



# St Mary's Priory Catholic Infant and Junior Schools

Love one another  
Always do our best  
Take care of ourselves and the world around us

Mobile Phone policy

Approved: September 2026

|                         |                | <b>Date</b>    |
|-------------------------|----------------|----------------|
| <b>Head Teacher</b>     | Jane Ronan     | September 2026 |
| <b>Next review date</b> | September 2027 |                |



At St Mary's Priory Catholic Infant and Junior Schools, we are committed to ensuring the safety of children in our care. We recognise that mobile phones in the school have a role to play for the purpose of communication, but we are aware that casual or inappropriate use of mobile phones, smart devices and associated applications may present safeguarding risks including child-on-child abuse, online bullying, coercion, exploitation, grooming, radicalisation and exposure to harmful content. Any such concerns will be managed in accordance with the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

The enhanced functions of many mobile phones are of most concern and are most susceptible to misuse. Misuse includes the creation, possession or sharing of nude, semi-nude, sexual or otherwise harmful images involving children, as well as bullying, harassment and exploitation. Mobile phones can cause an unnecessary distraction during the working day and can be intrusive when used in the company of others.

When mobile phones are misused, it can impact on an individual's dignity, privacy and right to confidentiality. Such concerns are not exclusive to children and young people; hence there is a duty to protect the needs and vulnerabilities of everyone.

It can be difficult to detect when such devices are present or being used, particularly in relation to enhanced functions, such as cameras. The use of all mobile phones is, therefore, limited, regardless of their capabilities.

The aim is to avoid distraction and disruption of the working day, and to minimise the opportunities for any individual to make any covert images or misuse functions in any other way.

This policy applies to all pupils, staff, volunteers and visitors.

**Please note that for the purposes of this policy, the term 'mobile phone' also covers any electronic device with the capacity to be used as a form of communication, either through the device itself or any applications stored on the device.**

### **Relevant guidance**

This policy meets the requirements of section 36 of the [Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act 2026](#), and the Department for Education (DfE)'s [mobile phone guidance](#) and [behaviour guidance](#). Further guidance that should be considered alongside this policy includes [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#), which sets out the expectation that all schools should be mobile phone-free environments by default.

Concerns arising from the use of mobile phones or smart devices may also be considered under the school's Online Safety, Acceptable Use and Filtering and Monitoring arrangements, Staff Code of Conduct, pupil Behaviour Management policy.

### **Staff Personal Mobile Phones**

Staff (including volunteers, contractors and anyone else otherwise engaged by the school) are not permitted to use their personal mobile phone during the school day, while pupils are present and during contact time. 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).

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 (this list is non-exhaustive):

- For emergency contact by their child, or their child's school
- In the case of acutely ill dependents or family members

The headteacher will decide on a case-by-case basis whether to allow for special arrangements.

If special arrangements are not deemed necessary, school staff can use the school office number as a point of emergency contact.

- Staff must give the school telephone number to their next of kin in case it is necessary for the staff member to be contacted, in an emergency, during working hours.
- A personal mobile phone may be taken on school trips in accordance with guidance – see 'The Use of Mobile Phones on Trips' section below.
- Camera or video functions on personal mobile phones must not be used by staff to take images of children under any circumstances.
- Staff are not required to make work calls on their own phones, either mobile or landline; however, in exceptional circumstances, if this should be necessary then they are advised to use the prefix 141 before dialing the recipient's number to ensure their own number is protected.
- Staff must never store parents', carers' or children's telephone numbers on their mobile phones and staff must never give their private mobile number to parents, carers or children.
- Staff must not communicate with pupils using personal messaging services, social networking sites, gaming platforms or private email accounts. Any communication required for educational purposes must take place through approved school systems.

Failure by staff to comply with the mobile phone policy guidelines could result in disciplinary action.

#### **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 Gemini).

#### **Safeguarding**

- Staff must not give their personal contact details to parents/carers or pupils, including by 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 that 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.
- Staff must immediately report the loss, theft or unauthorised access of any device containing school information to the Headteacher and Data Protection Lead in accordance with the school's data breach procedures.
- Any concern regarding the misuse of a mobile phone, smart device, social media application or electronic communication involving a pupil must be reported immediately to the DSL or Deputy DSL.

#### **Using personal mobiles for work purposes**

In some circumstances, it may be appropriate for staff to use personal mobile phones or a similar device during the school day in front of pupils for work. Such circumstances may include, but are not limited to:

- Use of multi-factor authentication
- Emergency evacuations
- Off-site trips
- Residential visits

See Educational Visits policy in [staff portal](#) and on the school website.

In these circumstances, staff will:

- Use their mobile phones in an appropriate and professional manner, in line with our staff code of conduct
- Not use their phones to take photographs or recordings of pupils, their work, or anything else that could identify a pupil
- Refrain from using their phones to contact parents/carers. If necessary, contact must be made via the school office

### **Work phones**

Some members of staff are provided with a mobile phone by the school for work purposes. Only authorised staff are permitted to use school phones, and access to the phone must not be provided to anyone without authorisation. Residential trips will have use of school devices to collect photographs and videos of activities.

Staff must:

- Only use school phone functions for work purposes, including making/receiving calls, sending/receiving emails or other communications, or using the internet
- Make sure that all communication and conduct linked to the device is appropriate and professional at all times, in line with our staff code of conduct

### **Sanctions**

Staff that fail to adhere to this policy may face disciplinary action. See the school's staff disciplinary policy for more information.

### **Children using mobile phones**

At St Mary's Priory, to ensure a mobile phone-free environment in line with the Statutory guidance on [Mobile phones in schools](#), we have the following practice in place:

- Only pupils 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 to school, but must deposit it with the class teacher at the start of the day and collect it from the class teacher at the end of the day. Phones must not be turned on until leaving the school site.
- 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 handed to the class teacher by a child 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 carry mobile phones on any school trips
- 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.

Pupils will be taught the risks that are associated with the use of mobile phones, both in school and more broadly, to make sure they understand the decision 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. Pupils will be encouraged to see a mobile-phone free environment as desirable and valuable.

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 material on a mobile phone may provide evidence relating to a criminal offence, the device will be secured, passed to the DSL and, where appropriate, retained for police investigation.

### **Preservation of Digital Evidence**

Where a mobile phone, smartwatch or other electronic device is believed to contain evidence of a safeguarding concern, child-on-child abuse, online bullying, harassment, exploitation, grooming, criminal behaviour, or nude, semi-nude or sexual imagery involving children, staff must preserve the integrity of the evidence.

Staff must not:

- Delete, edit, copy, forward or share any content;
- Conduct their own investigation of the device;
- Ask pupils to delete material;
- Print, download or store images on another device;
- View the content beyond what is necessary to establish an immediate safeguarding risk.

The device should be secured and passed to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or Deputy DSL without delay. The DSL will determine any further action, including consultation with Children's Social Care, the police, the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) where appropriate, or other relevant agencies, in accordance with the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy. Any handling of devices or digital evidence will be conducted in a manner that protects pupils, preserves evidence and complies with safeguarding, data protection and statutory guidance requirements.

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

At St Mary's Priory, smartwatches are considered under the same practice as mobile phones.

### **The Use of Mobile Phones on School Trips**

Carrying mobile phones on trips can help to ensure safety for all members of the school 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 trip leader has permission to use their personal phone for use in contacting other staff members or volunteers on the trip, contacting the school or contacting the emergency services. At all other times, the guidelines below must be followed.

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 school 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.
- 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 device – this must be passed back to the party leader at the end of the trip.
- The trip 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 trip leader undertakes to ensure that these numbers are not held on any mobile device or in any written form after the end of the trip.
- It is advised that if the trip leader is using his or her own mobile phone and 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.

### **Exceptions for special circumstances**

In the case of permission due to exceptional circumstances, permission will only be granted where there is a documented safeguarding or medical necessity. To request such permission, pupils or parents/carers should contact a member of the senior leadership team via the school office. Any pupils who are given permission must then adhere to the school's Behaviour policy and Acceptable Use policy.

### **Sanctions**

Where school procedures are not followed the following sanctions will be applied:

- Mobile phone will be confiscated (Schools are permitted to confiscate phones from pupils under [sections 91](#) and [94](#) of the Education and Inspections Act 2006)
- Confiscated phones must be collected by parent/carer following a meeting with a member of the senior leadership team (Headteachers can confiscate mobile phones and similar devices for the length of time they deem proportionate, according to the [DfE's guidance on mobile phones in schools](#))
- Confiscated phones will be stored with a member of the senior leadership team in a secure location.

Where assessed as a necessary, 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 contains nude, semi-nude, sexual or otherwise harmful images, or is being or has been used to commit an offence or cause harm to another person).

Where inappropriate content is found on phone, or if inappropriate behaviour is suspected, these will be handled in line with our Child Protection policy and Behaviour Management policy. Parents/carers will be kept informed of all actions.

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 (SEN), 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 [Keeping Children Safe in](#)

Education. This will include speaking with the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) or deputy, who will consider whether pastoral support, an early intervention, or a referral to children's social care is appropriate

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

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

- Notices are displayed in the school advising visitors, parents and carers that mobile phones are not to be used.
- Parents, carers and visitors should not use mobile phones or smart devices in areas where pupils are present unless specifically authorised by a member of staff.
- Visitors and supply staff are not allowed to use mobile phones on the school site and phones must be kept in their bags. Mobile phones can be used in the staff room.
- If a visitor, parent or carer is seen using their mobile phone, they will be asked politely to turn it off/desist from using it/remove it from children's view.
- Parents/carers or volunteers supervising trips are also responsible for enforcing the school's policy for pupils using their phones, but must refer any proposed sanctions to a member of staff, as they do not have the power to search or confiscate devices.

### **Parent/Carer Photography and Video Recording at School Events**

Parents and carers may take photographs or videos at school events where the school has confirmed that this is permitted. Images and recordings should focus on their own child wherever possible and must be for personal and family use only. Images containing other children must not be shared on social media or other public platforms without appropriate permission.

The school will respect the photograph and video permissions given by parents and carers. Where a child does not have permission to be included in photographs or recordings taken by other parents/carers, the school may restrict or prohibit photography and filming at the event. Parents and carers will be reminded of these expectations at the start of relevant events.

### **Loss, theft or damage**

Pupils bringing mobile phones to school must make sure that their phones are switched off, ready to be stored away securely in the classroom cupboard when not in use during the school day. Pupils must secure their mobile phones as much as possible, including using passwords or pin codes to protect access to the phone's functions.

Staff must also secure their personal phones, as well as any work phone provided to them. Failure by staff to do so could result in data breaches.

The school accepts no responsibility for mobile phones that are lost, damaged or stolen on school premises or transport, during school visits or trips, or while pupils are travelling to or from school. Please see our school office for this disclaimer.

Confiscated phones will be stored with a member of the senior leadership team in a secure location.

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

Our school is a mobile phone-free environment.

- Please keep your mobile phone on silent/vibrate while on the school grounds
- Please do not use phones where pupils are present. If you must use your phone, you must go to an area away from children (office, staffroom)
- Do not take photos or recordings of pupils (unless it is your own child), or staff
- Do not use your phone in lessons, when working with pupils or while children are present

The school accepts no responsibility for phones that are lost, damaged or stolen while you are on the school grounds.

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