



**St Michaels Catholic School
(SMCS)
High Wycombe & Aylesbury**

Mobile phone policy

1. Introduction and aims

At SMCS 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.

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

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 Phase/Site Headteacher is responsible for monitoring the policy every 2 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.

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 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 and Google Bard).

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 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.

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 aren't limited to:

- To issue homework, rewards, or sanctions
- To use 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 which 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 always appropriate and professional, in line with our staff code of conduct.

4.6 Sanctions

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

5. Use of Mobile Phones by Pupils

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

At St Michael's Catholic School, we recognise that many pupils require a phone for safety and travel purposes before and after school. However, any phone or device brought onto the school site remains the responsibility of the pupil and family. The school accepts no responsibility for loss, theft or damage.

The school's mobile phone expectations operate on a "**gate-to-gate**" basis. This means that from the moment pupils enter the school site until they leave at the end of the school day, phones must not be seen, heard or used unless specifically authorised under this policy.

All devices must be switched off and stored securely in bags or lockers throughout the school day.

In addition, St Michael's Catholic School has adopted a phased transition to a smartphone-free environment for pupils in Years 7-11 and the Primary Phase, commencing September 2027.

5.1 Definitions

For the purposes of this policy:

Smartphone

A smartphone is any mobile device capable of internet access, social media access, messaging applications, email, image or video sharing, app usage, web browsing, streaming services or similar online functionality.

Basic Mobile Phone

A basic mobile phone (sometimes referred to as a "brick phone") is a device primarily used for telephone calls and text messages and which does not provide smartphone functionality.

5.2 Phased Introduction of Smartphone-Free School Site

Following consultation with pupils, parents/carers, staff, governors and the Trust, the school has agreed to implement a phased removal of smartphones from the school site.

The following arrangements will apply:

Date	Smartphones Not Permitted On Site For
September 2027	Primary pupils and Year 7
September 2028	Primary pupils and Years 7 and 8
September 2029	Primary pupils and Years 7, 8 and 9
September 2030	Primary pupils and Years 7, 8, 9 and 10
September 2031	All pupils in Primary and Years 7–11

The phased implementation applies to each incoming cohort as they progress through the school.

Pupils in year groups covered by the smartphone ban must not bring smartphones onto the school site.

Pupils in affected year groups may bring a basic mobile phone for safety and travel purposes. These devices remain subject to the school's gate-to-gate expectations and must not be seen, heard or used during the school day.

For year groups not yet included within the phased ban, smartphones may continue to be brought onto the school site but must remain switched off, out of sight and unused throughout the school day.

5.3 Use of Smartwatches by Pupils

The DfE's non-statutory mobile phone guidance includes within the term "mobile phones" any devices with communication and smart technology capabilities that a school chooses to include within its policy.

Pupils may wear smartwatches to school. However, smartwatches must only be used for timekeeping purposes during the school day.

Pupils must not use smartwatches for:

- Messaging
- Telephone calls
- Internet access
- Social media
- Photography
- Audio or video recording
- Any communication function

Smartwatches must be removed for all examinations in accordance with examination regulations.

Where a smartwatch is used to circumvent this policy, it may be confiscated and sanctions applied.

5.4 Exceptions for Special Circumstances, SEND and Medical Needs

The school recognises its duties under the Equality Act 2010 and the SEND Code of Practice.

The school may permit a pupil to possess or access a smartphone where there is a demonstrated:

- Medical need;
- Disability;
- Special Educational Need;
- Requirement identified within an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP);
- Exceptional safeguarding need; or
- Other exceptional circumstance approved by the school.

Requests should be made through the relevant Head of Year, Key Stage Leader or SENDCo.

Any agreed arrangements will be considered on an individual basis and recorded appropriately.

Pupils granted permission to possess or use a smartphone under this section must continue to comply with any specific conditions set by the school.

5.5 Sixth Form Students

Sixth Form students are permitted to bring smartphones onto the school site in recognition of their increased independence and responsibility.

Sixth Form students may only use smartphones appropriately within designated Sixth Form areas and during authorised times.

Sixth Form students must ensure that smartphone use:

- Does not disrupt learning.
- Does not compromise safeguarding;
- Does not interfere with the education of younger pupils;
- Remains consistent with the school's values and behaviour expectations.

Misuse of mobile phones by Sixth Form students will result in sanctions in accordance with the Behaviour Policy.

5.6 Sanctions

If a pupil's mobile phone is seen, heard or used on the school site, it will be confiscated and an NP1 awarded in line with the Behaviour Policy.

Where a pupil in a year group subject to the smartphone ban brings a smartphone onto the school site, this will also be treated as a breach of school rules and the device may be confiscated.

Repeated breaches may result in additional sanctions in accordance with the Behaviour Policy.

The following procedures will then apply according to the relevant campus.

High Wycombe Primary

The phone will be stored with the Senior Assistant Headteacher or Headteacher.

High Wycombe Secondary

First Incident

- Phone confiscated and taken to Student Support.
- Parents/carers informed.
- NP1 issued.
- Phone returned to the pupil at the end of the school day.

Second Incident

- Phone confiscated and taken to Student Support.
- NP2 issued.
- Head of Year contacts parents/carers.
- Parent/carer required to collect the phone.

Aylesbury Secondary

First Incident

- Phone confiscated and taken to the school office.
- Parents/carers informed.
- NP1 issued.
- Phone returned to the pupil at the end of the school day.

Second Incident

- Phone confiscated and taken to the school office.
- NP2 issued.
- Head of Year contacts parents/carers.
- Parent/carer required to collect the phone.

The only exception to these procedures is where a pupil's behaviour indicates that they may be suffering, or at risk of, harm. In such circumstances staff will follow the safeguarding procedures set out in Keeping Children Safe in Education.

Certain types of conduct involving mobile phones may constitute criminal behaviour. The school takes such incidents extremely seriously and will involve the police and other agencies where appropriate.

This includes, but is not limited to:

- Sexting (consensual and non-consensual sharing of nude or semi-nude images)
- Upskirting
- Threats of violence or assault
- Harassment or abuse through calls, texts, messaging applications or social media
- Hate incidents based on race, religion, disability, sex 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 if appropriate 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 other parents/carers.
- Take photos or recordings of pupils, their work, or anything else which 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. They must not try to contact their child on their personal mobile during the school day.

7. Loss, theft or damage

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

Pupils must secure their mobile 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 student support office.

Lost phones should be returned to the reception or the student support offices. 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 of 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

The school will specifically monitor the implementation and impact of the phased smartphone-free programme, including its effects on behaviour, attendance, safeguarding, wellbeing, and learning outcomes.

Appendix 1: SMCS Mobile Phone code of conduct/acceptable use agreement

Student Name: _____

Pupils in year groups subject to the school's phased smartphone-free programme must not bring a smartphone onto the school site. Pupils in these year groups may bring a basic mobile phone for safety and travel purposes, provided it remains switched off, out of sight and unused throughout the school day.

For those students who are permitted to bring a mobile phone to school: you must obey the following rules:

1. You may not use your mobile phone during lessons, breaktimes, lunchtimes or at any point during the school day unless the school has granted a specific exemption.
2. Phones must be switched off (not just put on 'silent').
3. You may not use your mobile phone in the toilets or changing rooms. This is to protect the privacy and welfare of other pupils.
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 password(s) or access code(s) 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. Don't use your phone to view or share pornography or other harmful content.
12. You must comply with a request by a member of staff to switch off, or hand over, a phone. Refusal to comply is a breach of the school's behaviour policy and will be dealt with accordingly.
13. Mobile phones are not permitted in any internal or external exam or test environment. If you have a mobile phone, you will be asked to store it appropriately, or turn it over to an exam invigilator, before entering the test room. Bringing a phone into the test room can result in your exam being declared invalid.
14. Your phone is brought to school at your own risk, as specified in the mobile phone policy. The School is not liable for any damage or theft that may occur to it.

Signed: _____

Date: _____