

Mobile Phones & Smart Devices Policy

2026–2027



We Give Thanks to God, Work Together and Always Try Our Best.

Shining in Little Ways for All to See.

Matthew 5:16

Policy owner	Headteacher / Designated Safeguarding Lead
Approved by	Governing Body
Effective from	1 September 2026
Review	September 2027, or earlier following statutory/guidance change or safeguarding review

1. Purpose and statutory context

St Gregory's Catholic Primary School is a mobile phone-free environment for pupils throughout the school day.

This policy reflects the Department for Education's statutory guidance 'Mobile phones in schools' (updated 29 June 2026; schools should follow it from 1 September 2026), Keeping Children Safe in Education, the school's Behaviour Policy, safeguarding arrangements and the Early Years Foundation Stage statutory framework.

The central principle is simple: pupils should not have access to, or use, mobile phones or equivalent smart technology during the school day. Any departure from this position is by exception only and must be authorised and proportionate.

2. Scope

This policy applies to pupils, staff, volunteers, students, visitors and contractors while on the school site, during the school day and, where relevant, on educational visits, residentials and school activities. References to mobile phones include smart watches and other personal communication, recording or smart devices where the school determines that they have similar functionality.

3. Expectations for pupils

Parents/carers who need to contact a pupil during the school day must contact the main school office. Pupils who need to contact home must speak to a member of staff; they will not be given access to a personal phone for this purpose.

Year 6 pupils must not retain a second phone or device, access a handed-in phone during the day, or use a smart watch or other device as an alternative means of communication.

Year 6 staff will place handed-in phones in the designated basket and secure the basket in a closed, locked cupboard for the whole school day. Phones will be returned only at the end of the school day, when the pupil is leaving the premises.

The only routine exception is for Year 6 pupils who bring a basic mobile phone/smartphone for safety when travelling independently to or from school. The phone must be switched off before the pupil enters the school premises and handed directly to Year 6 staff on arrival.

Year 6 – independent travel exception

Pupils in Nursery to Year 5 are not permitted to bring a mobile phone or personal smart device into school. If one is brought in, it must be switched off immediately and handed to the main office. The device will be stored securely and will not be returned to the pupil. A parent/carer must collect it from the school office at the end of the day.

Years N-5

The school day includes arrival on the school premises, lessons, transitions, breaktime, lunchtime and all supervised activities until the pupil leaves the premises at the end of the day.

St Gregory's is a mobile phone-free school. Pupils must not have access to or use a mobile phone, smart watch or other personal communication/recording device at any point during the school day.

The school will take reasonable care of devices handed in or confiscated. Any concern about loss or damage must be reported promptly to the Headteacher.

4. Exceptions and reasonable adjustments

The school recognises that a small number of pupils may require access to a device because of disability, a medical condition, safeguarding needs, caring responsibilities or another exceptional individual circumstance. The school will consider each case on its merits and will make reasonable adjustments where required by law.

An agreed exception will normally specify the purpose, times, location and supervision arrangements for use. An exception does not provide unrestricted access to a phone.

5. Staff use of personal mobile phones and smart devices

Personal phones must be stored away during working time and must not be used for personal reasons in front of pupils. Routine personal access should take place only in the designated staff area and at an appropriate break. The Headteacher, or Deputy Headteacher in the Headteacher's absence, may authorise an exception where there is a legitimate operational, welfare, safeguarding or emergency reason.

- Staff must model the school's mobile phone-free culture consistently.
- Smart watches or other personal devices must not be used to send/receive personal messages, take photographs, make recordings or access personal social media while working with pupils.
- Where school systems legitimately require a personal device, for example multi-factor authentication, its use should be brief, purposeful and in line with school instructions.
- Personal phone numbers and personal messaging/social-media accounts must not be used for routine communication with pupils or parents.

6. Photography, video and audio recording

Personal devices must not normally be used to photograph, film or record pupils. School-authorised devices must be used wherever possible. Images and recordings must only be made for a legitimate school purpose and in accordance with safeguarding, data protection and the school's consent arrangements.

7. Exceptional use of a personal device for school photographs

In exceptional circumstances - for example, on an educational visit where no school-authorised device is available and there is a legitimate safeguarding, educational or school communication need - the Headteacher (or Deputy Headteacher in her absence) may authorise a named member of staff to use a personal device.

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- Authorisation must be specific to the circumstance and must not become routine practice.
- Only images or recordings necessary for the authorised school purpose may be taken.
- The school's parental consent and safeguarding requirements continue to apply.
- Images must be transferred to the school's authorised system as soon as practicable.
- After transfer, images must be permanently deleted from the personal device, including the 'recently deleted' folder and, where applicable, any personal automatic cloud backup/storage.
- Images must never be retained for personal use, edited for personal use, sent through personal messaging accounts, uploaded through a personal social-media account or shared with any unauthorised person.
- Any accidental capture, upload, retention or disclosure must be reported immediately to the Headteacher/DSL and managed in accordance with safeguarding and data-protection procedures.

8. EYFS safeguarding requirements

Within EYFS, the school's safeguarding arrangements explicitly cover the use of mobile phones, cameras and other electronic devices with imaging and sharing capabilities. All staff, students, volunteers and relevant visitors working in EYFS must follow this policy. Personal devices must not be used routinely to photograph or record children.

9. Educational visits and activities outside the normal school day

The trip leader must consider mobile-phone arrangements as part of visit planning. Pupil use may be prohibited or restricted so that the educational experience and safeguarding arrangements are not compromised. Staff should use school-authorised devices wherever practicable. Any exceptional personal-device use must follow section 7.

10. Visitors, volunteers and contractors

- Visitors must not photograph, film or record pupils unless this has been expressly authorised by the school.
- Where appropriate, visitors will be reminded that personal phone use should take place away from children and in an agreed area.
- Any concern about inappropriate device use must be reported immediately to the Headteacher/DSL or a Deputy DSL.

11. Parents and carers

Parents are expected to support the school's mobile phone-free environment. During the school day, urgent messages for pupils should be directed through the school office. Parents attending school events must follow any photography and recording instructions given by the school, particularly where safeguarding or consent restrictions apply.

12. Breaches, confiscation and safeguarding concerns

Before applying a sanction, staff will consider the pupil's age, SEND, disability, medical needs, safeguarding circumstances and any agreed individual exception. Where a breach may indicate that a child is at risk of harm, the matter must be referred immediately to the DSL or a Deputy DSL.

Reasonable adjustments and safeguarding

- Staff must not routinely search through the contents of a pupil's device. Any examination, deletion, retention or referral of data/images must be undertaken only where lawful and in accordance with DfE searching, screening and confiscation guidance and safeguarding procedures.
- Where there are reasonable grounds to suspect that a pupil possesses a phone or similar device contrary to school rules, the Headteacher or an authorised member of staff may use the school's lawful search powers. Mobile phones and similar devices are identified by this policy and the Behaviour Policy as items that may be searched for.
- Photographing, filming or audio-recording any pupil or adult without school authorisation, accessing inappropriate content, bullying/harassment, or sharing material: device secured immediately and referred to the Headteacher/DSL. Safeguarding, online-safety and behaviour procedures will be followed and parents/carers informed. Police or other agencies will be involved where appropriate.
- Deliberate use during the school day, refusal to hand over a device, concealment of a second device, or use to contact/message others: treated as a serious breach of the Behaviour Policy. The device is confiscated for parent/carer collection and a proportionate school sanction is applied.

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- Repeated breach: parent/carer is contacted; the device is collected by the parent/carer; an appropriate behaviour consequence is applied; and the Headteacher/Deputy may withdraw the pupil's permission to bring a phone onto the premises for independent-travel purposes for a specified period.
- Year 6 phone not switched off before entry, not handed in on arrival, heard ringing/vibrating, or found in the pupil's possession: confiscated immediately and secured in the main office. Parent/carer must collect it. The incident is recorded and the pupil is reminded of the policy.
- Device brought in by a Nursery–Year 5 pupil: switched off, confiscated and stored securely in the main office. Parent/carer must collect it at the end of the school day.

Consequences for pupils

The school's response will be calm, consistent and proportionate. The starting point is that a device brought into school contrary to this policy is secured immediately so that the school remains mobile phone-free.

13. Communication, implementation and monitoring

- The policy will be communicated to staff, pupils and parents and published with the school's policy information.
- Expectations will be reinforced at the start of the school year and when necessary thereafter.
- All staff are responsible for consistent implementation.
- The Headteacher and DSL will monitor implementation, safeguarding concerns and any exceptions authorised under this policy.
- The policy will be reviewed following any relevant statutory change, significant incident or identified weakness in practice.

14. Related policies and guidance

- Department for Education: Mobile phones in schools - statutory guidance (updated 29 June 2026; to be followed from 1 September 2026).
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026.
- EYFS statutory framework for group and school-based providers, effective 1 September 2026.
- Behaviour Policy / St Gregory's Standard.
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.
- Online Safety / Acceptable Use arrangements.
- Data Protection and Privacy arrangements.
- Educational Visits Policy.
- Searching, Screening and Confiscation guidance.
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions policy.

ST GREGORY'S STANDARD - QUICK REFERENCE

PUPILS	Mobile phone-free school. N–Y5: devices must not be brought in; if brought, office secures and parent collects. Y6 independent-travel phones: switched off before entry, handed to Y6 staff and locked away all day.
STAFF	Personal phones away; no personal use in front of pupils. Routine access only in the designated staff area.
PHOTOS	School-authorised devices only wherever possible.
EXCEPTION	Pupil exceptions only for agreed individual need/reasonable adjustment. Staff photography exception only with HT/DHT authorisation; transfer promptly and permanently delete.