

Mobile Phone Policy

This policy applies to mobile phones and smart devices brought into school

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1. Introduction and Rationale

This policy has been developed in line with the Department for Education's guidance on mobile phones in schools (updated January 2026). The school is committed to creating a mobile phone-free environment throughout the school day to support pupil wellbeing, safeguarding, and educational outcomes.

Mobile phones and smart devices have become an integral part of modern life. However, research and evidence demonstrate that their use during the school day can lead to:

- Loss of focus in lessons and increased classroom disruption
- Increased incidents of bullying and online safety concerns
- Negative impacts on mental health and wellbeing
- Displacement of positive activities such as socialising, exercise, and face-to-face interaction
- Safeguarding risks including inappropriate content sharing and contact with unknown individuals

By prohibiting the use of mobile phones throughout the school day, we aim to create a calm, safe, and focused learning environment where pupils can thrive academically and socially.

At Saint Benedict, however, we recognise and accept that a significant proportion of our pupils rely on their mobile phones as a means of payment for transport to and from school. For this reason, it is impossible for us to ban mobile phones on school site, but we do expect that when pupils have a mobile phone on school site, it is always out of sight.

2. Scope of the Policy

This policy applies to:

- All pupils throughout the school day, including lessons, break times, and lunchtimes
- Mobile phones and other smart devices with similar functionality (including smartwatches capable of sending/receiving messages, recording audio or video, or accessing the internet)
- The school premises during the school day, from arrival until departure

The school day is defined as: from the time pupils arrive on school premises until the end of the final lesson or activity of the day.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the school's Behaviour Policy, Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, Online Safety Policy, and Acceptable Use Policy.

3. Policy Statement

Pupils are not permitted to use mobile phones or similar smart devices at any time during the school day. This includes during lessons, between lessons, break times, and lunchtimes.

"On site, out of sight."

4. Implementation

4.1 Bringing Mobile Phones to School

Whilst pupils may bring a mobile phone to school for safety reasons when travelling to and from school or, to use as a means of payment for the bus, the following rules apply:

- Mobile phones must be switched off (not on silent) upon arrival at school and placed in school bags (not in pockets)
- The school accepts no responsibility for lost, stolen, or damaged mobile phones. Pupils bring devices entirely at their own risk

4.2 During the School Day

Mobile phones must not be:

- Visible at any time during the school day
- Switched on or used in any capacity
- Taken into examination rooms or assessment areas

5. Expectations

5.1 Expectations for Pupils

All pupils are expected to:

- Understand and comply with this policy at all times
- Not attempt to use or access their phone during the school day for anything, including checking the time or timetables
- Understand the reasons for this policy, including safeguarding and wellbeing benefits
- Hand their phone over to a member of staff if asked to do so

Pupils will be taught about the risks associated with mobile phone use, both in school and more broadly, through the curriculum including Personal Development and computing lessons. This includes understanding online safety, digital citizenship, cyberbullying, and the impact of excessive screen time.

5.2 Expectations for Staff

All staff are expected to:

- Consistently enforce this policy throughout the school day
- Model appropriate behaviour by not using personal mobile phones for personal reasons in front of pupils during the school day
- Challenge pupils who breach the policy promptly and fairly
- Apply sanctions consistently in line with the school's Behaviour Policy
- Record all confiscations and breaches of the policy appropriately

Staff may use mobile phones or similar devices for legitimate educational or administrative purposes, such as issuing homework, recording rewards and sanctions, multi-factor authentication, or contacting parents in emergencies.

5.3 Expectations for Parents and Carers

Parents and carers play a vital role in supporting this policy. We ask that parents and carers:

- Discuss this policy with their child and reinforce its importance
- Support the school in maintaining a mobile phone-free environment

- Contact the school office if they need to communicate with their child during the school day, rather than contacting them directly via mobile phone
- Understand that the school will not respond to messages or calls made directly to pupils during school hours
- Support their child in managing screen time and mobile phone use outside school hours

6. Unacceptable Use

The school considers the following to be serious breaches of this policy:

- Using a mobile phone during the school day for any purpose
- Refusing to hand over a mobile phone when requested by staff
- Recording (audio, video, or photographs) any person without their knowledge and consent
- Recording any event on school property
- Recording in private areas such as toilets or changing rooms
- Using a mobile phone to bully, harass, intimidate, or threaten any member of the school community
- Sharing inappropriate, offensive, or harmful content via mobile phone
- Using a mobile phone to access, create, or distribute illegal content
- 'Sexting' - sending or receiving sexually explicit messages, images, or videos
- Deliberately engineering situations to humiliate, embarrass, or intimidate others through recording and sharing content on social media platforms

7. Sanctions

This policy will be enforced in line with the school's Behaviour Policy. The school will take a proportionate approach to sanctions, taking into account the nature and severity of the breach, as well as any individual circumstances.

7.1 Confiscation

Staff have the legal right to confiscate mobile phones as a disciplinary penalty where the policy has been breached. This includes situations where:

- A mobile phone is seen or heard during the school day
- A pupil refuses to hand in their phone at the designated time
- Staff are concerned about the safety of a pupil
- Staff are concerned about the content of things on a child's mobile phone
- Staff have reasonable grounds to suspect a breach of the policy

When a mobile phone is confiscated:

- **First offence:** The phone will be confiscated and held securely in the relevant Year Office. It may be collected by the pupil at the end of the school day. The incident will be logged, and parents will be informed.
- **Second offence:** The phone will be confiscated and held securely for three school days. Parents will be contacted, and the pupil may face additional sanctions in line with the Behaviour Policy.
- **Third offence:** The phone will be confiscated and held securely until a parent or carer collects it in person. The pupil may face further sanctions, and the headteacher may impose a temporary or permanent ban on bringing a mobile phone to school.

The headteacher has the authority to confiscate a mobile phone for any length of time deemed proportionate to the circumstances. Confiscated phones will be stored securely and returned to parents. The headteacher has the authority to confiscate a mobile phone for safeguarding reasons.

The law protects staff from liability in proceedings brought against them for any loss or damage to confiscated items, provided they have acted lawfully.

7.2 Further Sanctions

Depending on the nature and severity of the breach, additional sanctions may include:

- Detention
- Internal isolation or removal from lessons
- Fixed-term suspension
- Permanent exclusion (in cases of serious or persistent breaches, particularly those involving safeguarding concerns)

7.3 Serious Misuse

Where mobile phone use involves potential criminal activity (such as harassment, threats, sharing indecent images, or other illegal content), the school will:

- Report the incident to the police
- Refer the matter to the Designated Safeguarding Lead
- Consider whether a referral to children's social care is appropriate
- Take appropriate disciplinary action, which may include permanent exclusion

8. Searching Pupils

The headteacher and authorised staff have the statutory power to search pupils or their possessions where there are reasonable grounds to suspect that a pupil is in possession of a prohibited item or any item identified in the school's behaviour policy.

Mobile phones and similar devices are identified as items that may be searched for under this policy. Searches will be conducted in accordance with the DfE guidance 'Searching, Screening and Confiscation' and the school's Behaviour Policy.

Where there are safeguarding concerns, staff may confiscate a mobile phone from a pupil. Parents will be notified about these concerns and the confiscation and, if necessary, concerns may be reported to the police.

9. Reasonable Adjustments and Exceptions

Whilst the school expects all pupils to comply with this policy, we recognise that some pupils may require reasonable adjustments or exceptions due to:

- Special Educational Needs or Disabilities (SEND) where mobile phone access is necessary due to the nature of their disability
- Medical conditions requiring the use of monitoring apps or devices (e.g., continuous glucose monitoring for diabetes)
- Exceptional personal circumstances (e.g., young carers or pupils with specific safeguarding needs)

The school will comply with its duties under the Equality Act 2010 to make reasonable adjustments where necessary. Parents/carers should contact their child's Head of Year to discuss individual circumstances.

Where an exception is granted, the school will develop specific arrangements to allow the pupil to use their mobile phone for the specific purpose at specific times and locations (e.g., in the school office or Head of Year's office). These pupils will not be exempt from all restrictions and must still comply with appropriate use requirements.

10. Sixth Form Students

Sixth form students are permitted limited access to mobile phones in the Sixth Form Centre only, reflecting this period of education as one of increased independence and responsibility. However:

- Mobile phones must not be used during lessons or when moving about the school site
- Use is restricted to the Sixth Form Centre only
- Sixth form students remain subject to the school's behaviour policy and misuse of mobile phones may lead to sanctions

11. Mobile Phone Use Outside the School Day

11.1 Before and After School

Pupils may use their mobile phones before arriving at school and after leaving the school premises at the end of the day. However, pupils should be mindful of their behaviour and conduct online, as the school may act if online behaviour negatively impacts the school community and those within it.

We encourage and advise parents to take responsibility for any issues that may occur on social media outside of school time (evenings, weekends and school holidays) by reporting concerns to the appropriate bodies and agencies.

Year Teams will investigate and respond to any behaviours that occur in school time or when journeying to and from school.

11.2 School Trips and Residential Visits

The school will determine arrangements for mobile phone use on school trips and residential visits on a case-by-case basis. Specific guidance will be provided to pupils and parents before each trip. Generally:

- Educational visits during normal school hours will be subject to this policy
- Residential trips may allow limited supervised mobile phone use at designated times
- Pupils must comply with staff instructions regarding mobile phone use on all trips

11.3 Conduct Outside School

The school expects pupils to conduct themselves appropriately when using mobile phones outside school hours. Mobile phone use that undermines the school, compromises our ability to maintain a safe environment, or harms other pupils or staff will be considered a breach of this policy and the school's behaviour policy.

Examples include but are not limited to:

- Cyberbullying of pupils or staff
- Sharing inappropriate content involving pupils or staff
- Making defamatory or disrespectful comments about the school, staff, or other pupils
- Organising or promoting behaviour that undermines school values or discipline

The school will take appropriate action in accordance with the behaviour policy, which may include sanctions up to and including permanent exclusion.

12. Online Safety

This policy supports the school's wider online safety strategy. Pupils will be taught about online safety through the curriculum, including:

- Understanding how personal information and data can be shared online
- Recognising and responding to online risks including cyberbullying, grooming, and inappropriate content
- Making responsible decisions about online behaviour and digital footprints
- Understanding the legal implications of online behaviour
- Knowing how and where to seek help if they have concerns

The school maintains appropriate filtering and monitoring systems in accordance with 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' guidance. Pupils are encouraged to raise concerns with teachers about issues that have occurred online whose content may be categorised as harmful, illegal, inappropriate or threatening in nature.

13. Communication and Review

13.1 Communication to the School Community

This policy will be communicated to all members of the school community through:

- Publication on the school website
- Induction programmes for new pupils and parents
- Regular reminders at the start of each term and academic year
- Assemblies, form time, and Personal Development lessons
- Letters to parents and information events

13.2 Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed every two years, or sooner if required by changes in legislation or DfE guidance. The review will include:

- Analysis of behaviour logs relating to mobile phone incidents
- Feedback from staff, pupils, and parents
- Review of any safeguarding incidents related to mobile phones
- Consideration of best practice from other schools

14. Related Policies

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

- Behaviour Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Online Safety Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Acceptable Use Policy (ICT)
- Searching, Screening and Confiscation Policy
- SEND Policy

15. Guidance and Legislation

This policy has been developed with reference to:

- DfE 'Mobile phones in schools' guidance (January 2026)
- DfE 'Behaviour in schools' guidance
- DfE 'Keeping children safe in education'
- DfE 'Searching, screening and confiscation' guidance
- Equality Act 2010
- Children and Families Act 2014
- Education Act 1996