



St Mary's C of E (VA) Primary School

Working together
in an inclusive Christian environment
to allow every pupil to shine brighter and brighter.

St Mary's is an inclusive school where we believe that all people are of equal value, irrespective of their ethnicity, culture, religion, gender, ability or sexual identity. We recognise and respect differences.

Mobile Phone and Smart Device Policy

This policy is GDPR compliant.

Date of issue: Autumn 2026

Last reviewed/adopted: Autumn 2026 (Resources Committee)

Next review date: Autumn 2027

Signed: _____

Date: _____

1. Introduction and Aims

At St Mary's C of E Primary School, we recognise that mobile phones, smartwatches and other connected devices are part of everyday life. They can provide reassurance and practical benefits outside school; however, access to personal devices during the school day can create unnecessary distraction and can present risks relating to safeguarding, privacy, online safety, behaviour and data protection.

In accordance with current Department for Education guidance, **St Mary's is a mobile-phone-free school during the school day.**

The Department for Education's statutory guidance states that schools should be mobile-phone-free environments by default and should implement arrangements whereby pupils do not have access to their mobile phones throughout the school day, including lessons, transition times, breaktimes and lunchtimes. ([GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/government/statutory-guidance/schools-and-colleges))

Our policy aims to:

- create a calm, safe and purposeful environment in which children can learn, play and develop relationships without digital distraction;
- promote safe, responsible and age-appropriate use of technology;
- protect pupils and adults from inappropriate photography, recording or communication;
- reduce opportunities for online bullying and harmful online behaviour during the school day;
- establish clear and consistent expectations for pupils, staff, parents/carers, visitors and volunteers;
- support our Relationship and Positive Behaviour Policy, Online Safety Policy and safeguarding procedures;
- teach pupils to develop healthy and responsible relationships with technology.

This reflects our school values, particularly **Respect**: respect for other people's privacy, learning, safety and right to interact without being photographed, recorded or distracted by personal devices.

St Mary's existing Online Safety Policy recognises both the opportunities and risks associated with mobile and digital technologies and places online safety within the school's wider safeguarding responsibilities.

2. Scope

For the purposes of this policy, **mobile phones and smart devices** include, but are not limited to:

- mobile phones and smartphones;
- smartwatches;
- internet-enabled watches;
- tablets and other personal connected devices;
- devices capable of sending or receiving messages or notifications;

- devices capable of making or receiving calls;
- devices capable of taking photographs, video or audio recordings;
- location trackers, including AirTags and similar devices;
- any other personal communication or smart technology that performs similar functions.

School-owned technology used as part of teaching and learning is not covered by the prohibition on personal devices and will be managed through the school's Online Safety Policy and Acceptable Use Agreements.

3. Relevant Guidance and Related Policies

This policy has been developed with regard to:

- **Department for Education – Mobile phones in schools**, statutory guidance, updated June 2026;
- **Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026**;
- **Behaviour in Schools: Advice for Headteachers and School Staff**;
- **Searching, Screening and Confiscation at School**;
- the Equality Act 2010;
- relevant data protection legislation.

KCSIE 2026 is now the current statutory safeguarding guidance for schools and came into force on 1 September 2026. ([GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk))

This policy should be read alongside St Mary's:

- Relationship and Positive Behaviour Policy;
- Online Safety Policy and Acceptable Use Agreements;
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy;
- Child-on-Child Abuse Policy;
- Data Protection Policy;
- Staff Code of Conduct;
- SEND Policy.

Our Relationship and Positive Behaviour Policy establishes consistent expectations, responses and consequences and requires adults to model the behaviour expected of children. This policy follows the same principles.

4. Responsibilities

4.1 Headteacher and Governing Body

The Headteacher has overall responsibility for the implementation of this policy. The Headteacher will ensure that:

- expectations are communicated clearly to pupils, staff and parents/carers;
- staff apply the policy consistently;

- appropriate safeguarding procedures are followed where misuse raises a safeguarding concern;
- appropriate reasonable adjustments and individual arrangements are considered where required;
- incidents are monitored and the policy reviewed accordingly.

The Governing Body will provide appropriate oversight and challenge.

4.2 Staff

All staff, including teachers, support staff and supply staff, are responsible for consistently implementing this policy.

Visitors, volunteers and contractors should report any breach of the policy to a member of staff.

Adults are expected to model responsible use of technology. Current statutory guidance specifically states that staff should not use personal mobile phones for personal reasons in front of pupils during the school day. ([GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/612222/Statutory_Guidance_-_Mobile_Phones_in_Schools.pdf))

5. Mobile Phones and Smart Devices – Pupils

5.1 General expectation

Pupils must not have access to or use a mobile phone or personal smart device during the school day.

This includes:

- lessons;
- Collective Worship;
- breaktimes;
- lunchtimes;
- clubs taking place immediately before or after school where pupils remain under school supervision;
- movement around the school;
- Forest School and PE;
- school visits and activities during the normal school day, unless the school has made specific arrangements.

Pupils do not need a mobile phone to communicate with their parents/carers during the school day. Where communication is necessary, this will take place through the school office.

Parents/carers should similarly contact the school office rather than attempting to contact their child directly.

6. Bringing a Phone to School

We recognise that some older pupils travel independently and that parents may wish their child to carry a phone for safety on the journey to and from school.

Therefore, **pupils in Years 5 and 6 who have permission to travel to or from school independently may bring a mobile phone to school.**

The following conditions apply:

1. The phone must be clearly labelled with the child's name.
2. The phone must be **switched off before the child enters the school site.**
3. It must be handed to the class teacher/designated adult immediately on arrival.
4. It will be stored securely during the school day.
5. It will be returned at the end of the school day.
6. The phone must remain switched off and stored safely until the pupil has left the school site.
7. Pupils must not use the phone while walking around the school site.

St Mary's requires that any phone brought to school for this purpose is a simple device with only the functionality necessary for emergency communication.

7. Smartwatches

Smartwatches capable of communication, internet access, notifications, photography, video/audio recording or similar smart functions are treated in the same way as mobile phones.

They must therefore **not be accessible to pupils during the school day.**

If brought to school, they must be switched off and handed in alongside mobile phones.

A watch without connectivity, camera, recording or communication functions may be worn and used simply as a watch.

A smartwatch must not be used to:

- send or receive messages;
- make or receive calls;
- access the internet;
- receive notifications;
- take photographs;
- record video or audio;
- access social media or other applications.

8. Location Trackers and AirTags

St Mary's recognises that parents/carers may use AirTags or other location trackers to provide reassurance when older children travel independently.

However, trackers can also create safeguarding, privacy and data protection concerns, particularly where they inadvertently track other children, staff or the location of a school group.

Therefore, **pupils should not routinely wear or carry active location-tracking devices during the school day, on school trips or residential visits.**

Where a Year 5 or Year 6 pupil travels independently and a parent wishes them to carry a tracker for their journey, the tracker should be handed in on arrival and returned at the end of the day in the same way as a mobile phone.

Any exception must be agreed with the Headteacher in advance.

9. Reasonable Adjustments and Exceptional Circumstances

The school recognises that there may be exceptional circumstances in which a pupil needs access to a mobile phone or smart device.

This may include circumstances relating to:

- disability;
- medical needs;
- SEND;
- an agreed accessibility requirement;
- another exceptional safeguarding or welfare need.

Any arrangement must be **agreed in advance with the Headteacher** and clearly recorded.

Where possible, the school will identify an arrangement that meets the child's individual need while maintaining the principle of a mobile-phone-free school.

10. Trips and Residential Visits

Unless parents/carers are explicitly informed otherwise, pupils should **not bring mobile phones, smartwatches or connected personal devices on school trips or residential visits.**

The school will provide appropriate means of communication in an emergency.

Parents should contact the school or the emergency contact arrangements provided for the visit rather than contacting pupils directly.

Where an exceptional arrangement has been made for a pupil to bring a device, its use and storage will be determined by the trip leader.

11. Photography, Video and Audio Recording by Pupils

Pupils must never use a personal device to photograph, video or audio-record another pupil, member of staff, volunteer or visitor on the school site or during a school activity.

Unauthorised recording is considered a serious breach of this policy because it may:

- breach another person's privacy;
- create safeguarding concerns;
- facilitate bullying or harassment;
- lead to images or recordings being shared online;
- compromise personal data.

Any safeguarding concern involving images or recordings will be referred immediately to the DSL.

12. Responding to Pupil Misuse

The school's response will be consistent with its **Relationship and Positive Behaviour Policy**.

Where a pupil has a phone or smart device when they should not:

First/low-level incident:

The device will be removed and stored securely. The expectation will be explained to the child and the device returned at the end of the school day.

Repeated or deliberate breach:

The device will be stored securely and the parent/carer informed. The school may require a parent/carer to collect the device and/or withdraw permission for the pupil to bring it to school.

Serious misuse:

Where a device has been used to photograph or record others without permission, access inappropriate material, bully or harass another person, share harmful material or otherwise create a safeguarding concern, the matter will be referred to the Headteacher/DSL and dealt with under the school's Behaviour, Online Safety, Child-on-Child Abuse and Safeguarding procedures as appropriate.

Consequences will be **proportionate, logical, educational and/or protective**, reflecting St Mary's therapeutic and relational approach. The Behaviour Policy establishes that consequences should help children understand their actions, support lasting change and protect the wellbeing of others.

Where necessary, external agencies, including the police, may be consulted.

13. Searching and Confiscation

Where there are reasonable grounds to suspect that a pupil possesses a prohibited item or an item identified in the school's Behaviour Policy as searchable, authorised staff will act in accordance with current statutory guidance on **Searching, Screening and Confiscation**.

The Headteacher may identify mobile phones and similar devices as items that may be searched for under the school's Behaviour Policy, as expressly recognised by the current DfE mobile phone guidance. ([GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/mobile-phones-in-schools))

Any search of a device itself or examination of data/images will only take place where lawful, necessary and appropriate, taking account of safeguarding and data protection requirements.

14. Staff Use of Personal Mobile Phones and Smart Devices

Staff must model the standards expected of pupils.

Personal mobile phones and smart devices must therefore **not be used for personal purposes while staff are supervising or working with pupils**.

Personal devices should normally be kept securely away and used only:

- during non-contact time;
- during authorised breaks;
- in areas where pupils are not present, such as the staffroom.

Exceptions may be agreed by the Headteacher where there is an important personal need, for example an urgent family or medical situation.

Staff may also need to use a personal device for an authorised professional purpose such as:

- multi-factor authentication;
- an emergency evacuation;
- an off-site visit;
- a residential visit;
- another purpose expressly authorised by the Headteacher.

Use must remain professional and proportionate.

Staff should not use personal mobile phones to contact pupils or parents/carers. School-approved communication channels should be used.

15. Photographs and Recordings by Staff

Staff must never use a personal mobile phone or personal device to photograph, film or audio-record pupils.

Where photographs or recordings are required for legitimate school purposes, school-owned equipment must be used and images stored on approved school systems.

Personal devices must not be used to store or process confidential pupil information or other school personal data.

16. Parents/Carers

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

We ask parents/carers to:

- support and reinforce this policy with their child;
- ensure that any permitted phone is switched off before their child enters the school site;
- contact the **school office**, rather than their child's personal device, during the school day;
- avoid encouraging children to keep phones or smart devices with them contrary to school rules;
- respect the privacy of other children when taking photographs at school events.

Parents/carers should not photograph or record children other than their own unless the school has specifically indicated that this is appropriate.

Where photographs are permitted at performances or public events, parents/carers must respect the privacy of other families and must not publish images or recordings containing other identifiable children online or on social media without appropriate consent.

17. Visitors, Volunteers and Contractors

Visitors, volunteers, governors and contractors must not use personal mobile phones while working directly with pupils.

They must not use personal devices to:

- photograph or record pupils;
- access confidential information;
- communicate directly with pupils;
- undertake school business involving personal pupil data.

Devices should be kept securely away while working with children.

Relevant expectations will be communicated through visitor arrangements and volunteer induction.

18. Loss, Theft or Damage

Any device brought onto the school site remains the responsibility of the owner.

The school will take reasonable steps to store devices handed in by pupils securely; however, **St Mary's cannot accept liability for personal phones, smartwatches or other devices that are lost, stolen or damaged while on school premises, during visits or while travelling to or from school**, except where liability arises through the school's own negligence.

Families are therefore encouraged not to send expensive devices into school.

19. Online Safety and Education

A mobile-phone-free school does not mean avoiding education about mobile technology.

St Mary's recognises that children need to develop the knowledge, judgement and resilience to use technology safely and responsibly.

Online safety is therefore embedded across the curriculum, including Computing, PSHE and Relationships and Health Education. Our existing Online Safety Policy includes teaching children about cyberbullying, grooming, misinformation, privacy, digital resilience and positive online reputations.

Children will also be taught:

- why the school is mobile-phone-free;
- appropriate digital boundaries;
- respectful online communication;
- the risks associated with photographing or recording others;
- how to seek help when something online worries them;

- the importance of balancing technology with face-to-face relationships, learning, physical activity and play.

20. Behaviour Outside School

The school recognises that parents/carers are primarily responsible for their child's use of personal devices outside school.

However, the school may respond to online behaviour outside school where it:

- affects another member of the school community;
- constitutes bullying, harassment or threatening behaviour;
- creates a safeguarding concern;
- disrupts the orderly running of the school;

- adversely affects pupils' wellbeing or ability to attend or learn.

Any response will be made in accordance with the school's Behaviour, Online Safety and Safeguarding policies.

21. Monitoring and Review

The school will monitor the effectiveness of this policy through:

- behaviour records;
- safeguarding and online-safety incidents;
- feedback from staff;
- feedback from pupils;
- feedback from parents/carers;
- changes to statutory guidance and legislation.

The policy will be reviewed annually, or sooner where national guidance or the needs of the school change.

St Mary's: The Simple Rule

Please remember that:

At St Mary's, our school day is mobile-phone free.

If you need a phone because you travel independently, switch it off and hand it in when you arrive.

Smart devices stay off and away too.

If you need to contact home, an adult will help you.

We never use personal devices to photograph, film or record other people.

We use technology safely, responsibly and respectfully.