

St Mary's CE School

Mobile Phone Policy

St Mary's CE Primary School

Approved by:	Governing Body / Headteacher
Date:	September 2026

1. Introduction and Aims

At St Mary's CE Primary School, we recognise that mobile phones and similar devices (including smartphones and smartwatches) are an integral part of modern daily life for pupils, parents/carers, and staff. However, in line with Department for Education standards, our school environment must be phone-free by default to foster a calm, safe, and focused learning environment.

This policy aims to:

- Promote safe, responsible, and lawful device use.
- Set clear expectations for pupils, staff, parents/carers, visitors, and volunteers.
- Support key policies, particularly those relating to Child Protection, Safeguarding, Behaviour and Relationships, and Data Protection.
- Mitigate phone-related risks, including classroom disruption, cyberbullying, data/privacy breaches, safeguarding vulnerabilities, and loss or damage.

Note: In this policy, "mobile phones" refers to mobile phones, smartphones, smartwatches, and all electronic communications or smart technology with similar capabilities (e.g., messaging, internet browsing, or audio/video recording).

2. Relevant Guidance & Statutory Framework

This policy is written in accordance with the Department for Education's (DfE) statutory guidance **Mobile Phones in Schools** (September 2026), alongside statutory guidance on **Behaviour in Schools, Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE)**, and duties under the **Equality Act 2010**.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

3.1 Staff

- All staff (including teachers, support staff, supply staff, and external visitors such as sports coaches and music tutors) are responsible for enforcing this policy consistently.
- Volunteers and contractors must alert a member of staff immediately if they witness or become aware of a breach of this policy.
- Staff will respond to parent/carers inquiries promptly and clarify the educational and safeguarding reasons for prohibiting mobile phone use.

3.2 Headteacher

- The Headteacher is responsible for overseeing the implementation, monitoring, and regular review of this policy every two years.
- The Headteacher holds staff and pupils accountable for adhering to these standard operating procedures.

3.3 Governors

- The Governing Body will receive regular reports on the implementation of this policy and any associated behaviour or safeguarding issues.

4. Use of Mobile Phones by Staff

In accordance with DfE statutory guidance, staff must not use personal mobile phones for personal reasons in front of pupils at any point during the school day.

4.1 Personal Mobile Phones

- Personal devices must not be used during contact time or in areas where children are present. Personal phone use is limited to non-contact time in designated staff-only areas (such as the staffroom).
- Exceptional circumstances requiring personal phone access during contact time (e.g., acute family illness or urgent child care emergencies) must be explicitly agreed with the Headteacher in advance.
- Where special access is not granted, emergency contact must go through the main school office.

4.2 Data Protection & Safeguarding

- Personal devices must never be used to process personal data or confidential school information. Inputting pupil data into Generative AI tools (e.g., ChatGPT, Claude) on personal devices is strictly prohibited.
- Staff must not share personal contact details or connect with pupils or parents/carers on social media or messaging platforms.
- Staff are prohibited from using personal devices to take photographs or recordings of pupils or pupil work. School-owned equipment must be used for all school activities, trips, or

educational evidence.

4.3 Official Use of Personal Devices

When personal devices are approved for operational use (e.g., multi-factor authentication, educational trips, emergency evacuations), staff must:

- Act in full alignment with the Staff Code of Conduct.
- Refrain from taking unauthorised photos or contact parents/carers directly from personal numbers.

4.4 School-Issued Devices

Where staff are issued official school mobile devices:

- Devices must be used exclusively for authorised school operational purposes.
- Devices must remain password/PIN protected and kept secure at all times.

4.5 Sanctions

Failure by staff to comply with this policy may result in formal disciplinary action under the school's Staff Disciplinary Policy.

5. Use of Mobile Phones by Pupils

St Mary's CE Primary School is a **mobile phone-free environment by default** throughout the entire school day. Pupils are prohibited from using mobile phones during lessons, transition times between lessons, breaktimes, and lunchtimes.

5.1 General Rule

Pupils are not permitted to bring mobile phones or smart devices onto school premises. Exceptions are strictly granted on an individual basis with prior written authorisation from the Headteacher.

5.2 Smartwatches and Wearable Devices

Smartwatches with cellular, messaging, app, or audio/video recording capabilities fall under the scope of this policy.

- Pupils are discouraged from wearing smartwatches to school.
- Any device capable of sending/receiving messages or accessing external networks must be stored away under the same rules as mobile phones.

5.3 Exceptional Circumstances & Reasonable Adjustments

In accordance with DfE statutory guidance and the Equality Act 2010, exceptions may be made for:

- Pupils who travel to and from school independently.
- Pupils with specific medical monitoring needs (e.g., continuous glucose monitoring for diabetes).
- Young carers who require reasonable adjustments.
- Disabled pupils where phone access forms part of an agreed reasonable adjustment.

Process for Requesting Permission: Parents/carers must submit a formal request via email to the Headteacher.

If approved, the pupil and parent/carer must sign the Acceptable Use Agreement (Appendix 1) and complete the Permission Form (Appendix 2).

Storage Routine: Pupils granted permission to bring a phone for their walk to/from school must switch the device OFF (not silent) before entering school grounds and immediately hand it in at the main admin office upon arrival. Devices will be stored in a secure, locked cabinet and retrieved at the end of the school day.

5.4 Sanctions and Confiscation

If a pupil brings an unauthorized device to school or misuses an authorized device:

- **Confiscation:** The device will be confiscated by staff and stored in a locked cabinet in the admin office. Confiscated devices will ONLY be returned directly to a parent/carer.
- **Searching Devices:** Authorized staff have the legal power to search a pupil's phone where there is reasonable cause to suspect it contains evidence of criminal activity, extreme harm, or prohibited material (in accordance with DfE guidelines on searching, screening, and confiscation).
- **Severe Misconduct:** Incidents involving sexting, upskirting, harassment, cyberbullying, or illegal image sharing will be handled under the Behaviour & Relationships Policy and Child Protection Policy, with police or external agency involvement where appropriate.

6. Parents/Carers, Visitors, and Volunteers

All visitors, volunteers, governors, and parents/carers on school grounds during the school day must adhere to the standard operating rules:

- Devices must be set to silent or vibrate.
- Phone usage is prohibited in front of pupils or in instructional spaces.
- Taking photos or audio/video recordings of pupils or staff is strictly forbidden (except during approved public events for personal use only).
- Parents/carers must contact their children exclusively via the main school office and NEVER attempt to message or call a child directly during the school day.

7. Loss, Theft, or Damage

- All devices brought to school under approved exceptions must be clearly labelled and handed into the office immediately upon arrival.
- **Disclaimer:** St Mary's CE Primary School accepts no financial or legal responsibility for lost, stolen, or damaged mobile devices on school premises, on school transport, or during off-site visits.

8. Monitoring and Review

This policy will be formally reviewed every two years by the Headteacher and Governing Body. Reviews will take into account feedback from staff, pupils, and parents, as well as updated statutory guidance from the DfE and Local Authority.

Appendix 1: Code of Conduct / Acceptable Use Agreement (Pupils)

If you are granted permission to bring a mobile device to school due to exceptional circumstances, you must strictly follow these rules:

1. Switch your device OFF before entering the school gates.
2. Hand your phone directly into the main office upon arrival.
3. Do not use your device anywhere on school grounds, including toilets or changing rooms.
4. Never take photos, videos, or audio recordings of staff or other pupils.
5. Do not share personal contact details or account credentials with others.
6. Never use your device to send vulgar, abusive, or intimidating content, or to bully others.
7. Hand over your device immediately if instructed to do so by a member of staff.

Appendix 2: Parent/Carer Permission Form

PUPIL DETAILS	
Pupil Name:	
Year Group / Class:	
Parent/Carer Name(s):	

Reason for Request (Please check appropriate box):

- ☐ Travel to and from school independently
- ☐ Young carer responsibilities
- ☐ Medical monitoring adjustment (e.g., diabetes management)
- ☐ Other exceptional circumstance approved by the Headteacher

Agreement:

I confirm that my child requires their device for the reasons indicated above and agrees to abide by the school's Mobile Phone Policy and Code of Conduct. I understand that the school accepts no liability for loss or damage and that permission may be revoked if rules are breached.

Parent/Carer Signature: _____	Date: _____
Headteacher Signature: _____	Date: _____

Appendix 3: Visitor Mobile Phone Notice

Welcome to St Mary's CE Primary School

To safeguard our pupils and align with statutory guidance, please follow our phone rules while on site:

- Turn your phone to **silent/vibrate**.
- Do **not** use devices in areas where pupils are present.
- Photography and video recording are **strictly prohibited**.
- If you need to make an urgent call, please use the main staffroom or reception area.

Thank you for helping us keep our children safe.

