St Patrick's Catholic Primary School

Our Mission in St Patrick's is to develop each child's talents and potential in a caring Catholic community inspired by the teachings of Jesus Christ.

Mobile Phone Policy 26-27

Policy agreed (date):	**October 2026**
Policy published (including on website) (date):	**October 2026**
Next review (date):	**October 2027**

Introduction and aims

At Saint Patrick's Catholic Primary School we recognise that mobile phones and similar devices, including smartwatches, are an important part of everyday life for our pupils, parents/carers and as well as the wider school community. Saint Patrick's Catholic Primary School operates as a mobile phone-free environment by default; pupils do not have access to their mobile phone during the school day, including lessons, the time between lessons, breaktimes and lunchtime, other than by exception.

Note: throughout this policy, 'mobile phones' refers to mobile phones and similar devices. 'Staff' refers to all staff including teachers, support staff, MDSAs, office staff and supply staff.

Our policy aims to:

- Promote safe and responsible phone use
- Set clear guidelines for the use of mobile phones for pupils, 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

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.

Roles and responsibilities

- All 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 Senior Leadership Team is responsible for monitoring the policy every annually, reviewing it, and holding staff and pupils accountable for its implementation.
- Teaching staff will address any questions or concerns from parents/carers quickly, and clearly communicate the reasons for prohibiting the use of mobile phones.

Governors

The Governors will be alerted to any changes to the policy as a part of the School Policy Monitoring schedule.

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. Personal mobile phones belonging to staff ,volunteers, contractors and anyone else otherwise engaged by the school are not permitted to use their personal mobile phone, while children are present. Use of personal mobile phones must be restricted to non-contact time, and when pupils are not present.

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 Co-Pilot). Please see school's data protection policy and Online Safety Policy

Safeguarding

- Staff must not 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 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.

Using personal mobiles for work purposes

In some circumstances, it may be appropriate for staff to use personal mobile phones for work. Such circumstances may include, but are not limited to: Issuing home learning on google classrooms, use of multi-factor authentication

Supervising offsite trips

- Supervising residential visits-In these circumstances, staff will:
- Use their mobile phones in an appropriate and professional manner, in line with our staff behaviour policy
- Not use their phones to take photographs or recordings of pupils, their work, or anything else which could identify a pupil
- Refrain from using their phones to contact parents/carers. If necessary, contact must be made via the school office team.

Sanctions

Staff that fail to adhere to this policy may face disciplinary action. (see staff behaviour policy)

Use of mobile phones by pupils

The DfE's non-statutory mobile phone guidance says that pupils should not use mobile phones/devices with Smart communication technology throughout the school day. This includes during lessons, in the time between lessons, at breaktimes, at lunchtimes and on the school site before and after school.

For those children who travel to and from school with a mobile phone or smart device, these will be collected at the gate in the morning by the teacher on duty and then taken to the office for storage during the day. At the end of the day children then collect their phones from the office after dismissal from class.

Exceptions for special circumstances

Pupils with diabetes who use their phones to monitor their blood sugar are allowed the device in school for this purpose only.

Sanctions

If a pupil is found to have brought a phone into school, it will be confiscated, kept in the office and a parent contacted to collect this at the end of the day. (Schools are permitted to confiscate phones from pupils under sections 91 and 94 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006) Staff can search pupils' phones in specific circumstances, as set out in the DfE's guidance on searching, screening and confiscation. The DfE guidance allows you to search a pupil's phone if there is a good reason to do so . 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 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

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

- Parents/carers, visitors and volunteers (including governors and contractors) must adhere to this policy as it relates to staff if they are on the school site during the school day. This means:
- Not taking pictures or recordings of pupils, unless it's at a public event (such as a school fair), or of their own child
- Using any photographs or recordings for personal use only, and not posting on social media without consent
- Not using phones in lessons, or when working with pupils
- Parents/carers, visitors and volunteers will be informed of the rules for mobile phone use when they sign in at reception.

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

- Use their phone to make contact with other parents/carers
- Take photos or recordings of pupils, their work, or anything else that could identify a pupil

- Parents/carers or volunteers supervising trips are also responsible for enforcing the school's policy for pupils using their phones, as set out above, but must refer any sanctions to a member of staff, as they do not have the power to search or confiscate devices.

Parents/carers must use the school office as the first point of contact if they need to get in touch with their child during the school day. They must not try to contact their child on their personal mobile during the school day.

Loss, theft or damage

- Year 6 Pupils bringing mobile phones to school must ensure that the phones are appropriately labelled and are handed in on arrival to the class teacher.
- Pupils must turn their phones off on entry to the school grounds.
- Staff must also secure their personal phones. 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 and from school.