



Mobile phone policy

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Contents

1. Introduction and aims.....	3
2. Relevant guidance.....	3
3. Roles and responsibilities	3
4. Use of mobile phones by staff	3
5. Use of mobile phones by pupils	4
6. Use of mobile phones by parents/carers, volunteers and visitors	6
7. Loss, theft or damage	6
8. Monitoring and review	6
Appendix 1: Acceptable use agreement for pupils allowed to bring their phones to school due to exceptional circumstances	7
Appendix 2: Permission form allowing a pupil to bring their phone to school	8
Appendix 3: Template mobile phone information slip for visitors	9

1. Introduction and aims

At St Luke's we recognise that mobile phones and similar devices, including smartphones, are an important part of everyday life for our pupils, parents/carers and staff, as well as the wider school community.

Our policy aims to:

- Promote safe and responsible phone use
- Set clear guidelines for the use of mobile phones for pupils, staff, parents/carers, visitors and volunteers
- 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

Note: throughout this policy, 'mobile phones' refers to mobile phones and similar devices.

2. 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](#).

3. Roles and responsibilities

All staff (including teachers, support staff and supply staff) are responsible for consistently 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.

The Head Teacher is responsible for monitoring the policy every three years, reviewing it, and holding staff and pupils accountable for its implementation.

Staff will address any questions or concerns from parents and carers quickly, and clearly communicate the reasons for prohibiting the use of mobile phones.

4. Use of mobile phones by staff

4.1 Personal mobile phones

Staff (including volunteers, contractors and anyone else otherwise engaged by the school) are not permitted to use their personal mobile phone, while children are present. 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 staffroom).

There may be circumstances in which it is appropriate for a member of staff to have use of their phone during contact time for personal reasons. For instance (this list is non-exhaustive):

- For emergency contact by their child, or their child's school
- In the case of acutely ill dependents or family members

The Head Teacher 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 01273 675080 as a point of emergency contact.

4.2 Data protection

Staff must not use their personal mobile phones to process personal data, or any other confidential school information, including entering such data into generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools such as chatbots (e.g. ChatGPT and Google Bard).

4.3 Safeguarding

Staff must not give their personal contact details to parents/carers 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/carers or pupils.

Staff must not use their personal mobile phones to take photographs or recordings of pupils, their work, or anything else that 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. In circumstances when school equipment is not available, and a personal device is used, any images or recordings will be downloaded at the earliest opportunity and then deleted from the device.

4.4 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 are not limited to:

- Issuing homework, rewards or sanctions
- Use of multi-factor authentication
- 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
- Refrain from using their phones to contact parents/carers. If necessary, contact must be made via the school office

4.5 Sanctions

Staff that fail to adhere to this policy may face disciplinary action.

See the school's staff disciplinary policy for more information.

5. Use of mobile phones by pupils

Parents and carers should first consider whether or not their child requires a mobile phone.

Children are not permitted to bring smartphones onto school premises.

Children in Year 5 and Year 6 are permitted to bring a 'brick' mobile phone to school if their parents or carers choose for them to do so, but only with permission. Parents and carers must complete a permission form and return it to the school office if they would like their child to bring a mobile phone into school. The form can be found at Appendix 2.

All mobile phones that are brought into school by pupils must be handed in to the class teacher on entry to the classroom first thing in the morning. Class teachers will keep all mobile phones in a safe place in the classroom for the duration of the day. Pupils are not permitted to use their mobile phones during the school day, including during

lessons, in the time between lessons, at breaktimes and at lunchtimes. Mobile phones will be returned to pupils at the end of the school day, as children leave the school grounds. School staff reserve the right to confiscate and retain a smartphone, if a child brings one in, or any other mobile phone that is being used inappropriately, or at a time when it should be handed in – see section 5.3 below for further details.

5.1 Use of smartwatches by pupils

The DfE's [non-statutory mobile phone guidance](#) includes in the term 'mobile phones' all devices with communications and smart technology that the school chooses to include in their policy.

Smartwatches are wristwatches with smart technology in them. They can be used to tell the time, send and receive text and voice messages, make calls and listen to music. Some smart watches have wellness and health-related features.

Smartwatches with the functionality similar to that of mobile phones, such as receiving calls or sending texts, are treated the same way as mobile phones and as such are not permitted on the school site.

5.2 Exceptions for Special Circumstances

The school may permit pupils to use a mobile phone in school, due to exceptional circumstances, for example if the pupil has diabetes and must monitor their blood sugar levels. This will be considered on a case-by-case basis. To request such permission, pupils or parents/carers should contact the Head Teacher.

Any pupils who are given permission must then adhere to the school's acceptable use agreement for mobile phone use (see appendix 1).

5.3 Sanctions

Any phones found in school that have not been handed in appropriately will be retained by the teacher, and parents or carers will be called to discuss the situation. If pupils repeatedly do not hand in their mobile phones, then the school retains the right to confiscate and keep hold of the mobile phone for a period of time, up to a maximum of half a term.

In each case, the sanction given must be reasonable and proportionate. The school will also consider whether:

- There are any relevant special circumstances (for example, age, religious requirements, special educational needs, disability)
- The pupil's behaviour may indicate they may be suffering, or at risk of, harm. If this is suspected, staff will follow the appropriate procedure set out in Part 1 of [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)

The school has the power to search pupils' phones in specific circumstances, as set out in the DfE's guidance on searching, screening and confiscation. The guidance allows the school to search a pupil's phone if there is good reason to do so (such as having reason to believe that the phone contains pornographic images, or if it is being or has been used to commit an offence or cause harm to another person).

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:

- Abusive calls, emails, social media posts or texts directed at someone on the basis of someone's ethnicity, religious beliefs or sexual orientation
- Threats of violence or assault
- Sexting (consensual and non-consensual sharing nude or semi-nude images or videos)
- Upskirting

6. Use of mobile phones by parents/carers, volunteers and visitors

Parents/carers, visitors and volunteers (including governors and contractors) 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 at 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/carers, 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.

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

- Use their phone to make contact with other parents/carers
- Take photos or recordings of pupils, their work, or anything else that could identify a pupil

Parents/carers or volunteers supervising trips are also responsible for enforcing the school's policy for pupils using their phones, as set out in section 5 above, but must refer any sanctions to a member of staff, as they do not have the power to search or confiscate devices.

Parents/carers must use the school office as the first point of contact if they need to get in touch with their child during the school day. They must not try to contact their child on their personal mobile during the school day.

7. Loss, theft or damage

Pupils bringing mobile phones to school must ensure that the phones are appropriately labelled and handed in to their teacher for safekeeping during the day.

Pupils must secure their mobile 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 the Head Teacher's office, who will be responsible for the phones for the duration of the confiscation.

Lost phones that are found should be returned to the main office. The school will then attempt to contact the owner.

8. Monitoring and review

The school is committed to ensuring that this policy has a positive impact on pupils' education, behaviour and welfare. When reviewing the policy, the school will take into account:

- Feedback from parents/carers and pupils
- Feedback from staff
- Records of behaviour and safeguarding incidents
- Relevant advice from the Department for Education, the local authority and any other relevant organisations

Appendix 1: Acceptable use agreement for pupils allowed to bring their phones to school due to exceptional circumstances

Acceptable Use Agreement

You must obey the following rules if you bring your mobile phone to school:

1. You may not use your mobile phone during lessons, unless the teacher specifically allows you to.
2. Phones must be switched off (not just put on 'silent').
3. You may not use your mobile phone in the toilets. This is to protect the privacy and welfare of other pupils.
4. You cannot take photos or recordings (either video or audio) of school staff or other pupils without their consent.
5. Avoid sharing your contact details with people you don't know, and do not share other people's contact details without their consent.
6. Do not share your phone's password(s) or access code(s) with anyone else.
7. Do not use your mobile phone to bully, intimidate or harass anyone. This includes bullying, harassing or intimidating pupils or staff via:
 - a. Email
 - b. Text/messaging apps
 - c. Social media
8. Do not use your phone to send or receive anything that may be criminal. For instance, by 'sexting'.
9. Rules on bullying, harassment and intimidation apply to how you use your mobile phone even when you aren't in school.
10. Do not use vulgar, obscene or derogatory language while on the phone or when using social media. This language is not permitted at school.
11. Do not use your phone to view or share pornography or other harmful content.
12. You must comply with a request by a member of staff to switch off, or hand over, a phone. If you refuse to comply then your parent or carer will be contacted.

Appendix 2: Permission form allowing a pupil to bring their phone to school

PUPIL DETAILS	
Pupil name:	
Year group/class:	
Parent/carer(s) name(s):	

I give permission for my child _____ to bring their mobile phone to school because they:

- Travel to and from school alone
- Are a young carer
- Need the phone to support their medical needs

Pupils who bring a mobile phone to school must abide by the school's policy on the use of mobile phones, and its acceptable use agreement.

The school reserves the right to revoke permission if a pupil does not abide by the policy.

Parent/carer signature: _____

FOR SCHOOL USE ONLY	
Authorised by:	
Date:	

Appendix 3: Template mobile phone information slip for visitors

Use of mobile phones and similar devices in our school

- Please keep your mobile phone on silent/vibrate while on the school grounds
- Please do not use phones where pupils are present. If you must use your phone, you may go to the school office.
- Do not take photos or recordings of pupils, or staff
- Do not use your phone in lessons, or when working with pupils

The school accepts no responsibility for phones that are lost, damaged or stolen while you are on the school grounds.

A full copy of our mobile phone policy is available from the school office.

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