

Use of Mobile and Device **Policy**

St. Bernadette's Catholic Primary School



Approved by:

Date: October 2026

Last reviewed on: October 2026

Next review due by: October 2029

1. Introduction and aims

At St Bernadette's Catholic Primary School, we recognise that mobile phones and other smart technology are part of everyday life. We also recognise the risks they can pose to safeguarding, privacy, wellbeing and learning. This policy reflects the Department for Education (DfE) statutory guidance "Mobile phones in schools" (updated June 2026 and applicable from 1 September 2026), Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2026, the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act 2026 and other relevant legislation and guidance. The school is a mobile-phone-free environment for pupils by default throughout the school day.

- DfE statutory guidance – Mobile phones in schools:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/mobile-phones-in-schools/mobile-phones-in-schools>
- KCSIE 2026: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2>

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
- Promote a calm, safe and focused school day by preventing pupil access to mobile phones and similar smart technology, except where an agreed individual exception is necessary.

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 consistently enforcing this policy. Staff must model the expected approach and report safeguarding concerns or breaches promptly.

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 Senior Leadership Team (SLT) is responsible for monitoring implementation, reviewing the policy when guidance or legislation changes, and holding staff and pupils accountable for its implementation.

2.2 Governors

Governors will review and approve the policy at least every three years, and sooner where legislation, statutory guidance or school practice changes. They will hold the Headteacher accountable for its implementation.

3. Use of mobile phones by staff

3.1 Personal mobile phones

Staff (including volunteers, contractors and anyone else engaged by the school) must not use personal mobile phones for personal reasons in front of pupils during the school day. Personal calls, messages and other use must be restricted to non-contact time and areas where pupils are not present, such as the staff room or main office. Phones must be kept away and not visible to pupils during teaching, supervision and other pupil-contact duties.

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 consider requests for exceptional arrangements on a case-by-case basis, including any safeguarding, medical, disability or caring circumstances. Any agreed arrangement must be proportionate, clearly defined and consistent with pupils' safety. In an emergency, staff should follow school procedures and inform a senior leader as soon as practical.

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

3.2 Data protection

Staff must not use personal mobile phones to process personal data or access, store, photograph or transmit confidential school information. We have a school mobile phone. Staff must follow the school's data protection, information security and acceptable-use policies.

More detailed guidance on data protection can be found in our Data Protection Policies.

3.3 Safeguarding

Staff must not give personal contact details to parents or pupils or connect with them through personal social media accounts or personal messaging apps. All communication with pupils and families must take place through authorised school channels and in accordance with the staff code of conduct and safeguarding procedures.

Staff must avoid publicising their contact details on any personal social media platform or website, to avoid unwanted contact by parents or pupils.

School-based social media and messaging systems must only be used through authorised accounts and approved devices or systems. Staff must not download or use school communication apps on personal phones unless explicitly authorised by the Headteacher and subject to appropriate safeguards.

Staff must never use personal mobile phones to photograph or record pupils, their work, or anything that could identify a pupil. Where photographs or recordings are required for a legitimate school purpose, staff must use school-approved equipment and follow the school's safeguarding, consent, data protection and image-storage procedures. Any concern about inappropriate images or recordings must be reported immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or deputy.

3.4 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:

- Emergency evacuations
- Supervising off-site trips
- Supervising residential visits

In these circumstances, staff will:

- Use any authorised phone for a legitimate work purpose only, in an appropriate and professional manner and in line with the staff code of conduct.

- Never use a personal phone 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 unless in an emergency. Otherwise, contact must be made via the school office

3.5 Work phones

The Headteacher and Deputy Headteacher may use a personal or work mobile phone for work purposes where necessary, subject to the safeguards in this policy. School-issued or approved equipment should be used wherever practicable.

During contact time, they must:

- Use phone functions during contact time only for an authorised work purpose, such as an emergency, an approved communication or a necessary work application.
- Ensure that communication or conduct linked to the work is appropriate and professional at all times, in line with our staff code of conduct.

3.6 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 should not normally bring mobile phones or similar personal smart devices to school. As an exception, Year 5 or 6 pupils who travel to or from school without adult supervision may bring a phone only with prior written permission from a parent/carer and school approval. The pupil must switch the phone off before entering the school site and hand it to the school office or class teacher immediately on arrival. The phone will be stored securely and returned at the end of the school day; it must not be accessed at any point during the school day, including lessons, transitions, breaktimes and lunchtime. Pupils must not use smart watches or other devices to send/receive messages, notifications, audio or video recordings during the school day.

Pupils must not use mobile phones during educational visits or residential visits unless a specific exception has been agreed in advance by the Headteacher for an identified need. Staff will communicate any arrangements to pupils and parents/carers before the visit.

Reasonable adjustments and exceptional arrangements: the school will consider individual circumstances, including disability, special educational needs, medical conditions (for example, a phone linked to a continuous glucose monitor) and young-carer responsibilities. Where phone access is necessary, the school will agree a written, individual arrangement with the family and relevant professionals as appropriate. This will specify the purpose, times, locations and supervision arrangements and will limit access to what is necessary. An agreed exception does not permit unrestricted use.

4.1 Sanctions

- If a pupil is found with or using an unauthorised mobile phone or similar device, staff may confiscate it as a proportionate disciplinary sanction in line with the school's Behaviour Policy and DfE guidance. A phone that rings or is used while stored may also be confiscated.

The school's power to confiscate items is exercised in accordance with the Education and Inspections Act 2006, the Education Act 1996 where applicable, and current DfE guidance on mobile phones in schools and searching, screening and confiscation.

DfE guidance: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/searching-screening-and-confiscation>

- Parents/carers will be informed. Confiscated phones will be stored securely and returned to a parent/carer, or an adult nominated by them, at an agreed time. The school will consider the pupil's age, SEND, medical needs and individual circumstances when deciding what response is proportionate.

Please note:

Staff must not routinely search the contents of a pupil's phone. Any search of a pupil or their possessions must be carried out only by the Headteacher or an authorised member of staff, on reasonable grounds and in accordance with the law and the current DfE Searching, Screening and Confiscation guidance. Staff must follow safeguarding procedures if there is concern that a device contains harmful, abusive, indecent or illegal material, evidence of an offence, or material indicating that a child may be at risk. Staff must not copy, forward or share suspected indecent images of children. The DSL/police should be consulted in line with safeguarding procedures.

Certain conduct involving a phone may constitute a criminal offence or indicate that a child is at risk of harm. The school will take such conduct seriously, record and refer concerns through safeguarding procedures, and involve the police or other agencies where appropriate.

Such conduct includes, but is not limited to:

- Creating, requesting, possessing or sharing nude or semi-nude images or videos of children (often referred to as "sharing nudes and semi-nudes")
- Upskirting or other non-consensual recording
- 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

Please see our current Safeguarding Policy for further details.

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

Parents, visitors and volunteers (including governors and contractors) must follow this policy while on the school site. Mobile phones must not be used for personal reasons in front of pupils during the school day, except where necessary for an authorised purpose or an emergency.

This means:

- Do not photograph or record pupils, other than their own child at a school event where the school has expressly permitted photography and the instructions given by staff are followed. Never photograph or record a child where permission has not been given or where staff have asked that recording stops.
- Use permitted photographs or recordings for personal use only. Do not post or share images or recordings of other children on social media or messaging platforms without the appropriate permission and consent.
- Do not use phones during lessons, while supervising or working with pupils, or in any situation where phone use may compromise children's safety, privacy or learning.

Parents, visitors and volunteers will be informed of the rules when signing in at reception or attending a school event. Staff may ask anyone to stop using a phone or recording device where its use conflicts with this policy or safeguarding requirements.

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

- Use their phone to contact other parents about pupils or the visit, except where expressly authorised by the visit leader for an agreed practical or emergency purpose.
- Take photos or recordings of pupils, their work, or anything else which could identify a pupil

Parents and volunteers supervising trips must model the school's mobile-phone expectations and support staff in ensuring that pupils do not access phones during the school day or visit, except where an agreed individual exception applies.

Parents/carers must contact the school office if they need to get in touch with their child during the school day. They must not contact their child directly on a personal mobile phone during the school day. The school will relay urgent messages as appropriate.

6. Smart glasses and other wearable recording devices

For the purposes of this policy, smart glasses and other wearable devices include any glasses, watches, badges or similar devices capable of taking photographs, recording audio or video, livestreaming, or discreetly capturing or transmitting information. Ordinary prescription glasses without recording or connected-device functions are not covered by this section.

Smart glasses and other discreet wearable recording devices present particular safeguarding, privacy and data-protection risks because recording may be difficult for others to notice.

Pupils must not wear, use or access smart glasses or any personal wearable device capable of recording, photographing, livestreaming or transmitting audio/video while on the school site or during a school activity or visit. Any exceptional use for a documented medical, disability or other individual need must be agreed in writing in advance by the Headteacher, with appropriate safeguards and supervision.

Staff, volunteers and contractors must not wear or use personal smart glasses or other discreet recording devices when working with or supervising pupils, or anywhere on the school site where pupils may be present. Any exceptional use for a legitimate school purpose requires prior written authorisation from the Headteacher, a clear purpose, and appropriate safeguarding and data-protection arrangements. School-approved equipment must be used wherever practicable. Staff must never use such devices to capture or transmit images, audio or information about pupils unless expressly authorised under school procedures.

Parents, carers, visitors and other adults must not wear or use camera-enabled smart glasses or other discreet recording devices on the school site or at school events. They must switch off and put away these devices before entering pupil areas. Permission to take photographs at an event does not give permission to use smart glasses or other discreet wearable devices to record. Any exception must be explicitly authorised in advance by the Headteacher and subject to clear safeguards.

Any suspected unauthorised recording, livestreaming or transmission must be reported promptly to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or a senior leader. The school will record and assess the concern, take proportionate steps to protect pupils, and involve parents/carers, the police or other agencies where appropriate. Staff must not attempt to copy, delete or share potentially harmful or illegal content; safeguarding procedures must be followed.

Where a pupil uses an unauthorised device, the school may take proportionate action in line with the Behaviour Policy and the relevant confiscation guidance. Any search of a pupil or their possessions must only be carried out by the Headteacher or an authorised member of staff, on reasonable grounds and in accordance with current law and DfE guidance. Any device belonging to an adult may be required to be switched off and put away, or the adult may be asked to stop using it or leave the premises where necessary to protect pupils.

7. Loss, theft or damage

Pupils should not bring mobile phones to school unless this policy permits it. Any phone brought in under an agreed exception remains the responsibility of the owner. The school will take reasonable care when storing confiscated phones but cannot accept responsibility for personal devices that are lost,

damaged or stolen on school premises or transport, during school visits or trips, or while pupils travel to and from school, except where the law provides otherwise.

Confiscated phones will be switched off where practicable and stored securely in the Headteacher's office or another designated locked location, with access limited to authorised staff.

Lost phones found on the school site should be handed to the school office. The school will take reasonable steps to identify and contact the owner.

8. Monitoring and review

The school is committed to ensuring that this policy supports pupils' education, behaviour, safeguarding and welfare and reflects current statutory requirements. The policy will be reviewed at least every three years and sooner if legislation, DfE guidance, KCSIE or school practice changes. In reviewing it, 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

Pupils will be taught, in age-appropriate ways, about the risks associated with mobile phones and online behaviour, including distraction, bullying, privacy, sharing images and how to seek help. Concerns arising from phone use will be handled in line with the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, Behaviour Policy, Online Safety Policy and Data Protection Policy.