



Autumn | 26-27

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

Mobile Phone and Smart Device Policy

Date ratified by Governors:	Autumn 2026
Date of next review of the policy:	Autumn 2027
This policy is reviewed:	Annually

Learn together and grow in God's love

Aspiration - Compassion - Community - Faith - Respect – Responsibility

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Section 1: Rationale

At St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, we want every child to learn and play in a calm, safe and happy environment, where they can focus on their learning, build real friendships and enjoy their time at school. We believe that childhood should be protected from the distraction, pressures and risks that mobile phones and smart devices can bring during the school day.

St Joseph's is a **mobile phone and smart device-free school**. Pupils do not have access to mobile phones or smart devices at any time during the school day. This follows the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance, which expects all schools to be mobile phone-free environments by default.

The aims of this policy are to:

- Remove the distraction and disruption that mobile phones and smart devices can cause to learning
- Protect pupils from online harms during the school day, including cyberbullying and exposure to inappropriate content
- Encourage pupils to talk, play and build relationships with each other face to face
- Allow Year 5 and Year 6 pupils who walk to and from school on their own to carry a phone for their journey, with their parents' written permission, while keeping the school day phone-free
- Make clear expectations for pupils, staff, parents/carers and visitors, and apply them consistently
- Make sure any exceptions are fair, lawful and meet pupils' individual needs

This policy forms part of our Relationships and Positive Behaviour Policy, and should be read alongside it and our Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, e-safety policy, ICT policy and acceptable use agreements, photography policy, Missing Child Policy and Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy.

Section 2: Legislation and Guidance

This policy is based on the DfE's statutory guidance "Mobile phones in schools", which became statutory on 29 June 2026 under section 36 of the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act 2026, and which schools must follow from 1 September 2026. It also takes account of:

- Behaviour in Schools: advice for headteachers and school staff (2024)
- Searching, screening and confiscation: advice for schools (2022)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (2026)
- Supporting pupils with medical conditions at school (statutory guidance under the Children and Families Act 2014)
- The Equality Act 2010, including the duty to make reasonable adjustments for disabled pupils
- Relationships education and health education statutory guidance
- The statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, in relation to the use of mobile phones and cameras in our Reception class

Ofsted considers each school's mobile phone policy, and how well it is put into practice, as part of every inspection.

Section 3: What This Policy Covers

In this policy, "mobile phones and smart devices" means:

- Mobile phones
- Smartwatches and fitness trackers that can send or receive messages, calls or notifications, or record audio, photographs or video
- Wireless earphones (for example, AirPods) and personal headphones
- Location trackers, such as Apple AirTags, Samsung SmartTags, Tile trackers and other GPS tracking devices, including those attached to bags, coats, clothing or keys
- Tablets, cameras and any other personal device with similar functions

The "school day" means from the moment a pupil arrives at school until the end of the school day, including

lessons, the time between lessons, break times, lunchtime and any before- or after-school clubs run by the school.

This policy does not cover school-owned devices, such as iPads, laptops and headphones provided by the school for learning. These are used in line with our ICT policy and acceptable use agreements, and are protected by the school's filtering and monitoring systems.

Section 4: Our Phone and Smart Device-Free Approach

Pupils are not encouraged to bring mobile phones or smart devices to school, and most pupils do not have one. Pupils must never use, wear or have access to a mobile phone or smart device during the school day.

Year 5 and 6 Walkers

The only pupils who may bring a mobile phone to school are pupils in Year 5 and Year 6 who walk to and from school on their own, and who have written permission from their parent/carers (see Appendix 1). Not all walkers will have a phone, and this is entirely a decision for parents/carers.

For these pupils, the following arrangements apply:

- The pupil **turns their phone off** before they come into school
- When they arrive, the pupil hands their phone to their **class teacher**
- The phones are placed in the class phone box, and a **teaching assistant** takes the box to the school office, where it is kept securely during the school day
- At the end of the day, the teaching assistant collects the box from the office and the phones are **given back to the pupils** before they leave, so that they have them for their walk home
- Pupils must not switch on or use their phone until they have left the school site
- Phones should be clearly labelled with the pupil's name

Smartwatches, wireless earphones, headphones, location trackers (such as AirTags) and other smart devices must not be brought to school by any pupil, including attached to bags, coats or other belongings.

Pupils bring mobile phones and devices to school at their own and their parents'/carers' risk. The school will take reasonable care to store handed-in devices securely, but cannot accept responsibility for any loss or damage.

Contact Between Parents and Pupils During the Day

If parents/carers need to contact their child during the school day, they should call the school office on **020 8858 4182**. Office staff will pass on the message or arrange for the child to speak to their parent/carers. Likewise, if a pupil needs to contact home, they will be supported to do so from the school office. Pupils must not use their own phone to contact home during the school day.

Section 5: Educational Visits and Residential Trips

- Pupils must not bring mobile phones or smart devices on school trips, unless this has been agreed in advance by the Headteacher
- Location trackers, such as AirTags, must not be attached to pupils, their clothing or their belongings on any school trip, including residential trips. This is to protect the safety and privacy of every child in the group, because a tracker can show where the whole group is at any time, and so that staff remain responsible for supervising and accounting for all pupils
- On residential trips, pupils will not have access to their mobile phones. The trip leader will keep parents/carers updated through the school, and parents/carers will be given an emergency contact number for the trip
- Staff will carry a mobile phone on all trips, so they can contact the school and emergency services, in line with our Missing Child Policy. If there is any change to the trip, or any concern about a child, the school will contact parents/carers directly
- Parents/carers who are worried about their child's safety on a trip are encouraged to speak to the trip leader or the Headteacher before the trip, so that any concerns can be addressed

Section 6: Exceptions and Reasonable Adjustments

We will make exceptions to this policy where the law requires it, or in other exceptional circumstances. Each case will be considered individually by the Headteacher. Exceptions may include:

- **Medical conditions:** where a pupil needs a mobile phone or device to manage a medical condition – for example, a pupil with diabetes who uses a continuous glucose monitor linked to a phone. This will be set out in the pupil's individual healthcare plan
- **Disability and SEND:** where access to a device is a reasonable adjustment for a disabled pupil, under the Equality Act 2010
- **Individual circumstances:** for example, a young carer who needs to be contactable, or a pupil in particularly difficult family circumstances. In rare cases, this could include agreeing the use of a location tracker for an individual pupil where there is a specific safeguarding or SEND reason, such as a risk of running from school, as part of the pupil's risk assessment and support plan

Where an exception is agreed, it will not mean the pupil is free from all restrictions. The Headteacher will agree with the parents/carers, and record in writing, exactly how, when and where the device may be used – for example, only for a specific purpose, at set times, in the school office or with a named adult. Relevant staff will be told about the arrangement.

Section 7: If the Policy Is Not Followed

The DfE's guidance supports schools to confiscate mobile phones and similar devices where the policy is breached. If a pupil uses a mobile phone or smart device during the school day, wears a smartwatch, or a device is seen or heard (for example, ringing in a bag):

- A member of staff will confiscate the device, switched off, and take it to the school office, where it will be kept securely
- The device will be returned to the pupil's parent/carer, not to the pupil. Parents/carers will be contacted and asked to collect it from the school office
- The incident will be recorded on CPOMS
- If a pupil repeatedly breaches the policy, the class teacher or a member of SLT will meet with the parents/carers. The Headteacher may decide that the pupil can no longer bring a device to school, or apply other sanctions in line with our Relationships and Positive Behaviour Policy

Any sanction will be proportionate. Staff will take into account the pupil's age, any SEND and their individual circumstances. The law protects staff from liability for loss of, or damage to, items they have confiscated, provided they have acted lawfully.

Searching

Mobile phones and smart devices are items that may be searched for under our Relationships and Positive Behaviour Policy, where staff have reasonable grounds to suspect a pupil has one during the school day. Any search will follow that policy and the DfE's "Searching, screening and confiscation" advice. Reasonable force will never be used to search for a mobile phone or smart device, because they are banned by school rules rather than by law.

Safeguarding Concerns

Staff will not look through the contents of a confiscated device. If there is any concern that a device contains inappropriate or harmful content – for example, nude or semi-nude images, or evidence of bullying or grooming – staff will not view, copy or delete it, and will tell the DSL immediately. The DSL will follow our Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy. Staff will also consider whether a breach of this policy suggests that a pupil is at risk of harm, and speak to the DSL (Ms Judith Harvey) or a deputy DSL if so.

Section 8: Online Safety

- Pupils will be taught about the risks of mobile phones and the internet – including loss of focus, bullying, and online harms – and the benefits of a phone and smart device-free school, through our computing, RSHE and online safety curriculum
- Pupils will be reminded of this policy, and what happens if it is not followed, at the start of each

- school year and at regular intervals
- If a pupil wants to raise a concern about something that has happened online, staff will listen and support them. Where appropriate, and with the agreement of the DSL, the pupil may be allowed supervised access to their device to show staff what has happened, following our Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- The governing board makes sure that appropriate filtering and monitoring systems are in place on school devices and the school network, and are reviewed regularly. Our IT lead (Dom Spalding) and IT service provider (ATS) support this, with the DSL
- We will share online safety information with parents/carers, including through our communications about this policy

Section 9: Staff, Volunteers and Visitors

Staff and Volunteers

Staff are role models for our pupils and will model this policy. All staff and volunteers will:

- Not use their personal mobile phone or smart device in front of pupils during the school day. Personal phones should be kept out of sight, on silent, and only used during non-contact time in areas where pupils are not present, such as the staff room
- Never take photographs, videos or recordings of pupils on their personal devices. Only school-owned devices may be used, in line with our photography policy
- Never contact pupils or parents/carers from a personal phone or personal social media account
- Only use a phone or device in front of pupils where there is a clear work reason – for example, using the school phone on a trip, contacting the office or emergency services, or using a school device for teaching or multi-factor authentication
- In our Reception class (EYFS), not use personal mobile phones or cameras at any time while children are present, in line with the EYFS statutory framework and our Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Consistently apply this policy, and follow the procedures for handing in, storing and confiscating pupils' devices

If staff need to be contactable in an emergency during the school day, family members should call the school office.

Parents, Carers and Visitors

- Visitors, contractors and parents/carers in school during the day are asked not to use mobile phones in front of pupils, and never to take photographs or recordings of pupils
- At school events, such as assemblies and performances, parents/carers may only take photographs or videos where the school has said this is allowed. Images must only be for personal use and must not be shared on social media if they include other children, in line with our photography policy
- Staff will politely remind anyone who is not following this policy

Section 10: Communicating the Policy

- This policy is published on the school website
- The policy, the reasons for it and the arrangements for handing in devices will be explained to parents/carers when their child joins the school, and at the start of each school year
- Parents/carers are encouraged to talk to their child about the policy at home, including the risks of mobile phone use and the benefits of a phone and smart device-free school
- Where parents/carers have questions or concerns, staff will respond promptly and explain the reasons for the policy

Section 11: Roles and Responsibilities

- **The governing board** approves this policy, makes sure it is followed and reviewed, and makes sure appropriate filtering and monitoring systems are in place
- **The Headteacher** makes sure the policy is put into practice consistently, decides on any exceptions, and decides on sanctions for repeated breaches
- **All staff** consistently enforce the policy, model it in their own phone use, and report any concerns to the DSL
- **Pupils** follow the policy, Year 5 and 6 walkers hand in their phone on arrival, and tell an adult if they are worried about anything that has happened online
- **Parents/carers** support the policy, only allow their child to bring a phone if they are a Year 5 or 6 walker and have given written permission, and contact their child through the school office during the day

Section 12: Monitoring and Review

The Headteacher will monitor how well this policy is working, including any breaches recorded on CPOMS and feedback from pupils, parents/carers and staff. This policy will be reviewed annually by the Headteacher and approved by the governing board.

Appendix 1: Parent/Carer Request for a Pupil to Bring a Mobile Phone

This form is only for pupils in Year 5 and Year 6 who walk to and from school on their own. Please complete it if you would like your child to carry a mobile phone for their journey, and return it to your child's class teacher. Your child must not bring a phone to school until this form has been returned.

Detail	Please complete
Child's name	
Class	
My child walks to and from school on their own (please tick)	
Description of phone (to help us identify it)	

By signing this form, I understand and agree that:

- My child will turn their phone off before coming into school and hand it to their class teacher, and it will be kept in the school office until it is given back to them at the end of the day
- My child will not use or switch on their phone while on the school site, and will not bring a smartwatch, location tracker (such as an AirTag) or any other smart device to school or on school trips
- If my child does not follow the policy, the phone will be confiscated and I will need to collect it from the school office, and permission may be withdrawn
- Phones are brought to school at our own risk, and the school cannot accept responsibility for loss or damage
- If I need to contact my child during the school day, I will call the school office on 020 8858 4182

Parent/carers	Details
Name	
Signature	
Date	

Appendix 2: Our Phone and Smart Device-Free School – A Guide for Pupils

This page can be shared with pupils and displayed in classrooms.

At St Joseph's we are a phone and smart device-free school

We do not use phones, smartwatches, AirPods, headphones or trackers (like AirTags) at school or on school trips. This helps us to focus on our learning, play together and stay safe.

Only Year 5 and 6 walkers with permission from home may bring a phone. Switch it off before you come in and give it to your teacher. It will be kept safe in the office, and you will get it back at the end of the day for your walk home.

Do not switch your phone on until you have left the school site.

If your phone is seen or heard in school, it will be taken to the office and your grown-up will need to collect it.

If your grown-up needs to talk to you, they will call the school office.

If something online has worried or upset you, always tell a trusted adult. We are here to help.