



St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

Mobile Phone Policy

Through our loving God

We follow in the footsteps of St Joseph

Who helps us to be gentle, caring and hardworking.

As we learn together, we love, value and welcome everyone.

Date adopted: September 2026

Review date: September 2027

Policy owner: Headteacher

Introduction and purpose

This policy sets out St Joseph's Catholic Primary School's approach to the possession and use of mobile phones, smart watches and other personal communication devices on the school site and during school-organised activities.

· It aims to:

- Protect pupil welfare, safeguarding and privacy.
- Minimise distraction and support high-quality teaching and learning.
- Ensure consistency with our Catholic values, school vision and expectations of mutual respect, courtesy and safeguarding.
- Set clear expectations for pupils, staff, parents/carers, visitors and governors.

Statutory and guidance context

This policy reflects and implements relevant UK Government and Department for Education guidance (including the DfE mobile phones in schools guidance and related communications guidance published in 2025–2026) and is consistent with the school's wider behaviour and safeguarding policies.

It will be implemented in a way which complies with the Equality Act 2010, safeguarding duties (Keeping Children Safe in Education), data protection requirements (UK GDPR & DPA 2018), and other applicable legislation.

Scope

Applies to all pupils (including pre-school children attending our Pre-School), staff (teaching and non-teaching), volunteers, governors, visitors, contractors and external providers when on the school site or taking part in school-run activities (including wrap-around care and residential).

Covers mobile phones, smartphones, smartwatches with communication capabilities, tablets, smart glasses and any personal device that can send/receive messages, images or access the internet or make recordings.

Policy statement

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School expects the school day to be free from personal mobile phone use by pupils to promote focus, reduce online harms and maintain high standards of learning.

We recognise that some families wish pupils to carry a phone for safety on their journey to and from school. These are permitted only under the conditions set out in this policy.

The school acknowledges exceptions for medical or pastoral reasons and will make reasonable adjustments for pupils with SEND or other needs, following co-produced plans with parents/carers.

Roles and responsibilities Headteacher / Senior Leadership Team

- Decide the final operational arrangements for implementing the policy, taking into account school context, safeguarding risk assessments and the views of families and pupils.
- Ensure staff training and consistent implementation.
- Communicate the policy widely (see Communications section).
- Review and monitor compliance and consider exemptions and reasonable adjustments.

Governing Body

- Approve the policy and ensure it aligns with statutory requirements and the school's broader behaviour, safeguarding and inclusion strategies.
- Receive regular reports on policy implementation and impact.

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

- Advise on safeguarding implications of mobile phone incidents (e.g., online abuse, image-sharing).
- Lead any investigation that involves potential safeguarding risk and coordinate with external agencies where necessary.

Class teachers and support staff

- Implement the policy in classrooms, playgrounds, wrap-around care and on trips.
- Reinforce expectations and follow procedures for breaches.
- Record incidents of misuse and refer safeguarding concerns to the DSL.

Parents / carers

- Ensure pupils and families understand and support the policy.
- Provide reasons for requests for exemptions (e.g., medical needs) and engage in co-production of any reasonable adjustment plans.

Pupils

- Follow the policy and accept the consequences for breaches.
- Report concerns relating to misuse, bullying or image-sharing to a trusted adult.

Visitors and contractors

- Adhere to the policy when on site; be informed of expectations at reception or within any visitor information.

Key implementation principles and procedures

1. Expected baseline rules for pupils

- Pupils must not use mobile phones or smart devices that can communicate or access the internet during the school day, including breaktimes, lunchtime, lessons, wrap-around care (7:10–6:00), and while on school premises, unless a formal exception has been agreed.
- Only pupils in Years 5 & 6 are permitted to bring mobile phones to school.
- If pupils bring a mobile phone to school, it must be:
 - Turned off (not on silent) and handed to the class teacher on arrival.
 - The mobile phones/smart devices will be stored securely in the school office and collected at the end of the school day by the pupil.
- Smartwatches or any other smart device with communication or recording capabilities must be turned off or set to flight mode and not used during the school day.
- Use of mobile phones on educational visits by pupils will not be permitted.

2. Exceptions and reasonable adjustments

- Medical needs: pupils who require a device to monitor a medical condition (e.g., glucose monitoring) will have an individual plan, storage and access arrangements agreed and documented. Staff will be trained as necessary.
- Independent travel: for pupils who walk home alone (relevant to Years 5 & 6), the school permits the device to be carried and used only before arrival and after departure from school premises; phones must still be handed in or turned off while on site unless a written arrangement exists.
- SEND and safeguarding adjustments: co-produced plans with families and the SENCO and/or DSL will set out any adaptations, taking care to balance autonomy with risk mitigation.
- All exemptions must be authorised by the Headteacher or a delegated SLT member and recorded.

3. Sanctions and responding to breaches

- The school's behaviour policy sets out graduated responses; typical actions include:
- First breach: reminder for pupil and parents/carers.
- Repeated breaches: pupil will not be permitted to have a mobile phone or smart device in school.

Confiscation procedure:

- A staff member will politely ask for the device.
- The device will be stored securely in the school office.
- Collection process will be clear (e.g., collected by parent/carer or returned to pupil at end of day depending on sanction).

Searches and handling of devices:

- The school follows DfE guidance on searching pupils and their possessions. Staff will not search a pupil without consent unless authorised under that guidance and with another member of staff present where possible.
- If the device needs to be examined for safeguarding reasons, the DSL will lead and involve parents and, if required, the police. Access will be proportionate and recorded.

Staff use of mobile phones and devices

- Staff must not use personal mobile phones for contacting pupils or parents; contact must be via official school phones or email accounts.
- Personal devices must be kept out of sight, switched off or on silent when children are present.
- Staff must not photograph pupils on personal devices. All school photographs must be taken on school equipment, stored and used in accordance with the Data Protection Policy and consent arrangements.
- The only permitted use of mobile phones is to photograph 'Work of the Week'. This must be completed when there are no children in this area of the school, including children in wrap around care.
- Visitors, volunteers and supply staff will be briefed on staff expectations.

Parent/Carer use of mobile phones and devices

- Parents and Carers are not permitted to use mobile phones or smart devices on the school site at any time.
- If usage is necessary for emergency or medical reasons, then permission must be sought from the Headteacher.

4. Safeguarding, privacy and data protection

- The school will treat incidents involving phones that raise safeguarding concerns seriously and according to safeguarding and KCSIE guidance.
- Image-sharing and sexting incidents will follow the UK Council for Child Internet Safety (UKCIS) and DfE guidance and be reported to the DSL without delay.
- Data protection: the school will record confiscation, searches and breaches in line with data protection requirements. Any retention of images or device data will have a lawful basis and be limited to what is necessary for safeguarding or disciplinary investigation.

5. Communication and consultation

- The policy will be communicated in advance to parents and pupils via: Newsletter, website (published policy), Studybugs and signage at entrances, induction packs for new families.
- Pupil assemblies and age-appropriate lessons about online safety and behaviour expectations.
- Training and briefings for all staff and volunteers.
- The school will consult parents and pupils when amending the policy and run trial periods if a change is introduced.

6. Education and preventative strategies

- Regular age-appropriate online safety education will be delivered through the curriculum and assemblies to help pupils make safe choices about devices and online conduct.
- The school will signpost parents to resources on online harms, screen time and safe use of devices.
- Reinforce positive behaviour and celebrate compliance as part of our ethos.

7. Monitoring, evaluation and review

- The Headteacher and Governing Body will monitor the policy's impact on learning, behaviour, safeguarding incidents and parental feedback.
- The policy will be reviewed annually or sooner if statutory guidance changes.
- Records of breaches, confiscations and safeguarding incidents relating to devices will be analysed termly to inform any policy adjustments.

Local implementation options and decisions

Collection and storage – class teachers will collect the mobile phones or smart devices in at the beginning of the school day. A pupil will take the devices to the school office where they will be stored securely. A pupil from Year 5 and Year 6 may collect the mobile phones/smart devices at the end of the school day and return them to class.

Exceptions process

For children who require a mobile phone for regular medical monitoring e.g blood glucose monitoring, the following rules must be in place:

- The device should be set to the lowest volume level that is appropriate for the individual child.
- The phone must not contain any social media apps or recording apps.
- Parents/Carers/Others should ensure that there are no messages or calls sent to the mobile phone during the school day.
- Specified school staff (who manage the pupil's individual medical need) to have access to the mobile phone at all times during the school day for accessing medical information only.
- The Headteacher will sign off all exceptions and this will be recorded on the child's medical care plan.

Wrap-Around Care

- This policy applies during wrap around care. Pupils bringing mobile phones or smart devices into school, should hand the device to a member of wrap around care staff. This member of staff will store the mobile phone/smart device in the school office. At the end of the wrap around care session, a member of staff will collect the mobile phone/smart device and give it to the pupil.

Trips and residentials

- Staff are permitted to have mobile phones and smart devices on trips and residentials to be able to communicate with school about changeable aspects of the school trip/residential and for emergency purposes.
- During the trip/residential, the staff are permitted to have their mobile phone upon their person and use it in accordance with the following:
 1. The phone must be on silent throughout the duration of the trip/residential with the vibrate option enabled.
 2. When usage is necessary for communication or an emergency (either messaging or calls), a second staff member needs to be present to witness/hear the call/see the message. If appropriate, the phone can be put on speaker phone for this purpose.
 3. The school member of staff will record the call/message with the time, date and reason for usage. Upon return from the trip/residential, the staff members who have used their mobile phone for these purposes must also sign the usage record.
 4. On residentials, when the children are not present, the staff members are permitted to use their mobile phones for contact with their family, personal usage as long as:
 1. **Children are not present and are not able to enter the room that the staff member is in.**
 2. **The staff member does not send any photos/videos/images during this usage.**

8. Equality, inclusion and reasonable adjustments

- The Headteacher and SENCO will ensure reasonable adjustments for pupils with SEND and those with protected characteristics, in line with the Equality Act 2010.
- Individual plans will be co-produced with parents/carers and recorded. Adjustments will be risk-assessed, time-limited and monitored.

9. Training and support

All staff receive training on:

- The policy and enforcement procedures.
- Safeguarding and online harms related to mobile phones.
- Data protection and searching/handling devices safely.
- Parents will be offered guidance and resources to support safe home use and to understand the school policy.

Related policies and documents

- Behaviour Policy
- Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy
- Anti-bullying Policy
- Data Protection (GDPR) Policy
- Acceptable Use Policy for IT
- SEND Policy and reasonable adjustment records
- Off-site visit / Educational Visits Policy

Implementation timeline and review mechanism

Policy approval by governors: 8th October 2026

Parent and pupil communication: 9th October – 23rd October 2026.

Full enforcement date: 2nd November 2026

Termly monitoring by SLT; annual formal review by governors

Useful incident flow for staff

1. Observe or receive report of device use or abuse.
2. Ask pupil to hand over device calmly and document.
3. If safeguarding concern, inform DSL immediately; do not interrogate pupils about images.
4. Store device securely and log confiscation.
5. Inform parent/carer if required; arrange collection if appropriate.
6. Apply sanctions as per behaviour policy and record incident.
7. If criminal activity suspected, involve police and follow DSL guidance.

Appendix A — Example short summary rules (for website and signage)

- Pupils: No mobile phones or smartwatches with communication functions may be used on site or during school activities. If a phone or smart device is brought in, it must be handed in on arrival and collected at home time unless an exception has been authorised.
- Parents: In emergencies contact the school office and we will get a message to your child. No usage on the school site.
- Staff and visitors: Follow staff expectations — no photographing pupils on personal devices, no contacting pupils via personal devices.

Appendix B — Example form: Request for exemption

- Child's name:
- Year group:
- Reason for requested exemption (medical / SEND / other). Attach supporting evidence if applicable.
- Proposed reasonable adjustments:
- Agreed by Headteacher/SENCO/DSL:
- Review date:

Appendix C — Incident log template fields (to store securely)

- Date/time of incident
- Pupil name and year group
- Device description
- Nature of breach
- Action taken (confiscation length, sanction)
- DSL involvement (Y/N) and safeguarding next steps
- Parent/carers notified (date/time)
- Outcome and follow-up actions

Framework note (Ofsted)

This policy is written to support leaders in delivering strong safeguarding, behaviour and learning environments in line with the OFSTED inspection framework (post-November 2025). It contributes to the school's responsibilities under Safeguarding, Behaviour and Attitudes, Personal Development and Leadership and Management. Leaders should ensure the implementation provides evidence of high expectations and inclusion, and that reasonable adjustments and communication records are available for inspectors.