

Mobile Technology

ST FRANCIS OF ASSISI CATHOLIC COLLEGE



Approved by:

Date:

Reviewed on:

Next review due by:

1. Introduction and aims

This policy is developed with the school's ethos at its heart and considers the need for academic excellence, the development of the whole child and their social responsibilities to one another and the wider community.

Our policy aims to:

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

The term mobile technology applies to mobile phones, headphones, speakers, handheld computers/tablets (e.g. Ipads), WI-Fi connectivity enabled devices (e.g. Smart watches) and gaming devices although this list is not exhaustive. The school wishes to trust its students to use mobile technology correctly and responsibly. Permission is therefore given for mobile technology to be brought to school.

Our School accepts that parents/carers give their children mobile phones to protect them from everyday risks involving personal security and safety. There is also increasing concern about children travelling alone on public transport, commuting long distances to school and walking home via rural and isolated routes. It is acknowledged that providing a child with a mobile phone gives parents reassurance that they can contact their child if they need to speak to them urgently. This policy has been written to take account of these risks, the need to ensure the school can meet its statutory responsibility for safeguarding students and to reflect parents views about safeguarding their child.

St Francis of Assisi also recognises the research that has been undertaken regarding academic outcomes in schools which ban mobile technology. A study by the LSE Centre for Economic Performance found that a mobile phone ban in school has a material effect on the chances of a student achieving good GCSEs. The most benefit goes to those with low prior attainment.

<https://www.ukonward.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/190416-Onward-Phones-Report-1.pdf>

As technology continues to develop rapidly and most young people are able to access the internet on their personal devices we have seen a sharp increase in the number of incidents relating to cyberbullying and safeguarding breaches. Technology with the ability to take photographs and videos can put students at risk through identification or sharing of location.

The NSPCC reports alarming statistics around the consequences of cyberbullying which can be found on their website where there is also guidance for parents/ carers and young people on how to keep themselves safe online.

In light of the increasing risk to young people, we as a school want to ensure we have a robust approach and policy that allows us to play a responsible role in protecting students from the above risks whilst they are in our care.

2. Roles and responsibilities

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.

Mr L Salkeld is responsible for monitoring the policy every 2 years, reviewing it, and holding staff and pupils accountable for its implementation.

3. Use of mobile technology 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/during contact time. 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 01922 740 300 as a point of emergency contact.

3.2 Data protection

Staff must not use their personal mobile phones to process personal data, or any other confidential school information.

3.3 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.

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 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. If necessary, contact must be made via the school office or a school mobile phone.

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

The term mobile technology applies to mobile phones, headphones, speakers, handheld computers or tablets, Wi-Fi connectivity enables devices (Smart watches) and gaming devices although this list is not exhaustive. The school wishes to trust its students to use mobile technology correctly and responsibly. Permission is therefore given for mobile technology to be brought to school as long as the conditions below are met. A breach of this trust by a student will result in one or more of the sanctions, outlined below, being applied. It is the responsibility of students who bring mobile phones to school to abide by the rules outlined in this policy. The decision to provide a mobile phone to their children should be made by parents or carers. It is incumbent upon parents to understand the capabilities of the mobile phone and the potential use/mis-use of those capabilities.

Parents/carers should be aware if their child takes a mobile phone to school the school cannot accept responsibility for any loss, damage or theft incurred due to its use at school. The school would advise parents to check that their household insurance covers loss or damage of mobile phones.

Parents/carers are reminded the school office must be the initial point of contact during the normal school day and can ensure your child is reached quickly and assisted in any relevant way. Passing on messages through school reception also eliminates lessons being inadvertently disrupted.

Acceptable Uses

Mobile technology must be switched off, out of sight and never heard between the hours of 8:00 am and 5:00 pm whilst students are under the care of the school and on its premises (defined as through the External Green gates). This therefore applies to the time before school when onsite, at breaktime, lunchtime and after school until the student is off the school premises. This also includes the use of mobile phones for listening to personal music anywhere on the school site.

The only exception to these rules is if a teacher has given a student permission to use his/ her technology for a teaching and learning purpose e.g to take a picture of a piece of work or use a learning app. Mobile technology should only be used in these circumstances under the direct instruction and supervision of a member of staff in the classroom when the 'window' opens to benefit learning and must be 'closed' so that the rule applies to all again. The use of personal mobile phones in one lesson for a specific purpose does not mean blanket usage is then acceptable.

Sixth Form

Sixth Form students are subject to the same rules as the rest of the student body with the exception of when in the Sixth Form study area where we expect responsible usage of mobile technology may be used for learning purposes.

4.1 Sanctions

Students who infringe the rules set out in this document will have their phones confiscated by staff. Student must give over the device to staff when requested to avoid an escalation in sanction.

Sanctions for using mobile technology

On the first infringement of this policy

- The mobile technology will be confiscated and the member of staff, Support Staff or SLT will take the technology to be stored safely and securely. Schools are permitted to confiscate phones from pupils under sections 91 and 94 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006
- Parents/ Carers will be informed of the confiscation and same day detention via School Comms (Text or email)

- The incident will be logged on SIMS as a 3 point incident and a Same day detention served for 45 minutes.
- **The student will be able to collect the mobile technology at the end of the detention on the same school day.**

On the first infringement the decision to return a mobile phone on the same day of confiscation directly to the student, has been taken to reflect parental concerns about the safety of their child travelling to and from school without a mobile.

On the second infringement

- The mobile technology will be confiscated and the member of staff, Support Staff or SLT will take the technology to be stored safely and securely. Schools are permitted to confiscate phones from pupils under sections 91 and 94 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006
- Parents/ Carers will be informed of the confiscation and same day detention via School Comms (Text or email)
- The incident will be logged on SIMS as a 3 point incident and a Same day detention served for 45 minutes.
- **The student will be able to collect the mobile technology at the end of the following school day.**

A third or subsequent infringement

- The mobile technology will be confiscated and the member of staff, Support Staff or SLT will take the technology to be stored safely and securely. Schools are permitted to confiscate phones from pupils under sections 91 and 94 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006
- Parents/ Carers will be informed of the confiscation via School Comms (Text or email)
- The incident will be logged on SIMS as a 3 point incident.
- **The phone will only then be returned to a parent/carer upon attending a pre-arranged meeting, at the discretion of the school, with the HAL or a member of the school leadership. The meeting will not be arranged on the same day of confiscation.**

The school reserves the right to ban a student on bringing a mobile phone to school given repeated infringements of this policy or in the case of a serious misuse of a mobile phone. In some circumstances a banning order may be issued in school which can include preventing a student from bringing a device to school or being required to hand it in to school upon arrival on site.

Sanctions for defying the request to hand over mobile technology or inappropriate use e.g taking pictures or filming/ social media posts

- The mobile technology will be confiscated and the member of staff, Inclusion Team or SLT will take the technology to be stored safely and securely. (Schools are permitted to confiscate phones from pupils under sections 91 and 94 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006)
- Parents/ Carers will be informed of the confiscation
- Other sanctions for the misuse of a mobile device will be applied; the severity of these sanctions will be dependent on the incident but could include time in Emmaus or in severe cases fixed term exclusion.

- In some circumstances a banning order may be issued in school which can include preventing a student from bringing a device to school or being required to hand it in to school upon arrival on site.

Staff have the power to search pupils' phones, as set out in the DfE's guidance on searching, screening and confiscation. The DfE guidance allows staff to search a pupil's phone if you have reason to believe the phone contains pornographic images, or if it is being/has been used to commit an offence or cause personal injury.

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
- 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 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.

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 a secure location and locked location