St Francis of Assisi Catholic Primary School

Mobile Phone Policy

Learning & Growing Together in God's Love

September 2025

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1. Introduction and aims

At St Francis of Assisi Catholic Primary School we recognise that mobile phones and similar devices, including smartphones, are an important part of everyday life for our pupils, parents/carers and staff, as well as the wider school community.

Our policy aims to:

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

Note: throughout this policy, 'mobile phones' refers to mobile phones and similar devices such as smart phones.

St Francis of Assisi supports parents at the school who have set up a Smartphone Free Childhood Parent Group, which meets regularly at school to offer guidance and support.

2. 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.

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 Staff

All staff (including teachers, support staff and supply 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 Headteacher is responsible for monitoring the policy every two years, reviewing it, and holding staff and pupils accountable for its implementation.

Staff will address any questions or concerns from parents/carers quickly, and clearly communicate the reasons for prohibiting the use of mobile phones.

3.2 Governors

Governors are responsible for monitoring and reviewing this policy every two years.

4. 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.

4.1 Personal mobile phones

Staff (including 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 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-basis whether to allow for special arrangements.

If special arrangements are not deemed necessary, school staff can use the school office number (01603 441484) as a point of emergency contact.

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.

4.2 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 Bard).

More guidance on data protection can be found in the Trust's Online Safety and Acceptable Use Policy, available on the school website, or on request from the School Office.

4.3 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.

4.4 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 homework, rewards or sanctions
- Use of multi-factor authentication
- Emergency evacuations
- Supervising off-site trips
- Supervising residential visits

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

4.5 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.

Staff must:

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

4.6 Sanctions

Staff that fail to adhere to this policy may face disciplinary action.

See the school's staff disciplinary policy for more information.

5. Use of mobile phones by pupils

The DfE's non-statutory mobile phone guidance says that pupils should not use mobile phones throughout the school day.

For this reason, only pupils who have been granted permission by the Headteacher may bring a named mobile phone to school, to be handed in at the main school gate each morning or at the school Reception (see 'Exceptions for Special Circumstances' below).

5.1 Use of smartwatches by pupils

The DfE's non-statutory mobile phone guidance includes in the term 'mobile phones' all devices with communications and smart technology that the school chooses to include in their policy.

Smartwatches are wristwatches with smart technology in them. They can be used to tell the time, send and receive text and voice messages, make calls and listen to music. Some smart watches have wellness and health-related features.

At St Francis of Assisi we do not allow children to wear smart watches to school. This is because of the possible safeguarding concerns that could arise, and also the fact that they could result in pupils becoming distracted in class. If pupils wear smart watches to school, they will be asked to remove them and they will be kept securely in the Office until the end of the day. Repeated wearing of smart watches may necessitate parents coming into school to collect them at the end of the school day. Basic non-smart watches can be worn, in line with the school's Uniform guidance.

5.2 Exceptions for special circumstances

The school may permit pupils to use a mobile phone in school, due to exceptional circumstances. This will be considered on a case-by-case basis but may include:

- Pupils travelling to school by themselves
- Pupils with diabetes who use their phones to monitor their blood sugar levels.

To request such permission, pupils or parents/carers should contact the Headteacher, submitting the Mobile Phone Parent Permission Slip (Appendix A).

Any pupils who are given permission must then adhere to the school's Acceptable Use Agreement (Appendix B)

Pupils bringing mobile phones to school must ensure that the phones are appropriately labelled.

Phones will be collected at the main school gate each morning by the Headteacher or member of the Senior Leadership Team, before being safely secured in the school Office in a locked cupboard. For pupils coming into school through the main Reception area (for example, for late arrivals) mobile phones need to be handed directly to Office Staff.

Pupils must secure their mobile phones as much as possible, including using passwords or pin codes to protect access to the phone's functions.

At the end of the day, pupils may collect their phones from the school Office, but must not turn their phones on until they have left the school site.

5.3 Sanctions

If pupils are found to be in breach of this Policy, the following sanctions will apply:

- Mobile phones or smart watches will be confiscated by a member of the SLT and held securely in the Office until the end of the day, when the pupil may collect their device. Parents will be notified. Schools are permitted to confiscate phones from pupils under sections 91 and 94 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006).
- Repeated breaches of this policy will result in the parent being called to remove the device from school property.
- 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 teachers to search a pupils' phone if there is good reason to do so (such as having reason to believe that the phone contains pornographic images, or if it is being/has been used to commit an offence or harm to another person). School Safeguarding procedures will then apply.

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.

6. 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 or attend a public event at school. They will be informed of this policy (Appendix C) and will be provided with a copy on request.

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 in section 5 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.

7. Loss, theft or damage

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.

Parents of pupils who have permission to bring their mobile phones into school will be given a copy of this Policy which explains the disclaimer above. This disclaimer is also included in the Parent Permission Letter.

Confiscated phones will be stored in the school Office in a locked cupboard.

Lost phones should be returned to The school Office. The school will then attempt to contact the owner.

8. Monitoring and review

The school is committed to ensuring that this policy has a positive impact on pupils' education, behaviour and welfare. When reviewing the policy, the school will take into account:

- Feedback from parents/carers and pupils
- Feedback from staff
- Records of behaviour and safeguarding incidents

- Relevant advice from the Department for Education, the local authority and any other relevant organisations

If there are any concerns regarding this policy, these should be brought to the attention of the Headteacher at head@st-francisofassisi.norfolk.sch.uk in a timely manner.

Appendix A: Permission form allowing a pupil to bring their phone to school

PUPIL DETAILS	
Pupil name:	
Year group/class:	
Parent/carer(s) name(s):	

I, …… request that St Francis of Assisi Catholic Primary School allows my child

…… to bring their mobile phone to school because they: *(Please tick relevant reason)*

- Travel to and from school alone
- Need the phone to support their medical needs
- Attend a before- or after-school activity where a mobile phone is required for the activity, or to contact parents/carers

I understand that my child must abide by the school's policy on the use of mobile phones, and its Acceptable Use Agreement

The school reserves the right to revoke permission if a pupil does not abide by the policy.

Parent/carer signature: _____

FOR SCHOOL USE ONLY	
Authorised by:	
Date:	

Appendix B: Acceptable Use Agreement

You must obey the following rules if you bring your mobile phone to school:

- Your parents need to have filled out a Mobile Phone Permission Form, available in 'Parent Info' on the school website, or from the School Office.
- Permission needs to have been given by Mrs Hope or Mrs Furness.
- Your phone must be clearly labelled with your name.
- You must hand in your phone each morning at the main school gate or, if you are coming in through the front entrance, to the Office staff.
- You must secure your mobile phone as much as possible, including using passwords or pin codes to protect access to the phone's functions.
- At the end of the day, you may collect their phones from the school Office, but **must not** turn your phone on until you have left the school site.
- You cannot take photos or recordings (either video or audio) of school staff or other pupils without their consent.
- Avoid sharing your contact details with people you don't know, and don't share other people's contact details without their consent.
- Don't share your phone's password(s) or access code(s) with anyone else
- Don't use your mobile phone to bully, intimidate or harass anyone. This includes bullying, harassing or intimidating pupils or staff via:
    - Email
    - Text/messaging app
    - Social media
- Don't use your phone to send or receive anything that may be criminal. For instance, by 'sexting'.
- Rules on bullying, harassment and intimidation apply to how you use your mobile phone even when you aren't in school.
- Don't use vulgar, obscene or derogatory language while on the phone or when using social media. This language is not permitted under the school's behaviour policy.
- Don't use your phone to view or share harmful content.

Appendix C: Mobile phone information slip for visitors

Use of mobile phones and similar devices in our school

- 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 may go to the Staff Room or outside the front entrance to the school.
- Do not take photos or recordings of pupils (unless it is your own child), or staff, unless it's at a public event (such as a school fair).
- Use photographs or recordings for personal use only, and do not posting on social media without consent
- Do not use your phone in lessons, or when working with pupils

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.

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