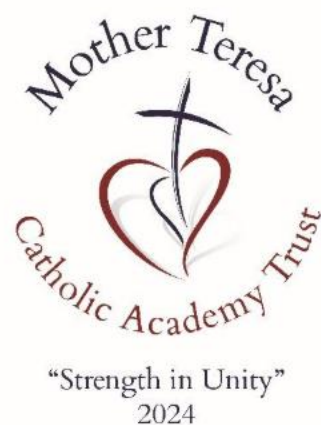


St Mary's Catholic Primary School



Smartphone Policy

Date approved by Governors	9/2/26	
Review Date	July 2027	
Body Responsible for Review	Local Governing Body	

Rationale

Smartphones can be useful tools for adults, but mounting evidence shows they negatively impact young people's mental health, wellbeing, and safety, presenting significant safeguarding risks for primary age children. St Mary's School prioritises real-world, in-person interaction that fosters empathy, social skills, and community.

Research links early smartphone use to:

- Anxiety, depression, and low self-esteem
- Sleep disruption and poor concentration
- Cyberbullying and online harm
- Addictive behaviours and social withdrawal
- Exposure to inappropriate content

Smartphone ownership has increasingly become a "rite of passage" for children transitioning to secondary school. However, despite widespread use, there is little evidence proving smartphones are safe for children. Social media algorithms, online anonymity, and addictive content can erode traditional and healthy childhood experiences.

These impacts are visible in schools through increasing levels of anxiety, attention difficulties, reduced motivation, and challenges to learning and achievement. At St Mary's School, we believe limiting access to smartphones protects childhood, supports learning, and improves wellbeing.

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](#).

St Mary's School Expectations

- Pupils are not permitted to bring smartphones to school.
- Pupils in Years 5 and 6 who travel independently may bring a basic mobile phone ("brick phone") for emergency use, with written parental consent.
- Pupils who bring a basic mobile phone to school must switch it off before entering the school grounds and hand it into the office upon arrival at school.

Technology and Learning

We value the role of technology in education, but we believe it must be used responsibly and safely. Technology should support, not replace, proven teaching methods. As a Microsoft School, we use Teams, all within a safeguarded and filtered online environment. Our curriculum includes digital literacy and responsible online behaviour.

Technology should enhance, not replace, proven teaching methods. Our smartphone-free policy aligns with our commitment to pupil wellbeing and academic success.

Use for Independent Travel

From September 2026, families of pupils in Years 5 and 6 may request permission for their child to carry a basic phone for unsupervised travel.

Approved phones must:

- Be basic models without internet, app store, or camera functionality
- Be switched off and handed to the office upon arrival at school
- Be labelled and programmed with emergency contacts
- Be listed with the school office (number on file)

Phones are stored securely during the school day and extended care. Confiscated phones will only be returned to an adult. The school is not responsible for loss or damage to mobile phones that are brought into school.

Examples of suitable basic 'brick' phones:

Manufacturer	Model	Retailer	RRP
Nokia	105	Argos/Amazon	£24.99
Artfone	F30 4G	Amazon	£49.99
Oakcastle	F100	Amazon	£14.95
Uleway	Big Button Mobile	Amazon	£25.88

*These examples are for guidance only.

Working in Partnership

While banning smartphones in school is a significant step, most phone use occurs outside of school hours. For this reason, we strongly recommend delaying smartphone ownership.

We ask parents to support this policy by:

- Delaying smartphone access for their children
- Monitoring internet and social media usage
- Encouraging screen-free time, outdoor activities, and in-person socialising

Families choosing to provide their child with a smartphone must ensure it remains at home and is not brought to school. This shared approach helps reduce peer pressure and supports consistent boundaries.

Separated Parents

Where a smartphone is necessary due to shared custody arrangements, contact the Headteacher to discuss possible exemptions.

Medical Needs

If a child needs a phone for medical reasons, please speak with the Headteacher. Approved devices must follow all other school protocols.

Mobile Phone Agreement

Prioritising the mental health and wellbeing of every pupil, St Mary's School is a smartphone-free school. This means that while basic mobile phones may be permitted for essential contact purposes during unsupervised travel for Year 5 and 6, pupils are not allowed to bring smartphones to school.

You may decide that if your child is arriving or leaving school alone, they should have a mobile phone so that they can contact home or school in case of an emergency. This is not compulsory and is at the discretion of each individual family.

To safeguard pupils while supporting limited phone use for travel, we enforce the following:

- Only basic 'brick' phones are allowed—no smartphones
- Phones must:
 - Have no internet, app store, or camera
 - Be switched off and handed in upon arrival

- Be labelled and programmed with emergency contacts, including the school
- Be listed with the school office (number added to pupil record)
- Phones are stored securely during the day (including during extended care)
- Phones should remain out of sight while walking, and used only in emergencies
- Confiscated phones will be returned only to an adult
- Pupils must not take, share, or distribute any images or videos of pupils, staff, or members of the public

The school accepts no responsibility for loss or damage to phones on school premises or during travel.

We are committed to preserving childhood and safeguarding mental health. By setting clear boundaries on smartphone use and working in partnership with families, we can foster a healthier, safer environment for our pupils.