



"We believe, we achieve, we succeed in God's family"

With God, all things are possible. Matthew 19:26

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St Mary's C of E Primary School

Mobile Phone Policy 2026

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1. Introduction and aims

At St Mary's C of E Primary School, we recognise that mobile phones and similar smart devices are an important part of everyday life for pupils, parents/carers, staff and the wider school community.

However, mobile phones and similar devices can create distraction, disruption and safeguarding risks within a school environment. The school is therefore committed to maintaining a mobile-phone-free environment throughout the school day.

This policy aims to:

- promote safe, responsible and appropriate use of technology;
- provide clear and consistent expectations for pupils, staff, parents/carers, volunteers and visitors;
- support a calm, safe and focused environment for learning;
- reduce distraction and disruption caused by mobile phones and similar devices;
- support safeguarding and child protection;
- protect personal data and privacy;
- prevent inappropriate photography, filming, recording and communication;

- support the school's Behaviour Policy, Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, Data Protection Policy and other relevant policies.

The policy also recognises that there may be exceptional circumstances where an individual pupil or member of staff needs access to a mobile phone or similar device. Such circumstances will be considered on an individual basis and appropriate arrangements will be made.

The Department for Education's statutory guidance requires schools to prohibit the use of mobile phones throughout the school day, including during lessons, between lessons, breaktimes and lunchtime. It also applies to other communications and smart technology with similar functionality.

2. Relevant guidance

This policy has regard to:

- Department for Education, Mobile phones in schools;
- Department for Education, Behaviour in schools;
- Department for Education, Keeping children safe in education (KCSIE) 2026;
- Department for Education guidance on searching, screening and confiscation;
- Equality Act 2010;
- Children and Families Act 2014, including duties relating to pupils with medical conditions;
- UK General Data Protection Regulation and Data Protection Act 2018;
- relevant school and Trust policies.

The Department for Education's mobile phone guidance became statutory on 29 June 2026 and schools should follow it from 1 September 2026.

3. Scope

For the purposes of this policy, mobile phones and similar smart technology includes mobile phones and other personal electronic devices with similar functionality, including devices that can:

- send or receive messages or notifications through mobile networks;
- make or receive calls;
- access the internet or social media;
- record audio or video;
- take photographs;
- communicate with other people.

This may include, for example:

- smartphones;
- mobile phones;
- smartwatches or other wearable technology where they have communication, messaging, recording or similar functionality.

School-owned technology provided for learning or other authorised purposes is not covered by the pupil prohibition in this policy, but must be used in accordance with the school's relevant acceptable-use and ICT policies.

4. Roles and responsibilities

4.1 Governing Body / Trust

The Governing Body / Trust is responsible for ensuring that the school has an appropriate policy which is consistent with relevant statutory guidance and the school's legal duties.

4.2 Headteacher

The Headteacher, Theresa Walker, is responsible for:

- implementing and monitoring this policy;
- ensuring that staff understand and consistently apply it;
- considering requests for exceptional arrangements;
- ensuring that sanctions and confiscation are applied proportionately;
- ensuring that individual circumstances, including SEND and medical needs, are considered;
- reviewing the policy at least annually or sooner where guidance or circumstances change.

4.3 Staff

All staff, including teachers, support staff, supply staff, volunteers, contractors and others working on behalf of the school, are responsible for:

- following this policy consistently;
- modelling appropriate mobile phone use;
- challenging inappropriate use where necessary;
- reporting safeguarding concerns in accordance with the school's safeguarding procedures;
- protecting pupils' privacy and personal data.

4.4 Parent and Carers

Parents/carers are expected to:

- support the school's mobile phone policy;
- ensure their child understands the expectations;
- use the school office as the first point of contact during the school day;
- work with the school where concerns or exceptional circumstances arise.

5. Use of mobile phones and smart technology by pupils

For St Mary's C of E Primary School, the normal expectation is that **pupils do not bring mobile phones to school**.

If a pupil brings a mobile phone to school contrary to this policy, the device must be given to a member of office staff. The school will not routinely accept responsibility for a pupil's decision to bring a mobile phone to school.

Where appropriate, the school may confiscate the device in accordance with section 7 of this policy.

Parents/carers will be contacted where required by the school's Behaviour Policy or where the circumstances make this appropriate.

6. Exceptions and reasonable adjustments

The school recognises that there may be exceptional circumstances in which a pupil needs access to a mobile phone or similar device.

Any exception must be agreed in advance by the Headteacher or an appropriately authorised member of staff.

Examples may include:

- a medical condition requiring a device to monitor or manage the condition;
- a disability where access to the device is necessary as a reasonable adjustment;
- specific safeguarding or welfare circumstances;
- exceptional family circumstances;
- other circumstances agreed by the school following an individual assessment.

Where an exception is agreed, the school will establish clear arrangements specifying:

- why access is required;
- when the device may be used;
- where it may be used;
- who will supervise or manage the arrangement;
- what restrictions continue to apply.

An exception does not mean unrestricted use of the device.

The DfE guidance makes clear that schools must consider their duties under the Equality Act 2010 and duties relating to pupils with medical conditions. In some circumstances, access to a mobile phone may be necessary as a reasonable adjustment or for effective management of a medical condition.

7. Use of mobile phones by staff

7.1 Personal use

Staff, including volunteers, contractors and anyone else working on behalf of the school, must not use personal mobile phones for personal reasons in front of pupils during the school day.

Personal mobile phones should be kept out of sight and used only during non-contact time and, where possible, in areas where pupils are not present, such as the staffroom.

This expectation applies because staff should model the behaviour expected of pupils and be able to enforce the school's mobile-phone expectations consistently.

7.2 Exceptional personal circumstances

There may be circumstances where a member of staff needs access to their personal phone during contact time.

Examples may include:

- an emergency involving their child;
- an emergency involving an acutely ill dependent or family member;
- another exceptional circumstance agreed with the Headteacher.

The Headteacher will consider such requests on an individual basis.

Where appropriate, staff may instead use the school office as an emergency contact point.

School office: 01245 320505

7.3 Appropriate work-related use

There may be circumstances where staff need to use a mobile phone or similar device for legitimate work purposes.

Examples may include:

- multi-factor authentication;
- emergency evacuation procedures;
- supervising off-site trips;
- supervising residential visits;
- another specific work-related purpose authorised by the school.

Staff must:

- use the device appropriately and professionally;
- comply with the Staff Code of Conduct;
- comply with data-protection requirements;
- avoid unnecessary personal use;
- never use a personal device to photograph or record pupils;
- not use a personal device to communicate directly with parents/carers or pupils unless expressly authorised by the school.

Where communication with parents/carers is required, this should normally take place through the school office or an approved school communication system.

7.4 Photography and recording

Staff must not use personal mobile phones or personal devices to:

- photograph pupils;
- video pupils;
- make audio recordings of pupils;
- photograph or record pupils' work where the pupil could be identified;
- create or store other pupil-identifiable material.

Where photography or recording is required for an authorised school purpose, school-owned or otherwise specifically authorised equipment must be used.

7.5 Staff contact details and social media

Staff must not give personal contact details to pupils or parents/carers for the purpose of direct contact.

Staff must not establish inappropriate personal communication with pupils or parents/carers through personal social-media accounts, messaging applications or similar services.

Staff should take reasonable steps to avoid unnecessarily publicising personal contact details on social media or websites where this could facilitate unwanted contact.

7.6 Staff breaches

Failure to comply with this policy may result in action under the school's or Trust's relevant disciplinary procedures.

8. Data protection and safeguarding

8.1 Data protection

Staff must not use personal mobile phones to process, store or transmit personal data or confidential school information unless specifically authorised and appropriately secured.

Staff must not enter confidential or personal school information into personal generative AI tools, chatbots or other unauthorised applications.

Staff must follow the school's:

- Data Protection Policy;
- Information Security procedures;
- Acceptable Use Policy;
- Staff Code of Conduct;
- relevant Trust procedures.

Where staff receive school or pupil information on a personal device accidentally, they should follow the school's data-protection procedures and report the incident where required.

8.2 Safeguarding

Mobile phones can create safeguarding risks, including:

- inappropriate communication;
- unauthorised photography or recording;
- cyberbullying;
- access to harmful or inappropriate content;
- sharing of images or personal information;
- inappropriate contact between adults and pupils.

Any safeguarding concern arising from mobile-phone use must be reported without delay in accordance with the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

Staff should speak to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or Deputy DSL where appropriate. KCSIE 2026 requires staff to act immediately on safeguarding concerns and report concerns to the DSL or deputy without delay.

Where mobile-phone misuse may indicate that a pupil is suffering, or may be at risk of, harm, staff should follow the school's safeguarding procedures rather than treating the matter solely as a behaviour issue.

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

Parents/carers, visitors and volunteers, including governors and contractors, must follow the school's expectations when on the school site.

They must:

- keep mobile phones on silent or vibrate where appropriate;
- not use mobile phones in lessons or while working directly with pupils;
- not take photographs or recordings of pupils without appropriate permission;
- not photograph or record staff without appropriate permission;
- not use mobile phones in a way that compromises safeguarding, privacy or confidentiality.

At public events, such as school fairs or performances, the school may permit photography or recording subject to the arrangements communicated for that event.

Where parents/carers photograph or record their own child at an event, they should take care to avoid capturing other children where possible and must not share identifiable images of other children without appropriate consent.

Photographs or recordings taken at school events should be for personal use only unless the school has provided different guidance.

9.1 Visitors

Visitors will be informed of the school's expectations when signing in at reception.

Where a visitor needs to make or receive a phone call, they should do so away from pupils wherever reasonably possible.

9.2 Parents/carers supervising trips

Parents/carers and volunteers supervising school trips or residential visits must not:

- use their personal phone to contact other parents/carers about pupils;
- photograph or record pupils, their work or anything else that could identify a pupil;
- use social media in connection with pupils or the school while undertaking their volunteering role.

Communication with the school should take place through the arrangements provided by the school. Parents/carers and volunteers do not have the authority to search or confiscate a pupil's phone. Any concerns should be referred to a member of school staff.

10. School trips, residential visits and activities outside the normal school day

The school will determine arrangements for mobile phones during trips, residential visits and activities taking place outside the normal school day.

The school may prohibit or restrict pupil access to mobile phones where this is necessary to:

- protect pupils' safety and welfare;
- prevent disruption;
- support the educational purpose of the activity;
- protect privacy;
- prevent inappropriate recording or communication.

Any arrangements will be communicated to pupils and parents/carers before the activity.

Where staff require mobile phones for emergency communication or supervision, they should follow the arrangements specified by the school.

11. Emergency contact arrangements

Parents/carers should use the school office as the first point of contact if they need to contact their child during the school day.

The school will relay urgent messages to pupils where appropriate.

School office: 01245 320505

Pupils should not normally contact parents/carers directly using personal mobile phones during the school day.

If a pupil has an agreed exception that permits access to a mobile phone, the school will specify the circumstances in which it may be used.

12. Loss, theft or damage

The school accepts no responsibility for mobile phones or similar personal devices that are:

- lost;
- damaged;
- stolen;

while on school premises, school transport, school visits or trips, or while travelling to or from school. Where the school has confiscated and is storing a device, staff will take reasonable care of it in accordance with the school's procedures. Parents/carers should ensure that pupils do not bring unnecessary valuable devices to school.

13. Communication and education

The school will ensure that pupils, staff and parents/carers are informed about this policy.

Pupils will be reminded of the policy at the beginning of each school year and at other appropriate times.

The school will explain:

- why mobile phones are restricted;
- the risks associated with inappropriate mobile-phone use;
- the benefits of a mobile-phone-free school environment;

- what happens when the policy is breached.

The DfE recommends that pupils understand both the risks associated with mobile phones and the benefits of a mobile-phone-free environment.

Parents/carers will be provided with clear information about:

- the school's expectations;
- how the policy is implemented;
- sanctions and confiscation arrangements;
- how to contact their child during the school day;
- how exceptional circumstances will be considered.

The school will respond to questions or concerns from parents/carers in a timely and appropriate manner.

14. Monitoring and review

The school is committed to ensuring that this policy has a positive impact on pupils' education, behaviour, safety and welfare. The policy will be updated where necessary to ensure that it remains effective, proportionate and compliant with relevant requirements.

Appendix 1 – Visitor Mobile Phone Information Slip

Use of mobile phones and similar devices at St Mary's C of E Primary School

Please help us to maintain a safe and focused environment for our pupils.

Please keep your mobile phone on silent or vibrate while on the school site.

Please do not use your phone where pupils are present.

If you need to make or take a call, please use an area away from pupils, such as the staffroom or car park, where appropriate.

Please do not take photographs or recordings of pupils or staff without appropriate permission.

Please do not use your phone while working directly with pupils.

Please follow any additional instructions given by school staff during events, trips or activities.

If you have a safeguarding concern, please report it immediately to a member of school staff.

The school accepts no responsibility for personal phones that are lost, damaged or stolen while on school premises.

A full copy of the school's Mobile Phone Policy is available from the school office.

School office: 01245 320505