St Paul's
Church of England Primary School

Mobile phone Policy

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Mobile Phone and Smart Device Policy

Introduction

St Paul's C.E Primary School 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 inspection framework, which requires inspectors to consider whether school mobile phone policies are understood, consistently applied and effective in supporting positive behaviour, attendance, safeguarding and wellbeing.

This policy outlines the appropriate use of mobile phones and smart devices on our school site. It reflects the guidance set out in the school's Code of Conduct, Acceptable Use Policy and the Safer Recruitment Consortium's Guidance for Safer Working Practice for Adults Working with Children and Young People in Education Settings (2022, as updated).

Statutory and National Guidance

This policy has been developed with reference to:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2025
- DfE Mobile Phones in Schools Guidance (2024)
- Behaviour in Schools (DfE)
- Searching, Screening and Confiscation Advice for Schools (DfE)
- Use of Reasonable Force Advice for Headteachers, Staff and Governing Bodies (DfE)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children
- UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) and Data Protection Act 2018
- Equality Act 2010
- Prevent Duty Guidance

The school recognises that mobile phones and internet-enabled devices can create safeguarding risks, including online abuse, cyberbullying, exposure to harmful content, sexual harassment, child-on-child abuse, online grooming, radicalisation and the creation or sharing of indecent images. This policy forms part of the school's wider safeguarding arrangements.

This Policy Should Be Read in Conjunction With

- Behaviour and Relationships Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

• Staff Code of Conduct
• Acceptable Use Policy (AUP)
• Equality Policy and 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.
6. Support the school's online safety responsibilities by reducing opportunities for cyberbullying, online abuse, inappropriate photography, harmful content sharing and other technology-enabled safeguarding risks.

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, photography, internet access or other communication functions.

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.

Mobile Phone Guidelines – For Pupils

1. The school strongly discourages pupils from bringing mobile phones to school. Those pupils who do walk to and from school on their own, may bring a phone in but this must be handed in at the school office at the start of the school day.
2. We recognise that some parents/carers may wish their child to carry a mobile phone when travelling independently to and from school. At St Paul's C.E Primary School, only Year 6 pupils and Year 5 pupils during the Summer Term are permitted to walk independently to and from school.
3. There is no reason for a pupil to use or access a mobile phone during the school day.
4. Parents and carers are reminded that, in emergencies, the school office remains the appropriate point of contact and can ensure that pupils are reached quickly and supported appropriately.
5. Valuable items should not be brought into school as they may be lost, stolen or damaged.
6. Where a parent/carer wishes an eligible pupil to bring a mobile phone to school, approval must first be obtained from the Headteacher, Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or Year 6 class teacher. These will be kept in the school office.
7. Approved phones must be switched off before entering the school grounds and handed immediately to the school office for secure storage until the end of the school day.
8. The school accepts no responsibility for loss, theft or damage to personally owned devices.

Smartwatches – Pupils

Pupils may wear basic smartwatches provided they cannot:

• make or receive calls
• send or receive messages

• record audio or video
• access the internet
• take photographs

All smartwatches must remain on silent mode and must not be interacted with during the school day.

Any smartwatch used for communication, recording, internet access or causing disruption will be treated as a mobile phone and dealt with under this policy.

Prohibited Use

Any use of a mobile phone or smart device by a pupil during the school day is a breach of this policy.

Serious breaches include:

• recording, photographing or filming pupils, staff or visitors without permission
• sharing images, videos or recordings without consent
• accessing, creating, storing or sharing inappropriate, harmful or illegal content
• cyberbullying, intimidation, harassment or threatening behaviour
• facilitating child-on-child abuse, sexual harassment or harmful sexual behaviour
• accessing social media, messaging applications or online platforms without authorisation
• attempting to bypass school safeguarding or filtering systems
• making malicious allegations using digital technology

Where safeguarding concerns arise, staff will respond in accordance with the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

Incidents may result in referral to the DSL, Children's Social Care, Police, Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) or other relevant agencies.

It should be noted that using a mobile phone to menace, harass or offend another person may constitute a criminal offence.

Confiscation, Search and Examination

School staff have the power to confiscate mobile phones and smart devices where their use breaches this policy.

Where there is reasonable suspicion that a device contains evidence relating to:

• bullying
• child-on-child abuse

• sexual harassment
• safeguarding concerns
• criminal activity
• inappropriate images or content

authorised staff may search, examine or delete data from the device in accordance with DfE Searching, Screening and Confiscation guidance and the school's Behaviour and Relationships Policy.

The Headteacher and authorised staff will exercise these powers proportionately, taking account of safeguarding responsibilities, data protection requirements and the welfare of all pupils involved.

Where indecent images of children are suspected or identified, staff will not view or forward images unnecessarily and will immediately follow safeguarding procedures and seek advice from the DSL.

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

• it will be confiscated and stored securely
• it will only be returned to a parent/carer unless otherwise agreed by the Headteacher
• parents/carers will be informed

Reasonable Adjustments

The school will make reasonable adjustments for pupils who require access to a device because of:

• medical monitoring requirements
• SEND needs
• disability
• young carer responsibilities
• safeguarding circumstances

Requests will be considered individually by the Headteacher, SENCO and DSL and reviewed regularly.

Mobile Phone Guidelines – Staff, Governors and Volunteers

1. The school recognises that staff may bring mobile phones to work.
2. Devices brought onto the site remain the responsibility of the owner.

3. The school accepts no responsibility for loss, theft or damage to personally owned devices.
4. Personal mobile phone use is restricted to breaktimes, lunchtime and after school once pupils have left the site, unless specifically authorised by the Headteacher.
5. The staffroom and designated leadership offices are the approved locations for personal mobile phone use.
6. Mobile phones must not be used in classrooms or learning areas when pupils are present.
7. Staff must not use personal mobile phones in the presence of pupils. Phones must remain out of sight and on silent mode.
8. The school caretaker may carry a mobile phone where this forms part of their operational duties.
9. Staff who use mobile phones inappropriately during teaching time may be subject to disciplinary procedures.
10. School mobile phones/i-pads may be issued for educational visits, emergency communication, safeguarding matters and operational purposes.
11. Calls and messages made using school devices must relate solely to school business.
12. Staff may carry mobile phones on educational visits for emergency purposes but should avoid personal use in the presence of pupils.
13. The recording, photographing or sharing of images, video or audio using personal devices is prohibited unless expressly authorised by the Headteacher.
14. Any authorised use of personal devices for school purposes must be recorded and may be subject to monitoring.
15. Personal devices should only connect to authorised school networks where this is approved and compliant with the school's Acceptable Use Policy and cyber-security arrangements.
16. Any member of staff who becomes aware of inappropriate, unsafe or unlawful use of a mobile phone or smart device must report concerns immediately in accordance with the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.
17. Staff will model safe, responsible, respectful and professional behaviour in their use of technology.

Smartwatches – Staff, Governors and Volunteers

Staff may wear smartwatches. To maintain safeguarding standards and minimise distractions, smartwatches must be set to School Mode or Aeroplane Mode during the school day.

Notifications should be silenced and communication, recording and internet functions disabled.

Smartwatches must not be used in the presence of pupils.

Mobile Phone Guidelines – Parents and Visitors

1. Parents and visitors are requested not to use mobile phones in areas where children are present, including reception areas and playgrounds.
2. Parents will be asked to stop using mobile phones during drop-off and collection times.
3. Visitors who need to make or receive calls should do so only in designated areas away from pupils.
4. Visitors must not photograph, film or record pupils without prior permission from the Headteacher.
5. Any individual bringing a device onto site must ensure it contains no inappropriate or illegal content.
6. Personal devices should only connect to authorised school networks where approved.
7. Using a mobile phone to menace, harass or offend another person may constitute a criminal offence and may result in police involvement.

Smartwatches – Visitors

On arrival, visitors will be asked to place smartwatches into School Mode or Aeroplane Mode for the duration of their visit.

This expectation is outlined within visitor induction information and safeguarding procedures.

Communication and Consistency

In line with DfE and Ofsted expectations:

- this policy will be communicated clearly to staff, pupils and parents
- annual reminders and training will reinforce expectations
- staff will be trained to apply the policy consistently
- the policy will be available on the school website
- the policy will form part of staff induction and new parent information

Consequences for Breaches

Consequences will be applied consistently, proportionately and fairly in accordance with the Behaviour and Relationships Policy.

Pupil Breaches

First Breach

- phone confiscated
- parent/carer informed

Repeated Breaches

- meeting with parent/carer
- appropriate consequence in line with Behaviour and Relationships Policy

Serious Breach

- immediate referral to the DSL
- parent/carer meeting
- safeguarding investigation where required
- possible police involvement
- sanctions applied in line with Behaviour and Relationships Policy

Staff Breaches

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

Visitor Breaches

Visitors will be reminded of expectations. Repeated or serious breaches may result in individuals being asked to leave the premises.

Monitoring, Review and Accountability

To ensure effective implementation, senior leaders will monitor:

- confiscation records
- safeguarding concerns linked to devices
- behaviour incidents involving mobile technology
- staff compliance with policy expectations

Trends, safeguarding concerns and policy compliance will be reviewed termly and reported to governors through safeguarding and behaviour monitoring arrangements.

This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner where national guidance changes.

Equality and Safeguarding Impact Assessment

This policy complies with:

- Equality Act 2010
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2026
- Behaviour in Schools guidance
- Searching, Screening and Confiscation guidance
- Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR

The school will ensure that reasonable adjustments are considered for pupils with SEND, medical conditions, disabilities and other protected characteristics.

Any exceptions to this policy will be risk assessed, documented and reviewed regularly by the SENCO and DSL.

The school will consider individual circumstances carefully to ensure that no pupil is unfairly disadvantaged whilst maintaining a safe, secure and effective learning environment for all.

St Paul's Primary School

MOBILE PHONE FREE ZONE

In line with Department for Education guidance

Our school is a mobile phone-free environment.

To support a calm, safe and focused learning environment, mobile phones and smart devices must **not** be used at any time during the school day, including lessons, breaks and lunchtime.

This follows Department for Education expectations that schools should be free from mobile phone use throughout the school day.

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR PUPILS

- Phones must be switched off and kept out of sight
- Phones should be stored in bags, lockers, or handed in (school policy applies)
- Smartwatches and similar devices may also be restricted
- Pupils should not use devices to message, call, or access social media during school hours

NOT ALLOWED

- Using mobile phones at any point in the school day
- Taking photos, videos, or recordings
- Social media use in school
- AirPods/earbuds connected to personal devices

ALLOWED
(ONLY WHEN APPROVED BY STAFF)

- Medical or accessibility needs
- Teacher-directed learning activities (rare and supervised)
- Emergency situations through the school office

WHY WE DO THIS

A phone-free school helps us to:

- Improve focus and learning
- Reduce disruption in lessons
- Support positive behaviour and wellbeing
- Prevent bullying and online harm
- Encourage social interaction

FOR PARENTS AND CARERS

- Please do not contact your child directly during school hours
- Contact the school office for any urgent messages
- Support us by reinforcing this policy at home

BREACHING THE POLICY

Failure to follow this rule may result in:

- Confiscation of the device
- Behaviour sanctions in line with school policy
- Parent/carer contact

Phones away. Focus on learning.