St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

Mobile Phone and Smart Device Policy

Mission Statement:

Journeying with Christ through
Love Compassion and Humility

As a family, we journey together with Christ,
to learn, help, play and pray
with love, compassion and humility.

School Motto 'Facta Non Verba'

Stauts: - Draft September 2026

Rationale

St Joseph's is committed to providing a calm, safe and supportive learning environment free from unnecessary distractions. Mobile phones and smart devices can disrupt learning, present safeguarding risks, contribute to online harms, and affect pupil wellbeing.

The Department for Education (DfE) strongly recommends that **all schools operate as mobile-phone-free environments by default**, unless there is an agreed exception.

This policy also reflects Ofsted's updated inspection framework, which requires inspectors to check whether school mobile phone policies are understood, consistently applied and effective in supporting positive behaviour, attendance and wellbeing.

This policy outlines the appropriate use of mobile phones on our school site. This policy reflects the guidance set out in both the school's 'Code of Conduct', the Safer Recruitment Consortium's 'Guidance for Safer Working Practice for Adults who work with Children and Young People in Educational Settings' (2022) and school's 'Acceptable Use Policy'.
This policy should be read in conjunction with:

- Behaviour Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

- Staff Handbook
- Acceptable Use Policy (AUP)
- Equality Policy & SEND Information Report
- Searching, Screening and Confiscation Guidance (DfE)

Policy Aims

This policy aims to:

1. Establish a mobile-phone-free school environment by default, in line with DfE guidance.
2. Promote pupil safety, wellbeing and positive behaviour.
3. Protect staff and pupils from safeguarding risks relating to misuse of mobile devices.
4. Provide clarity for pupils, staff, parents and visitors regarding rules and consequences.
5. Ensure reasonable adjustments are made for pupils with SEND, medical or other protected needs, in line with the Equality Act 2010.

Scope

This policy applies to:

- All pupils
- All staff and governors
- Parents, carers and visitors
- All mobile phones and smart devices, including smart watches capable of messaging, recording or connecting to the internet.

School Position: A Phone-Free Environment by Default

In line with DfE expectations, **pupils must not have access to or use a mobile phone or smart device during the school day**, including:

- lessons
- transitions between lessons
- assemblies
- breaktimes
- lunchtimes
- after-school clubs on site

Phones must not be seen, heard, used or accessed at any point during the school day.

Expectations for pupils

All pupils should be clear on the school's policy on prohibiting the use of mobile phones and should be reminded of the policy, and the consequences and sanctions for not following it, at the start of each school year and again, where appropriate, at regular intervals.

Pupils should 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 being taken by their school 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.

DfE's guidance on relationships and sex education (RSE) and health education provides further information on how to ensure that pupils are safe online, including how their information and data can be shared and how to consider the effects of their online actions.

Pupils should also be taught the benefits of having a mobile phone-free environment and be encouraged to see such an environment as desirable and valuable. This will help to create intrinsic motivation to support the school culture.

Mobile Phone Guidelines - Pupils

1. We strongly discourage pupils from bringing a mobile phone to school. We do understand that some parents/carers will want their child to have a mobile phone in their possession if they walk home to and from school on their own. At St Joseph's, we only allow pupils in Year 6 to walk to and from school on their own. Parents must specifically give permission for this in writing.
2. There are no reasons why a child needs to use, or have in their possession, a mobile phone during the school day.
3. Parents are reminded that in cases of emergency the school office remains a vital and appropriate point of contact and can ensure your child is reached quickly and assisted in any appropriate way.
4. In general, children should not bring valuable items to school, as they can be easily lost or stolen.
5. Should a parent/carer of a child in Year 6 want their child to bring a mobile phone into school, the mobile phone will be given to the class teacher for safekeeping where they will be stored securely until home time. All phones must be switched off before entering the school grounds.
6. Mobile phones are not permitted on school trips including residentials.
7. The school accepts no responsibility for the loss, theft or damage of personally owned mobile devices.

Smartwatches – Pupils

Pupils may wear basic smartwatches, provided they cannot make calls, send messages, record audio/video, or access the internet. All smartwatches must be set to silent mode at all times, and pupils must not interact with them during the school day. Any smartwatch used for communication, recording or causing distraction will be treated in line with the school's mobile phone policy, including confiscation.

Prohibited Use

Any use of a mobile phone by a pupil during the day is a breach of policy. Serious breaches include:

- recording, photographing or filming pupils or staff
- accessing or sharing inappropriate content
- using devices to bully, intimidate or harass others

Such behaviour may involve safeguarding procedures or police involvement. It should be noted that it is a criminal offence to use a mobile phone to menace, harass or offend another person. In such circumstances the school may consider it appropriate to involve the police.

Confiscation

If a phone is brought to school without permission or is used inappropriately:

- It will be confiscated and stored securely until collected by a parent/carer.
- Confiscation follows DfE "searching, screening and confiscation" guidance and our school Behaviour and Relationships policy.

Reasonable Adjustments

We will make reasonable adjustments for pupils who need device access due to:

- medical monitoring (e.g. Diabetes)
- SEND needs
- disability
- young carer responsibilities
- safeguarding circumstances

These cases will be assessed individually with the SENCO and DSL.

Mobile Phone Guidelines - For Staff, Governors and Volunteers

Staff should not use their own mobile phone for personal reasons in front of pupils throughout the school day. This will empower staff to better challenge pupils to meet the school expectations and effectively enforce the prohibition of mobile phones throughout the school day. There may be occasions where it is appropriate for a teacher to use a mobile phone or similar device, for instance to issue homework, issue rewards and sanctions or use multi-factor authentication.

Responsible bodies and school leaders should be clear with staff on their expectations around use of mobile phones during the day.

1. The school recognises that staff will bring their mobile phones to work and that they will be used within the parameters of this policy.
2. Mobile devices brought in to school are the responsibility of the device owner. The school accepts no responsibility for the loss, theft or damage of personally owned mobile devices.
3. The use of a mobile phone is restricted to break, lunchtime and after-school only. At all other times of the day, mobile phones should be away unless otherwise agreed with the Headteacher. There may be occasions where it is appropriate for a member of staff to use a mobile phone or similar device, for instance to issue rewards and sanctions or use multi-factor authentication.
4. The school staffroom is the designated mobile phone area, as are the SLT offices. Mobile phones are not to be used in the classrooms, apart from when the children are not present. They must be put away when children are present.

5. Staff must not use personal mobile phones in the presence of children. Phones must be kept out of sight and switched off or silent.
6. Staff found using a mobile phone in the presence of children during teaching time may face disciplinary action.
7. Staff mobile phones may be used on school trips as part of the emergency toolkit used for off-site trips.
8. The recording, taking and sharing of images, video and audio on any personal mobile device is to be avoided, except where it has been explicitly agreed by the Headteacher. All mobile device use is to be open to monitoring scrutiny and the Headteacher is able to withdraw or restrict authorisation for use at any time, if it is deemed necessary.
9. Personal mobile phones and mobile devices must not to be connected to the school's Wi-Fi system.
10. Staff will always model safe, responsible, respectful and professional behaviours in their own use of technology and ensure policies are consistently followed.

Mobile Phone Guidelines - For Parents and Visitors

1. Parents and visitors are respectfully requested not to use their mobile phones in any area where children are present. E.g. the reception area or on the playground during drop off and pick up.
2. Should visitors need to make or take phone calls and/or texts, use is restricted to designated areas which are not accessed by children in order to avoid any unnecessary disturbance or disruption to others.
3. Any individual bringing a personal device on site must ensure that it contains no inappropriate or illegal content.
4. Personal mobile phones and/or mobile devices are not to be connected to the school's Wi-Fi system.
5. It should be noted that it is a criminal offence to use a mobile phone to menace, harass or offend another person. In such circumstances the school may consider it appropriate to involve the police.

The role of parents

Parents have an important role in supporting the school's policy on prohibiting the use of mobile phones. The policy should be clearly explained to parents, including the reasons behind the policy and the school's expectations. Parents should also be encouraged to reinforce and discuss the policy at home as appropriate, including the risks associated with mobile phone use and the benefits of a mobile phone-free environment.

Communication and Consistency

In line with DfE and Ofsted expectations:

- The policy will be communicated clearly to all staff, pupils and parents via the school newsletter and on the school website.
- Annual refreshers will ensure consistent understanding.
- Staff will be trained to apply the rules consistently.
- The policy will appear in the staff handbook and school website.

Consequences for Breaches

Consequences will be applied consistently and fairly and in line with the school's Behaviour and Relationships Policy updated for September 2026.

Pupil Breaches

- First breach: warning given.
- Second breach: the phone confiscated and parents/carers will be informed.
- Further breaches: a meeting with parents/carer will take place and an appropriate consequence issued, in line with our Behaviour and Relationships policy.
- Serious breach (recording/harassment): a meeting with parents/carer will take place and this will include the involvement of our Designated Safeguarding Lead. with possible police notification. Consequences will be issued, in line with our Behaviour and Relationships policy.

Staff Breaches

Staff breaches will be managed in line with the Staff Code of Conduct and via the disciplinary procedures.

Visitor Breaches

Visitors will be reminded once; and repeated misuse may result in individuals being asked to leave the premises.

Monitoring, Review and Accountability

To ensure that this policy is consistently implemented, Senior Leaders will monitor incident logs via Cpoms. This policy will be reviewed annually or earlier if DfE guidance changes.

Equality and Safeguarding Impact Assessment

The policy complies with:

- **Equality Act 2010** (reasonable adjustments for protected characteristics)
- **Keeping Children Safe in Education**
- **DfE Behaviour in Schools** guidance
- **DfE Searching, Screening and Confiscation** guidance

The school will consider individual needs sensitively to avoid disadvantaging any pupil.