ST. OSWALD'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Mobile Phone Policy

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Mobile Phone Policy

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SCOPE: *For the purposes of this policy, the term 'mobile phone' includes mobile phones and any personal smart device capable of communication, internet access, photography, video recording, audio recording, messaging or similar functions, including smart watches/glasses where these devices have such capabilities.*

1. Introduction and aims

The Department for Education's (DfE) statutory safeguarding guidance, *Keeping Children Safe in Education* (KCSIE, 2026), states:

"All schools should be mobile phone-free environments by default; anything other than this should be by exception only. Statutory guidance on Mobile phones in schools is clear that the department expects schools to implement a policy whereby pupils do not have access to their mobile phone throughout the school day including during lessons, the time between lessons, breaktimes and lunchtime. There are a number of ways in which schools can ensure that they are mobile phone-free, and it is for headteachers to decide how best to achieve this within their own unique contexts."

St Oswald's Catholic Primary School is committed to maintaining a mobile phone-free environment throughout the school day. This policy sets out the school's arrangements for the management of mobile phones and other personal smart devices and establishes clear expectations for pupils, staff, parents/carers, visitors and volunteers.

The aims of this policy are to:

- Support the provision of a mobile phone-free environment throughout the school day.
- Safeguard pupils and staff from risks associated with the misuse of mobile phones and smart devices.
- Promote positive behaviour, wellbeing and engagement in learning.
- Provide clear and consistent expectations for pupils, staff, parents/carers, visitors and volunteers.
- Ensure the safe, responsible and lawful use of technology where its use is permitted.
- Support the effective implementation of St Oswald's Catholic Primary School's safeguarding, behaviour, online safety and data protection arrangements.

This policy should be read alongside St Oswald's Catholic Primary School's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, Behaviour Policy, Online Safety Policy, Code of Conduct for Employees, Data Protection Policy and Acceptable Use Policy.

2. 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.

3. Roles and responsibilities

Headteacher

The Headteacher has overall responsibility for implementing this policy and ensuring that the school's arrangements remain consistent with the expectations set out in KCSIE and the DfE's Mobile Phones in Schools guidance.

The Headteacher will:

- Ensure appropriate arrangements are in place to maintain a mobile phone-free environment throughout the school day.
- Determine how the school will manage and store pupil mobile phones where pupils are permitted to bring them onto site.
- Consider and approve any individual exceptions to this policy.
- Ensure staff, pupils and parents/carers understand the school's expectations and the safeguarding rationale underpinning them.
- Ensure breaches of this policy are managed consistently and proportionately in accordance with the school's Behaviour Policy.
- Monitor the effectiveness of the school's arrangements and review them regularly to ensure continued alignment with KCSIE and DfE guidance.

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

The DSL will provide advice and support where the use or misuse of a mobile phone or personal smart device gives rise to a safeguarding concern.

The DSL will ensure concerns involving mobile phones and personal smart devices, including online safety incidents, cyberbullying, child-on-child abuse, inappropriate imagery, misuse of social media or contact with unknown individuals, are managed in accordance with the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and the requirements of KCSIE.

Staff

All staff are responsible for implementing this policy consistently and helping to maintain a mobile phone-free environment, as expected by KCSIE and DfE guidance.

Staff will:

- Actively enforce the school's expectations relating to mobile phones and personal smart devices.
- Challenge and respond appropriately to breaches of this policy.
- Report safeguarding concerns arising from the use of mobile phones or personal smart devices in line with safeguarding procedures.
- Not use personal mobile phones for personal purposes in the presence of pupils during the school day.
- Model appropriate and professional use of technology.
- Support pupils and parents/carers in understanding the school's expectations and the reasons for them.

Volunteers, contractors, agency staff and any other adults working within the school are expected to comply with this policy and report any concerns to a member of staff immediately.

Pupils

Pupils are expected to comply with the requirements of this policy and any school procedures relating to mobile phones and personal smart devices.

Pupils must not use, access or attempt to access a mobile phone or personal smart device during the school day unless specifically authorised by a member of staff in accordance with an approved exception.

Parents and carers

Parents and carers play an important role in supporting the school's mobile phone-free environment.

Parents and carers are asked to:

- Support the school's expectations regarding mobile phones and personal smart devices.
- Refrain from contacting pupils directly on mobile phones during the school day (In an emergency, parents/carers should contact the school office).

4. Use of mobile phones and personal smart devices by staff

Personal mobile phones and smart devices

Staff, volunteers, contractors, agency staff and any other adults working on behalf of the school may bring personal mobile phones and smart devices onto site but must ensure that they are used appropriately and in accordance with agreed school protocols.

Personal mobile phones and smart devices must not be used for personal purposes whilst supervising pupils or undertaking duties involving direct contact with pupils.

Staff should ensure that personal devices and school-owned mobile devices are kept secure at all times. Devices should be protected by appropriate security measures, such as passwords, PINs or biometric authentication, and must not be left unattended or accessible to pupils.

The Headteacher may authorise exceptions where there is a legitimate reason for a member of staff to retain access to a personal mobile phone during the school day, such as emergency family circumstances, caring responsibilities or medical needs. Where no such arrangements are in place, parents, carers and family members should contact staff through the school office in the event of an emergency.

Professional conduct and safeguarding

Staff must maintain clear professional boundaries when using mobile phones and personal smart devices, adhering to the professional boundaries and expectations set out within the Trust's Code of Conduct for Employees, Social Media Policy, Online Safety Policy and Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

Staff must not:

- Share personal mobile telephone numbers with pupils.
- Communicate with pupils using personal phones, messaging services, social media platforms or other personal accounts.
- Communicate or attempt to communicate with pupils through personal social networking accounts, messaging services or personal electronic communication methods.
- Use personal mobile phones or smart devices to store or share photographs, videos or audio recordings of pupils.
- Use personal devices to store or share confidential school, staff or pupil information unless specifically authorised in accordance with the Trust's Data Protection Policy.

Any communication with pupils or parents/carers must take place through approved school systems and communication channels. In exceptional circumstances where personal devices were used (e.g. school trip emergency) staff should share this information with the Headteacher.

Concerns relating to the misuse of mobile phones or personal smart devices, including safeguarding concerns, inappropriate communication, online safety incidents or the creation, possession or sharing of inappropriate images, must be reported immediately in accordance with the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

Data protection and information security

Staff must comply with the requirements of the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR), the Data Protection Act 2018, Trust Data Protection Policy and Acceptable Use Policy when using technology.

Further guidance is contained within the Trust's Data Protection Policy, Cyber Security Policy, Acceptable Use Policy, Generative AI Policy, Social Media Policy, Code of Conduct for Employees, Online Safety Policy and the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

Use of personal devices for work purposes

There may be limited circumstances where staff are required to use a personal mobile phone or smart device for work-related purposes. Such use must be authorised by the Headteacher or a member of the Senior Leadership Team and must be consistent with safeguarding, data protection and information security requirements.

Examples may include:

- Multi-factor authentication and account verification processes.
- Emergency situations or critical incident management.
- Educational visits, residential visits and other off-site activities.

Where personal devices are used for authorised work purposes, staff must ensure that such use remains professional, proportionate and consistent with this policy and all relevant Trust policies.

- Photographs and videos must only be taken in accordance with the school's safeguarding procedures and parental permissions.
- Images must be transferred to an approved school system and permanently deleted from personal devices as soon as possible, in the presence of another member of staff.
- Staff must also delete images from the 'Recently Deleted' folder and ensure they are not retained in personal cloud storage.
- Images must not be shared through personal messaging apps or social media accounts.
- The school reserves the right to carry out appropriate spot checks to ensure compliance with this policy.

School-issued devices

Where staff are issued with a school mobile device, the device remains the property of the school and must be used primarily for school business.

Breaches of this policy

Any failure to comply with this policy will be addressed in accordance with Trust policy and may result in disciplinary action.

Where concerns relate to professional conduct, they will be managed in accordance with the Trust's Code of Conduct for Employees. Where concerns relate to safeguarding, they will be managed in accordance with the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

5. Use of mobile phones and personal smart devices by pupils

The school operates as a mobile phone-free environment throughout the school day. Pupils must not use, access or attempt to access a mobile phone during the school day, including during lessons, breaktimes, lunchtimes and the times between lessons.

Where a pupil needs to bring a mobile phone to school, the device must remain stored in the teacher’s desk drawer, inaccessible to the pupil throughout the school day. Devices may only be collected at the end of the school day in accordance with school procedures.

Mobile phones must not be used on the school site unless specifically authorised by a member of staff or where an agreed exception applies under this policy.

The school will ensure that pupils receive age-appropriate education regarding the safe, responsible and lawful use of technology through the curriculum and wider safeguarding arrangements. Further

information is contained within the school's Online Safety Policy, Behaviour Policy and Acceptable Use Policy.

Smart watches and other wearable technology

For the purposes of this policy, smart watches, smart glasses and other wearable devices with communication, internet, photography, recording or messaging functions are treated in the same way as mobile phones.

Pupils must not use or access smart watches or other wearable technology during the school day. Where pupils bring a smart watch or other wearable device onto the school site, the school will require it to be removed, switched off and stored in the same manner as a mobile phone.

Authorised exceptions

The school recognises that there may be exceptional circumstances where a pupil requires access to a mobile phone or smart device during the school day. Such arrangements will only be approved where there is a clear medical, safeguarding or educational need.

Examples may include:

- Pupils whose medical condition requires the use of a smart device to monitor or manage their health.
- Other exceptional circumstances approved by the Headteacher.

Requests for an exception should be made by a parent or carer and will be considered on an individual basis. Where an exception is approved, the school will agree appropriate arrangements for the possession, storage and use of the device.

Any authorised use must comply with this policy, the school's Acceptable Use Policy, Behaviour Policy, Online Safety Policy and any individual support plan or risk assessment where applicable.

Breaches of this policy

Where a mobile phone or smart device is found to be in use, or where a pupil refuses to comply with the school's requirements, the device may be confiscated by an authorised member of staff. Where a concern relates to safeguarding, online safety, inappropriate communications, the sharing of images, bullying, harassment or other harmful behaviour, staff will follow the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

Where there is reason to believe that a device contains evidence of criminal activity, illegal content or behaviour that may place a child at risk of harm, the school will act in accordance with relevant statutory guidance and seek advice from the DSL and, where appropriate, external agencies.

Confiscated devices will be stored securely and returned in accordance with the school's procedures. The school reserves the right to require a parent or carer to collect a confiscated device where appropriate.

When responding to breaches of this policy, the school will consider the age of the pupil, any special educational needs or disabilities, individual circumstances and whether the behaviour may indicate that the pupil is suffering or at risk of harm.

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

Parents, carers, volunteers, contractors, governors, trustees and visitors are expected to use mobile phones and personal smart devices responsibly whilst on the school site.

Mobile phones and personal smart devices must not be used in a way that compromises safeguarding, confidentiality, privacy or the effective operation of the school.

Visitors, volunteers and contractors working with pupils must be informed of, and comply with, the expectations set out in this policy and any instructions provided by the school.

Photographs, videos or audio recordings of pupils must not be taken without appropriate prior authorisation from the school. The storage and sharing of images must comply with the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, Data Protection Policy and any relevant consent arrangements.

Further expectations relating to professional conduct, image use, social media and confidentiality are set out within the Trust's Social Media Policy, Data Protection Policy and the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

7. Loss, theft or damage

Pupils who are permitted to bring a mobile phone or smart device to school do so at their own risk.

Where devices are brought onto the school site, pupils are expected to comply with the school's storage arrangements and ensure that devices are clearly identifiable as their property.

Pupils should take reasonable steps to protect devices from loss, theft or unauthorised access, including the use of passwords, PINs or other security measures where appropriate.

The school accepts no responsibility for mobile phones or smart devices that are lost, stolen or damaged on the school site, during educational visits, whilst travelling to or from school or at any other time.

Where a device has been confiscated under this policy, it will be stored securely by the school until it is returned in accordance with school procedures.

8. Monitoring and review

The school is committed to ensuring that this policy is implemented effectively and continues to support a safe, positive and mobile phone-free environment in accordance with the expectations set out in KCSIE and the DfE's *mobile phones in schools* guidance.

The effectiveness of this policy will be monitored regularly and reviewed at least annually, or sooner where required due to changes in legislation, safeguarding requirements or other school circumstances.