

St Stephen's Junior School
Mobile Phone Policy
September 2026

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Contents

1. Introduction and aims
2. Relevant guidance
3. Roles and responsibilities
4. Use of mobile phones by staff
5. Use of mobile phones by pupils
6. Use of mobile phones by parents/carers, volunteers and visitors
7. Loss, theft or damage
8. Monitoring and review

1. Introduction and aims

At St Stephen's Junior School, we recognise that mobile phones and similar devices, including smartphones, smartwatches and other smart technology-enabled devices, are part of everyday life for many pupils, parents/carers and staff. However, their presence in a primary school environment presents safeguarding, wellbeing, behaviour and learning considerations.

St Stephen's Junior School is a mobile-phone-free environment by default. Any access to or use of a mobile phone or similar smart device during the school day is permitted only where an agreed exception applies.

This policy aims to:

- Promote safe and responsible use of mobile phones and similar devices
- Set clear expectations for pupils, staff, parents/carers, visitors and volunteers
- Support safeguarding, behaviour and wellbeing across the school
- Reduce distraction to learning and social interaction
- Support a calm, focused and positive school environment
- Ensure appropriate arrangements are in place for pupils who have SEND, a disability or a medical need that requires access to a device

Throughout this policy, the term 'mobile phones' includes smartphones, smartwatches and any similar device with communication, notification or recording capability, including devices capable of sending or receiving messages or notifications or recording audio or video.

2. Relevant guidance

This policy is informed by and aligned with:

- DfE Mobile phones in schools
- DfE Behaviour in schools guidance
- DfE Searching, Screening and Confiscation guidance
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (current version)

This policy should be read alongside:

- Behaviour Policy
- Restrictive Intervention (Reasonable Force and Seclusion) Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Racial Incidents Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 Staff

All staff are responsible for the consistent and calm implementation of this policy.

- Staff must not physically intervene to retrieve mobile phones.
- Any refusal to follow instructions regarding mobile phones must be managed through the Behaviour Policy.
- Staff must model appropriate and responsible use of mobile phones and similar devices.
- Volunteers must alert a member of staff if they witness a breach of this policy.

The headteachers are responsible for monitoring and reviewing this policy annually and for ensuring that any agreed exceptions are appropriately authorised.

4. Use of mobile phones by staff

4.1 Personal mobile phones

Staff (including volunteers and contractors) must not use personal mobile phones for personal reasons when pupils are present. Personal use must be limited to non-contact time and designated staff areas such as the staffroom.

Where a member of staff has an exceptional personal circumstance that requires access to their phone, such as an emergency contact involving a dependent or acute family emergency, this must be agreed with the headteacher wherever possible.

Where a member of staff's role requires use of a mobile phone for work purposes, the school will provide a school device where reasonably possible. Where this is not possible, use of a personal device must follow clear school arrangements and must be limited to the professional purpose for which it is required.

This may include appropriate professional uses such as authorised communication, approved applications or systems, multi-factor authentication, supervising trips or residential visits, or other activities required by the member of staff's role.

4.2 Data protection and safeguarding

- Staff must not use personal devices to take photographs, videos or audio recordings of pupils, pupils' work, or anything else that could identify pupils.
- Staff must not share personal contact details with pupils or parents/carers.
- Personal devices must not be used to store or transfer personal information about pupils unless this is expressly authorised and compliant with the school's data protection arrangements.

4.3 Sanctions

Failure to adhere to this section may result in disciplinary action in line with the staff disciplinary policy and Code of Conduct.

5. Use of mobile phones by pupils

Pupils must not have access to or use mobile phones or similar devices during the school day, including lessons, movement between lessons, breaktimes and lunchtimes. St Stephen's Junior School also applies this expectation to before-school activities and after-school provision.

Pupils are taught about the risks associated with mobile phone and online use, why the school operates a mobile-phone-free environment and the benefits of reduced access to mobile phones during the school day.

5.1 Bringing mobile phones to school

Pupils may bring mobile phones to school only to support travel to and from school, subject to the following conditions:

- Phones must be switched off on entry to the school grounds (either main gate by Reception or at the top gate ahead of school path).
- Phones must be handed immediately to the class teacher or designated staff member for secure storage throughout the day.
- Phones must not be accessed or used at any point during the school day.
- Phones must remain securely stored and inaccessible to pupils throughout the school day, including lessons, movement around the school, breaktimes, lunchtimes, before-school provision and after-school provision.
- The school accepts no liability for loss or damage.

Where a pupil is permitted an exception to this policy, the exception must be agreed in advance by the headteacher or designated senior leader and should specify the reason, permitted use, times and location. Exceptions will be limited to the specific purpose agreed.

Educational Visits & Residential Trips

St Stephen's Junior School maintains a default phone-free expectation on off-site visits. Any variance for specific educational or travel safety purposes must be formally documented in the trip leader's risk assessment and approved by the Headteachers.

5.2 Smartwatches and similar devices

Smartwatches and similar devices are treated in the same way as mobile phones. This includes but is not limited to:

- Smartwatches with messaging, calling or internet capability
 - GPS or tracking watches capable of communication
 - Wearable devices that can send or receive notifications
 - Devices capable of recording photographs, video or audio
 - Any other communication-enabled wearable technology
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- Pupils should not wear smartwatches or similar communication devices during the school day.
 - Any smartwatch or similar device brought to school must be switched off and handed to the class teacher or designated staff member on arrival.
 - Such devices must not be accessed or used during lessons, breaktimes or lunchtimes.

5.3 Confiscation and refusal

If a mobile phone or similar device is used during the school day or is not handed in as required:

- The device will be confiscated only where this can be done calmly and safely.
- The device will be stored securely in the school office.
- The device will normally be returned directly to a parent/carer at the end of the school day, in accordance with the Behaviour Policy.
- In appropriate circumstances, the school may retain the device for longer where this is a proportionate response and is consistent with the Behaviour Policy.

Staff will not use physical intervention to retrieve a mobile phone or similar device.

If a pupil refuses to hand over a phone:

This will be managed as a behaviour matter in line with the Behaviour Policy and related consequences. The pupil may be supported by senior leaders, removed to a calm space, and a restorative follow-up arranged. Parents/carers will be informed and may be asked to attend site if the device has still not been given to an adult in the school.

At no point will physical restraint be used solely to confiscate a mobile phone. Any use of physical intervention must meet the threshold set out in the Restrictive Intervention Policy and relate to safety, not compliance.

5.4 Searching and safeguarding concerns including cyberbullying and online misuse

Staff may search a pupil or a pupil's possessions only in line with DfE Searching, Screening and Confiscation guidance and the school's Behaviour Policy.

Mobile phones and similar devices are identified in the Behaviour Policy as items that may be searched for, subject to the statutory requirements for searching.

A mobile phone or similar device may be searched where the legal requirements for searching are met, including where there is a safeguarding or behavioural concern. This may include reason to believe it contains:

- Inappropriate images or content
- Evidence of harm, bullying or criminal activity

Where a device has been confiscated under reasonable suspicion of a breach of safety or discipline, authorised staff may search the data or files on the device if there is a **good reason** to do so (e.g. searching for evidence of cyberbullying, distress, or harmful content) without requiring parental consent.

The school recognises that mobile phones and similar devices can be used to engage in behaviour that causes harm to others both in and outside school. Any use of a mobile phone or similar device to:

- Bully, intimidate, threaten or harass another person
- Share inappropriate, offensive or discriminatory content
- Exclude or target individuals online
- Circulate images, videos or recordings without permission
- Engage in conduct that could amount to child-on-child abuse (including the creation, request, holding, or sharing of sexually explicit, nude, semi-nude, or AI-generated synthetic images/deepfakes) will be treated as a severe safeguarding incident.

Where online behaviour affects the safety, wellbeing or education of members of the school community, the school may respond in accordance with the Behaviour Policy, Anti-Bullying Policy, Online Safety Policy and Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, even where the behaviour occurs outside the school day.

Any safeguarding concerns arising from online behaviour will be referred to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and recorded in line with safeguarding procedures.

Any safeguarding concern must be reported to the DSL and recorded on the school's safeguarding system. Where mobile-phone misuse gives cause to suspect that a pupil may be suffering, or may be at risk of, harm, the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy will be followed.

5.5 Sanctions, SEND and medical needs

Any sanction relating to mobile phone misuse will be:

- Reasonable and proportionate
- Considered in light of a pupil's age, SEND, disability or medical needs
- Supported by reasonable adjustments where appropriate, with individual arrangements agreed with parents/carers where necessary

Where a pupil requires access to a mobile phone or similar device to manage a medical condition, this will be permitted where necessary and will be managed through an agreed individual healthcare, medical or support arrangement. Such access will be limited to what is necessary for the pupil's medical need.

5.6 Pupil Mobile Phone Code of Conduct

All pupils will be taught the expectations in this Mobile Phone Code of Conduct through an assembly at the start of each academic year and will be reminded of the expectations at appropriate points throughout the year.

The Code of Conduct is intended to ensure that all pupils understand the school's expectations and the reasons for having a mobile-phone-free environment and principles are show below. Pupils are not required to sign the Code of Conduct.

Code of Conduct

Where a pupil is permitted to bring a mobile phone or similar device to school, the pupil is expected to:

- Bring a mobile phone only where it is needed to support travel to and from school.
- Switch the phone off before entering the school grounds.
- Hand the phone to the class teacher or designated member of staff immediately on arrival.
- Not have access to or use the phone during the school day.
- Not attempt to access a phone or smartwatch while it is being stored by the school.
- Not use a mobile phone or similar device to take photographs, videos or audio recordings of pupils, staff or other members of the school community.
- Not use a mobile phone or similar device to bully, threaten, harass or upset another person.
- Not use a mobile phone or similar device to access inappropriate content, social media, messaging services or other unauthorised material during the school day.
- Follow any specific conditions where an individual exception to the policy has been agreed.
- Speak to a trusted adult if they are worried about something that has happened online or through a mobile phone.

Pupils will be reminded that failure to follow this Code of Conduct may result in the device being confiscated and appropriate behaviour sanctions being applied in accordance with this policy and the Behaviour Policy.

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

Parents/carers, visitors and volunteers must follow guidance around mobile phones when entering the school building and signing in.

- Mobile phones should not be used in school grounds during the school day unless there is an agreed professional or emergency reason.

- Parents/carers, visitors and volunteers must not take photographs, videos or audio recordings of pupils whilst on the school site, except where the school has specifically authorised photography at a public event and the recording is of their own child.
- Images or recordings involving pupils must not be posted on social media without appropriate consent.
- Volunteers working with pupils are usually required to follow the rules set for staff.
- Parents/carers supervising school trips must follow the specific arrangements provided by the school.
- Contractors and other visitors must follow the school's expectations for mobile-phone use while on site.

Parents/carers should not contact pupils directly on their mobile phones during the school day. If a parent/carer needs to contact their child, they should contact the school office, which will deal with the matter appropriately.

The school will support necessary communication with parents/carers through the school office and other agreed school communication channels.

7. Loss, theft or damage

The school accepts no responsibility for loss, theft or damage to personal devices.

Confiscated devices are stored securely in the school office.

Pupils are responsible for following the school's arrangements for handing in and securing devices.

Lost devices should be reported to the school office. Any device found on the school site should be handed to the school office rather than retained by pupils or visitors.

8. Monitoring and review

This policy will be reviewed annually and in response to:

- Safeguarding or behaviour incidents
- Records of mobile-phone breaches and confiscations
- Feedback from pupils, parents and staff
- The impact of the policy on behaviour, learning, wellbeing and safeguarding
 - Emerging safeguarding concerns, online trends and any other related developments
- Updates to statutory or national guidance

The implementation of the policy will be monitored to ensure that expectations are understood and applied consistently by pupils and staff.

The policy will be shared with pupils, parents/carers and staff and published on the school website. Pupils will be reminded of the expectations at the start of each academic year and at appropriate intervals throughout the year. Parents/carers will be informed of the school's expectations and reminded that they can contact the school office if they need to get an urgent message to their child. See Appendix A for the Pupil's Charter.

Where changes are made to the policy, the school will communicate these clearly to parents/carers and pupils in advance wherever possible. Where an individual pupil requires a reasonable adjustment or adaptation, the school will work with the pupil and parents/carers to agree an appropriate arrangement.

This policy should always be applied with reference to safeguarding, dignity and the school's commitment to positive behaviour and wellbeing. The school will keep developments in technology, safeguarding practice and government guidance under review to ensure that this policy remains effective, proportionate and responsive to emerging risks for children and young people.