

Mobile Phone Policy

St Thomas of Canterbury Church of England Primary School



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1. Introduction and aims

At St Thomas of Canterbury Church of England 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 safeguarding, behaviour (Character Education), anti-bullying, acceptable use policies, staff code of conduct, confidentiality, curriculum policies (computing, PSHE, RSE) and data protection and data security.

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.

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.

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The Headteacher is responsible for monitoring the policy every 3 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

The School Development Committee of the Governing Body are also involved in monitoring and reviewing this policy, in line with statutory and non-statutory guidance from the Department for Education (DfE) and other advisory professional bodies/agencies.

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 pupils 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/PPA room).

There may be limited 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
- For staff with diabetes to use their phone to monitor their own blood sugar levels

The Headteacher will decide on a case-by-case basis whether to allow for special arrangements.

If special arrangements are not deemed necessary, school staff can use the school office number [01277 223651] as a point of emergency contact.

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).

More comprehensive and detailed guidance on data protection can be found on the school website, including the school's data protection policy.

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.

Similar details about connecting with parents/carers or pupils over messaging apps or social media are referenced in the Staff Code of Conduct policy.

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:

- Use of multi-factor authentication
- Medical monitoring/screening of children with identified medical conditions, e.g. diabetes
- 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 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 (and other smart technologies) by pupils

The DfE's non-statutory mobile phone guidance says that pupils should not use mobile phones throughout the school day. All schools should be mobile phone-free environments by default; anything other than this should be by exception only. This is essential in establishing and maintaining high standards of behaviour ensuring that the school is a calm and safe environment for all pupils and staff.

For the reasons highlighted above, St Thomas of Canterbury Church of England Primary School's approach to pupils bringing mobile phones to school is:

- **Mobile phones (and other smart technologies) are banned from the school premises altogether.**

5.1 Exceptions for special circumstances

In exceptional circumstances, some pupils will be permitted to bring a mobile phone to school and/or use it in school. This will be considered on a case-by-case basis. For instance:

- Pupils with diabetes who use their phones to monitor their blood sugar

To request such permission, pupils or parents/carers should contact the school office.

Any pupils who are given permission must then adhere to the school's code of conduct / acceptable use agreement for mobile phone use.

5.3 Sanctions

If a pupil is found to be in possession of a mobile phone (or other smart technology) and in breach of this policy, the following steps will be taken:

- The mobile phone will be confiscated. (Schools are permitted to confiscate phones from pupils under [sections 91](#) and [94](#) of the Education and Inspections Act 2006)
- Once confiscated, parents/carers only will be allowed to collect them at the end of the school day from the school office. It should be noted that Headteachers can confiscate mobile phones and similar devices for the length of time they deem proportionate, according to the [DfE's guidance on mobile phones in schools](#)

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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 you to search a pupil's phone if there is a good reason to do so (such as having reason to believe the phone contains pornographic images, or if it is being/has been used to commit an offence or cause harm to another person).

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 of 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

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.

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 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.

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.

Confiscated phones will be stored in the school office in a secure location / locked cabinet.

Schools that confiscate phones from pupils become responsible for the phone and can be held responsible for loss, theft or damage.

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 in a timely manner.