



# St Mary's

CE Primary & Nursery School

Where Every Day Matters & Everyone Counts

*St Mary's is committed to the spiritual, educational and social development of our children. We seek to inspire and nurture a love of learning, curiosity, independence and self-belief in a safe and enjoyable environment. We aim to support each other and the wider community.*

'Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God' (Matthew 5:9)

***We are proud to be part of Empower Trust***

## Mobile phone policy

<b><u>Reviewed</u></b>	<b><u>Reasons for Review</u></b>
Summer 2024	New policy
<b>Reviewed by:</b> Sarah North, Jonathan Lloyd, Laith Al-Asmar, Lianne Edwards, Rebecca Wade, and Grace Cartwright	
<b>Presented to Local Governing Body: June 2024</b>	
<b>Next Review: June 2025</b>	

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### 1. Introduction and aims

At St Mary's CE Primary School and Nursery, we recognise that mobile phones and similar devices, including smartphones, are an important part of everyday life for our pupils, parents/carers and staff, as well as the wider school community.

Our policy aims to:

- Promote safe and responsible phone use
- Set 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
- Potential for lesson disruption
- Risk of theft, loss, or damage
- Appropriate use of technology in the classroom

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

### 2. Relevant guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the Department for Education's non-statutory [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

### 3.1 Staff

All staff (including teachers, support staff and supply staff) are responsible for consistently enforcing this policy.

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 is responsible for monitoring the policy annually, reviewing it, 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

The DfE's non-statutory mobile phone guidance says that staff should not use their own mobile phone for personal reasons in front of pupils throughout the school day.

### 4.1 Personal mobile phones

Staff (including volunteers, contractors and anyone else otherwise engaged by the school) are not permitted to carry personal mobile phones while working. **This protects staff (including volunteers, contractors, and anyone else otherwise engaged by the school) from being distracted from their work and from allegations of inappropriate use.**

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).

Staff with known medical conditions that rely on their phone/smart watches for medical data such as diabetes/sugar levels are permitted to carry a mobile device.

There may be circumstances in which it's appropriate for a member of staff to have use of their phone during contact time for personal reasons. For instance:

- In the case of an urgent medical phone call
- 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.

School staff can use the school office number 01939 250323 as a point of emergency contact or notify the office that their mobile phone in secure storage has been left on to receive a call.

### 4.2 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 Bard).

ICT acceptable use policy within the online safety policy gives more detailed guidance.

### 4.3 Safeguarding

Staff are advised not to 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 which could identify a pupil. If it's necessary to take photos or recordings as part of a lesson/school trip/activity, this must be done using school equipment.

## 4.4 Using personal mobiles on school trips

Carrying mobile phones on trips can help to ensure safety for all members of the school or centre party. However, it is important that the following guidance is adhered to in order to keep children safe and protect staff and volunteers from accusations of inappropriate use:

- The party leader should carry a mobile phone for use in contacting other staff members or volunteers on the trip, contacting the school or contacting the emergency services.
- Members of staff and volunteers may carry their own, personal mobile phones within the following guidelines:
  - Personal phones should only be used to contact staff members or volunteers on the trip, the campus or emergency services. If possible, these calls should be made away from children.
  - Personal phones should not be used for any purpose other than school business for the duration of a trip. This means that personal calls or texts should not be made or accepted.
  - On residential trips this will apply while the member of staff or volunteer is on duty. Staff and volunteers should ensure that next of kin are provided with the school/residential school numbers so that in an emergency the school is contacted and will make contact with the relevant person through the party leader.
  - If it becomes necessary for a member of staff or volunteer to make a personal call or text, then the party leader or another member of staff should be informed and take responsibility for the pupils in the group while the call or text is made away from sight and sound of any pupils.
  - Personal mobile phones must not be used under any circumstances to take photographs or videos of pupils. Volunteers are acting role models for the duration of the trip and therefore must not take photos or videos of any pupils, including their own child, using a mobile phone or any other mobile device, e.g. camera or tablet, without the express permission of the party leader. Volunteers may be asked to take photographs of their group using a school or centre device – this must be passed back to the party leader at the end of the trip.
  - The party leader may ask volunteers to provide them with their mobile phone number for the duration of the trip so that they can be contacted in case of emergency. The party leader undertakes to ensure that these numbers or not held on any mobile device or in any written form after the end of the trip.
  - It is advised that if the party leader is using his or her own mobile phone, then if they need to contact anyone during the trip they do so by pre-dialling 141 (some mobile providers use a different prefix – staff are advised to check this with their provider) before the number so that their own number remains protected.

## 4.6 Sanctions

Staff that fail to adhere to this policy may face disciplinary action.

See the school's staff disciplinary policy for more information.

## 5. Use of mobile phones by pupils

- Children who walk to and from school without an accompanying adult may carry a mobile phone for safety. In these cases, children may bring a mobile phone onto school site. They **must** deposit it with the school office at the start of the day and collect it from the office at the end of the day.
- Parents and carers need to be aware that whilst there are obvious benefits to pupils having a mobile phone in terms of personal safety there are also some associated risks such as potential for theft, bullying and inappropriate contact, including grooming by unsuitable persons.
- We would also like to alert parents and carers to the risks that using a mobile phone has while walking to and from school. Children who are concentrating on using their phone can have reduced general safety awareness which may result in road accidents and/or injury if a child is not paying attention to their surroundings.

- Mobile phones deposited in the office by children will be kept safely in a locked cupboard. Whilst the school will take every reasonable care, it accepts no responsibility whatsoever for theft, loss, damage or health effects (potential or actual) relating to mobile phones. It is the responsibility of parents and carers to ensure mobile phones are properly insured. It is:
- Recommended that pupil's phones are security marked and password protected.
- Children are not allowed to bring mobile phones into any other areas of the school.
- Any mobile phones discovered to have been brought into the school and not handed in to the office will be confiscated immediately. Parents or carers will be asked to collect the mobile phone from the school office.
- Children with known medical conditions that rely on their phone/smart watches for medical data such as diabetes/sugar levels are permitted to carry a mobile device.
- Children are not allowed to carry mobile phones on any school trips or residential trips.
- If a member of the staff has any suspicion that a mobile phone brought into school by a pupil has unsuitable material stored on it, the pupil will be required to hand over the phone immediately to a member of staff and parents or carers will be asked to collect it from a member of the senior leadership team. In circumstances where there is a suspicion that the material on the mobile phone may provide evidence relating to a criminal offence the phone will be handed over to the school's safeguarding lead or to the head teacher for further investigation and the parent or carer asked to collect it from them.

## 5.1 Use of smartwatches by pupils, parents, visitors and staff

The DfE's [non-statutory mobile phone guidance](#) includes in the term 'mobile phones' all devices with communications and smart technology that the school chooses to include in their policy.

Smartwatches are wristwatches with smart technology in them. They can be used to tell the time, send and receive text and voice messages, make calls and listen to music. Some smart watches have wellness and health-related features.

Wearable technology is permitted on school premises but must not be used during lesson time. All adults within the school building are to put their watch in schooltime/airplane mode/switch off Bluetooth and Wi-Fi mode while children are on the school site. **This protects adults from being distracted from their work and from allegations of inappropriate use.**

Due to the high value of smart watches children are advised not to wear the watches in school. All personal devices are brought onto school premises by pupils/staff at their own risk. The school does not accept liability for loss or damage of personal devices.

Wearable technology is not to be worn during tests or examinations.

## 5.3 Sanctions

The following sanctions will be used if a pupil is in breach of this policy.

For example:

Will mobile phones be confiscated? (Schools are permitted to confiscate phones from pupils under sections 91 and 94 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006)

If confiscated, parents are to collect the phone at the end of the school day.

How do the sanctions for mobile phone use link with your school's wider behaviour policy?

Staff have the power to search pupils' phones in specific circumstances, as set out in the DfE's guidance on searching, screening and confiscation. The DfE guidance allows schools to search a pupil's phone if there is a good reason to do so (such as having reason to believe the phone contains pornographic images, or if it suspected of being used inappropriately and is being/has been used to commit an offence or cause harm to another person). In each case, the sanction given must be reasonable and proportionate. The school will also consider whether:

- There are any relevant special circumstances (for example, age, religious requirements, special educational needs, disability)

- The pupil's behaviour may indicate they may be suffering, or at risk of, harm. If this is suspected, staff will follow the appropriate procedure set out in Part 1 of [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)

Certain types of conduct, bullying or harassment can be classified as criminal conduct. The school takes such conduct extremely seriously and will involve parents, the police or other agencies as appropriate.

Such conduct includes, but is not limited to:

- Sexting (consensual and non-consensual sharing nude or semi-nude images or videos)
- Upskirting
- Threats of violence or assault
- Abusive calls, emails, social media posts or texts directed at someone on the basis of someone's ethnicity, religious beliefs or sexual orientation

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

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. Notices are displayed in reception advising visitors, parents and carers that mobile phones must be handed in on arrival.

- We ask all parents to turn their phone off or put in silent mode before handing their phone in.
- If parents/visitors are expecting an important call, they may leave their phone on which will alert a member of staff who will then respond according to the instructions given at the time.
- Visitors and supply staff are not allowed to use mobile phones on the school grounds and phones must be handed in at reception when signing in. Mobile phones can be used in the staff room.
- If a visitor, parent or carer is found with a phone in school after being asked to hand it in they will be asked politely to return to reception to hand it in.
- It is recognised that many parents and carers use their mobile phone as a camera/video device to record their child at special performances e.g. sports day, etc. On these occasions the use of a phone is permitted for photographing/videoing only; images should only be taken by parents and carers if they include their own child and that the use of these images is for their own personal use and must not be uploaded for any internet use including Facebook/SnapChat/Instagram/TikTok or any other social networking sites or used in any form of publication unless they are solely of their own child.
- The school recognise that children may inadvertently be included in photographs by another parent; the school, therefore, are obliged to warn parents and carers of the legal and safeguarding risks of publishing such photographs on any platform. The placing of any photographs of children on social media is dangerous and parents may be in breach of the Data Protection Act if they upload photos of other children without the explicit consent of that child's parents.

## 7. Monitoring and review

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

- 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

## 8. Appendix 1: Permission form allowing a pupil to bring their phone to school

PUPIL DETAILS	
<b>Pupil name:</b>	
<b>Year group/class:</b>	
<b>Parent/carer(s) name(s):</b>	

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

- > Travel to and from school alone
- > Need the phone to support their medical needs

Pupils who bring a mobile phone to school must abide by the school's policy on the use of mobile phones which states that they **must** deposit it with the school office at the start of the day and collect it from the office at the end of the day.

Parents and carers need to be aware that whilst there are obvious benefits to pupils having a mobile phone in terms of personal safety there are also some associated risks such as potential for theft, bullying and inappropriate contact, including grooming by unsuitable persons.

We would also like to alert parents and carers to the risks that using a mobile phone has while walking to and from school. Children who are concentrating on using their phone can have reduced general safety awareness which may result in road accidents and/or injury if a child is not paying attention to their surroundings.

Mobile phones deposited in the office by children will be kept safely in a locked cupboard. Whilst the school will take every reasonable care, it accepts no responsibility whatsoever for theft, loss, damage or health effects (potential or actual) relating to mobile phones. It is the responsibility of parents and carers to ensure mobile phones are properly insured. It is:

- Recommended that pupil's phones are security marked and password protected.
- Children are not allowed to bring mobile phones into any other areas of the school.

Any mobile phones discovered to have been brought into the school and not handed in to the office will be confiscated immediately. Parents or carers will be asked to collect the mobile phone from the school office.

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

Parent/carer signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Pupil signature (where appropriate): \_\_\_\_\_

FOR SCHOOL USE ONLY	
<b>Authorised by:</b>	
<b>Date:</b>	

## 9. Appendix 2: Mobile phone information slip for visitors

### Use of mobile phones and similar devices in our school

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. Notices are displayed in reception advising visitors, parents and carers that mobile phones must be handed in on arrival.

- We ask all visitors to turn their phone off or put in silent mode before handing their phone in.
- If parents/visitors are expecting an important call, they may leave their phone on which will alert a member of staff who will then respond according to the instructions given at the time.
- Visitors and supply staff are not allowed to use mobile phones on the school grounds and phones must be handed in at reception when signing in. Mobile phones can be used in the staff room.
- If a visitor, parent or carer is found with a phone in school after being asked to hand it in they will be asked politely to return to reception to hand it in.
- It is recognised that many parents and carers use their mobile phone as a camera/video device to record their child at special performances e.g. sports day, etc. On these occasions the use of a phone is permitted for photographing/videoing only; images should only be taken by parents and carers if they include their own child and that the use of these images is for their own personal use and must not be uploaded for any internet use including Facebook/SnapChat/Instagram/TikTok or any other social networking sites or used in any form of publication unless they are solely of their own child
- The school accepts no responsibility for phones that are lost, damaged or stolen while you are on the school grounds.

**This protects visitors from being distracted from their work and from allegations of inappropriate use.**

A full copy of our mobile phone policy is available from the school office.

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