

Mobile phone policy

St Patrick's Catholic Primary School



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1. Introduction and aims

At St Patrick's School we recognise that mobile phones, including smart phones, are an important part of everyday life for our pupils, parents and staff, as well as the wider school community.

Our policy aims to:

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

2. Roles and responsibilities

2.1 Staff

All staff (including teachers, support staff, and supply staff) are responsible for 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 2 years, reviewing it, and holding staff and pupils accountable for its implementation.

2. Use of mobile phones by staff

3.1 Personal mobile phones

Staff (including volunteers, contractors and anyone else otherwise engaged by the school) are not permitted to make or receive calls, or send texts, 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 staff room).

There may be circumstances in which it's appropriate for a member of staff to have use of their phone during contact time. For instance:

- › 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 as a point of emergency contact.

3.2 Safeguarding

Staff must refrain from giving their personal contact details to parents 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 or pupils.

Staff must not use their mobile phones to take photographs or recordings of pupils, their work, or anything else which 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. If this is not possible, it should be discussed on a case-by-case basis with the Headteacher.

3.3 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 aren't limited to:

- › 2 Factor Authentication for access to school systems and educational websites
- › 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 which could identify a pupil

3.4 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.

3.5 Sanctions

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

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

4. Use of mobile phones by pupils

Pupils are allowed to bring mobile phones into the school/setting if they travel to or from school on their own. Mobile phones must be handed in to the school office on arrival in school where they will be securely stored until the end of the day.

Pupils must adhere to the school's acceptable use agreement for mobile phone use (see appendix 1).

4.1 Sanctions

Any breach of the acceptable use agreement by a pupil may trigger disciplinary action in line with the school behaviour policy, which may result in the confiscation of their device.

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 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

5. Use of mobile phones by parents, volunteers and visitors

Parents, 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 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, 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 or volunteers supervising school trips or residential visits must not:

- › Use their phone to make contact with other parents
- › Take photos or recordings of pupils, their work, or anything else which could identify a pupil

Parents or volunteers supervising trips are also responsible for enforcing the school's policy for pupils using their phones, as set out in section 4 above.

Parents 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 his/her personal mobile during the school day.

6. Loss, theft or damage

Pupils bringing phones to school must ensure that phones are appropriately labelled, and are stored securely when not in use.

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

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.

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

7. Monitoring and review

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

- › Feedback from parents and pupils
- › Feedback from teachers
- › Records of behaviour and safeguarding incidents
- › Relevant advice from the Department for Education, the local authority or other relevant organisations

8. Appendix 1: acceptable use agreement for pupils

Acceptable Use Agreement – Mobile Phones

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

1. You must hand you phone into the school office when you arrive at school and collect at the end of the day.
2. Phones must be switched off (not just put on 'silent').
3. You may not use your mobile phone on the school site except with the permission of schools staff.
4. You cannot take photos or recordings (either video or audio) of school staff or other pupils without their consent.
5. Avoid sharing your contact details with people you don't know, and don't share other people's contact details without their consent.
6. Don't share your phone's passwords or access codes with anyone else.
7. Don't use your mobile phone to bully, intimidate or harass anyone. This includes bullying, harassing or intimidating pupils or staff via:
 - a. Email
 - b. Text/messaging app
 - c. Social media
8. Don't use your phone to send or receive anything that may be criminal. For instance, by 'sexting'.
9. Rules on bullying, harassment, and intimidation apply to how you use your mobile phone even when you aren't in school.
10. 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.
11. You must comply with a request by a member of staff to switch off, or turn over, a phone. Refusal to comply is a breach of the school's behaviour policy and will be dealt with accordingly.

9. Appendix 2: Template mobile phone information slip for visitors

Use of mobile phones 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 school office
- › Do not take photos or recordings of pupils (unless it is your own child), or staff
- › 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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