of, a breach of this policy.

The Headteacher and DSL are responsible for monitoring the policy and reviewing it every two years and holding staff and pupils accountable for its implementation.

Staff will address any questions or concerns from parents/carers quickly and clearly communicate the reasons for prohibiting the use of mobile phones.

4. Use of mobile phones by staff

Personal mobile phones

Staff (including volunteers, contractors, and anyone else otherwise engaged by the school) are not permitted to use their personal mobile phone during the school day, while children are present. Use of personal mobile phones must be restricted to non-contact time, and to areas of the school where pupils are not present (such as the staffroom).

There may be circumstances in which it is appropriate for a member of staff to have use of their phone during contact time for personal reasons. For instance (this list is non-exhaustive):

- For emergency contact by their child, or their child's school
- In the case of acutely ill dependents or family members

The headteacher will decide on a case-by-basis whether to allow for special arrangements.
If special arrangements are not deemed necessary, school staff can use the school office number 01704 880626 as a point of emergency contact.

Data protection

Staff must not use their personal mobile phones to process personal data, or any other confidential school information, including entering such data into generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools such as chatbots (e.g., ChatGPT and Google Gemini).
More detailed guidance on data protection can be found within the school's data protection policy and ICT acceptable use policy.

Safeguarding

Staff must not give their personal contact details to parents/carers or pupils, including connecting through social media and messaging apps.

Staff must avoid publicising their contact details on any social media platform or website, to avoid unwanted contact by parents/carers or pupils.

Staff must not use their personal mobile phones to take photographs or recordings of pupils, their work, or anything else that could identify a pupil. If it is necessary to take photos or recordings as part of a lesson / school trip / activity, this must be done using school equipment.

Using personal mobiles for work purposes

In some circumstances, it may be appropriate for staff to use personal mobile phones or a similar device during the school day in front of pupils for work. Such circumstances may include, but are not limited to:

- Use of multi-factor authentication
- Emergency evacuations
- Supervising off-site trips
- Supervising residential visits

In these circumstances, staff will:
Use their mobile phones in an appropriate and professional manner, in line with our staff code of conduct.
Not use their phones to take photographs or recordings of pupils, their work, or anything else that could identify a pupil.
Refrain from using their phones to contact parents/carers. If necessary, contact must be made via the school office.

Sanctions

Staff that fail to adhere to this policy may face disciplinary action.
See the school's staff disciplinary policy and Code of Conduct for more information.

5. Use of mobile phones by pupils

Pupils must not use their mobile phones during the school day, including during lessons, in the time between lessons, at breaktimes and at lunchtimes, unless explicitly authorised by a member of staff (for example, for a specific medical reason).
If a child brings mobile phone into school:

- Staff will collect the mobile phones on arrival, make sure they are switched off and stored until the end of the day – where it is then handed to a responsible adult.

Exceptional circumstances may include:

- Support for pupils with specific medical needs (for example, for diabetic pupils who use continuous glucose monitoring systems that connect to a smart device).

Arrangements for these circumstances will be discussed with the headteacher, DSL and SENCO, and decisions made on a case-by-case basis.

Pupils will be taught the risks that are associated with the use of mobile phones, both in school and more broadly, to ensure they understand the decision to prohibit the use of mobile phones throughout the school day. These risks can include a loss of focus in lessons, classroom disruption, and an increase in bullying. Pupils will be encouraged to see a mobile-phone free environment as desirable and valuable.

Use of smartwatches by pupils

Children are not allowed to use or wear Smart watches in school. The DfE's mobile phones guidance includes in the term 'mobile phones' all devices with communications and smart technology, therefore pupils cannot wear or use smart watches in school.

Exceptions

The school may permit pupils to use a mobile phone in school, due to exceptional circumstances. Permission will only be granted where there is a documented safeguarding or medical necessity. To request such permission, pupils or parents/carers should contact Mrs. J. Preston.
Any pupils who are given permission must then adhere to the school's code of conduct and acceptable use policy.

Sanctions

If a child brings a mobile phone into school, staff will make sure the mobile phone is switched off and removed from the child. It will be stored in a secure location by staff. The Mobile device will then be given to a responsible adult at the end of the day.
Staff will ensure that the adult is aware of and adheres to the school mobile phone policy. If the parent would like to seek permission for their child to bring their mobile phone to school, they should consult section 5 of this policy and request permission from Mrs. J. Preston.

6. Use of mobile phones by parents/carers, volunteers, and visitors

Parents are encouraged to reinforce and discuss this policy at home as appropriate, including the risks associated with mobile phone use and the benefits of a mobile phone-free environment.

Parents/carers, visitors, and volunteers (including governors and contractors) must adhere to this policy as it relates to staff if they are on the school site during the school day.

This means:

- Not taking pictures or recordings of pupils, unless it is at a public event (such as a school fair), or of their own child
- Using any photographs or recordings for personal use only, and not posting on social media without consent
- Not using phones in lessons, when working with pupils or while children are present

Parents/carers, visitors, and volunteers will be informed of the rules for mobile phone use when they sign in at reception or attend a public event at school.
Parents/carers or volunteers supervising school trips or residential visits must not:

- Use their phone to contact other parents/carers
- Take photos or recordings of pupils, their work, or anything else that could identify a pupil

Parents/carers or volunteers supervising trips are also responsible for enforcing the school's policy for pupils using their phones, as set out in section 5 above, but must refer any sanctions to a member of staff, as they do not have the power to search or confiscate devices.

Parents/carers must use the school office as the first point of contact if they need to contact their child during the school day. They must not try to contact their child on their personal mobile during the school day.

7. Loss, theft, or damage

Pupils bringing mobile phones to school must ensure that their phones are appropriately labelled, ready to be stored away securely in their class teacher's drawer when not in use during the school day.

Pupils must secure their mobile phones as much as possible, including using passwords or pin codes to protect access to the phone's functions.
Staff must also secure their personal phones, as well as any work phone provided to them. Failure by staff to do so could result in data breaches.

The school accepts no responsibility for mobile phones that are lost, damaged or stolen on school premises or transport, during school visits or trips, or while pupils are travelling to and from school. Confiscated phones will be stored in the Class teacher's drawer and be the responsibility of the class teacher until handed to a responsible adult at the end of the school day. Staff should ensure that the phone is switched off before storage.

Lost phones should be returned to the school Office. The school will then attempt to contact the owner.

8. Monitoring and review

The school is committed to ensuring that this policy has a positive impact on pupils' education, behaviour and welfare. When reviewing the policy, the school will consider:

- Feedback from parents/carers and pupils
- Feedback from staff
- Records of behaviour and safeguarding incidents
- Relevant advice from the Department for Education, the local authority, and any other relevant organisations
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If there are any concerns regarding this policy, these should be brought to the attention of Mrs. J. Preston or Mrs. D McGrath in a timely manner.

9. Appendix 1: Code of conduct / acceptable use agreement for pupils allowed to bring their phones to school due to exceptional circumstances

Pupil Code of conduct agreement
Key stage 2 ONLY
In conjunction with Acceptable Use Policy

- You must obey the following rules if you bring your mobile phone to school:
- You may not use your mobile phone throughout the school day, including lesson times, between lessons, breaktime, and lunchtime, unless a teacher specifically allows you to.
- Phones must be switched off (not just put on 'silent').
- You may not use your mobile phone in the toilets or changing rooms. This is to protect the privacy and welfare of other pupils.
- You cannot take photos or recordings (either video or audio) of school staff or other pupils.
- Avoid sharing your contact details with people you do not know, and do not share other people's contact details without their consent.
- Do not share your phone's password(s) or access code(s) with anyone else.
- Do not use your mobile phone to bully, intimidate or harass anyone or otherwise to act in breach of the school's behaviour policy. This includes bullying, harassing or intimidating pupils or staff via:
  Email
  Text/messaging app
  Social media
- Do not use your phone to send or receive anything that may be a criminal offence. For instance, by 'sexting.'
- Rules on bullying, harassment and intimidation apply to how you use your mobile phone even when you are not in school.
- Do not use vulgar, obscene, or derogatory language while on the phone or when using social media. This language is not permitted under the school's behaviour policy.
- Do not use your phone to view or share pornography or other harmful content.
- You must comply with a request by a member of staff to switch off, or hand over, a phone. Refusal to comply is a breach of the school's behaviour policy and will be dealt with accordingly.
- Mobile phones are not permitted in any internal or external exam or test environment. If you have a mobile phone, you will be asked to store it appropriately, or turn it over to an exam invigilator, before entering the test room. Bringing a phone into the test room can result in your exam being declared invalid.

10. Appendix 2: Permission form allowing a pupil to bring their phone to school

Pupil details	
Pupil name:	
Year group/class:	
Parent/carer(s) name(s):	

The school has agreed to allow _____to bring their mobile phone to school because they:

- Travel to and from school alone
- Are a young carer
- Need the phone to support their medical needs
- Are attending a school trip or residential where use of mobile phones will be allowed
- Attend a before or after-school activity where a mobile phone is required for the activity, or to contact parents/carers

Pupils who bring a mobile phone to school must abide by the school's policy on the use of mobile phones, and its code of conduct and acceptable use policy.

The school reserves the right to revoke permission if a pupil does not abide by the policy.

Parent/carer signature: _____

Pupil signature (where appropriate): _____

For school use only	
Authorised by:	
Date:	

11. Appendix 3: Template mobile phone information slip for visitors

Use of mobile phones and similar devices in our school
Our school is a mobile phone-free environment.

- Please keep your mobile phone on silent/vibrate while on the school grounds
- Please do not use phones where children are present. If you must use your phone, you may go to the front office.
- Do not take photos or recordings of pupils (unless it is your own child), or staff
- Do not use your phone in lessons, when working with pupils or while children are present

The school accepts no responsibility for phones that are lost, damaged or stolen while you are on the school grounds.
A full copy of our mobile phone policy is available from the school office.

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