



Mobile Phone Policy

1. Introduction and Aims

St Augustine's have a duty to create an environment that is calm, supportive, safe and free from distractions so all pupils, whatever their background, can learn and thrive. One of the greatest challenges facing all schools is the presence of mobile phones. National research suggests that one in five pupils have experienced bullying online and three in ten pupils cite mobile phone use has had a negative impact on making and maintaining friendships, their mental health and has increased their levels of worry, anxiety or depression.

At St Augustine's we recognise that mobile phones and similar devices, including smartphones and smartwatches, 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, safeguarding and our behaviour policy.

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

3.1 Staff

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

Staff will address any questions or concerns from parents/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/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 staffroom).

There may be circumstances in which it's 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 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 [020 7328 3434] 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). Staff should not use their personal mobile phones to take any video footage or photographs of any staff without gaining their permission. Please refer to our data protection policy and our ICT acceptable use policy.

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 should not communicate with any parents/carers or pupils via any messaging or social media platforms.

Staff must not use their personal 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. IPADs are available from the main office for this purpose, along with a school camera which can be located with Ana Cazan, Media and Marketing Officer.

If subjects use a platform which requires mobile phones to be used, this can only be used with Sixth Form students. Key Stage 3 and 4 students should be set these platforms as homework via MS Teams so that they can utilise their mobile phone to complete these tasks outside of lesson time. If a member of staff wants to use their mobile phone for a particular learning APP, then this must be discussed with the SLT line Manager and DSL to ensure all parties involved are covered by this policy and others, such as Safeguarding, Child Protection and Data Protection.

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 aren't limited to:

- To issue homework, rewards or sanctions
- To use multi-factor authentication (Safeguarding Team Members for CPOMS)
- To read and answer emails off-site
- To use MS Teams to communicate with staff within year team and department areas
- To communicate in any lockdown procedures
- Emergency evacuations
- Supervising off-site trips (School Mobile should be taken and that number issued to all parties)

- Supervising residential visits (School Mobile should be taken and that number issued to all parties)

In these circumstances, staff will:

- Use their mobile phones in an appropriate and professional manner, in line with our staff code of conduct. This includes using other platforms such as WhatsApp to communicate with staff.
- 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/carers. If necessary, contact must be made via the school office

4.5 Work phones

Staff must:

- Only use phone functions for work purposes, including making/receiving calls, sending/receiving emails or other communications, or using the internet
- Ensure that communication or conduct linked to the device is always appropriate and professional, in line with our staff code of conduct.

4.6 Sanctions

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

5. Use of mobile phones by pupils

The DfE's non-statutory mobile phone guidance says that pupils should not use mobile phones throughout the school day.

Pupils should not use their mobile phones during the school day, including during lessons, in the time between lessons, at breaktimes and at lunchtimes. Our students are growing in an increasingly complex world, living their lives on and offline. This presents many exciting opportunities but also challenges. At St Augustine's, mobile phones should **never be used, seen or heard**. Students can keep possession of their mobile phone only on the strict condition that they are never used, seen or heard. If any of these conditions are broken, then there are consequences for breaching these conditions.

- Pupils who are diabetic and use a mobile phone to read their glucose levels, must do so in the medical room where possible. Pupils who are diabetic will be issued with a medical pass so all staff will be aware of the need for these students to use their mobile phones purely to check their levels.

- Pupils who may also need to have their phone with them (Switched on but in silent and vibrate mode) due to a safeguarding concern or being a young carer, will be given permission to do so and staff will be informed the time frame for this arrangement.
- Pupils that are travelling to and from school by themselves or from a distance may need to use their mobile phone to contact home to let them know they have arrived safely. In this situation, pupils are told to use their mobile phone outside of the front gate and then switch off their mobile phone and place in their school bag for the rest of the day. Pupils should then only use their phone again once outside of the school gates after school has finished.

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.

- Pupils should not have any notifications on their smartwatch that would allow them to send and receive messages or play music whilst in school
- Pupils are advised to leave these types of watches at home as they are expensive, and pupils must remove these items for all assessments and examinations.

5.2 Exceptions for sixth-form pupils

Sixth-form pupils are allowed access to their mobile phones during the school day, to reflect their increased independence and responsibility, but must not compromise our policy on the use of mobile phones for other pupils.

Therefore, they are only permitted to use their mobile phones out of sight of younger pupils [Library, Common Room and during Directed Study periods]. Misuse of mobile phones by pupils in the sixth form will lead to sanctions according to our behaviour policy.

5.3 Sanctions

Schools are permitted to confiscate phones from pupils under sections 91 and 94 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006). If a pupil breaches our mobile phone rule of never being used, seen or heard the following will happen:

- The mobile phone will be confiscated and placed in the main office and a phone call made to the parent/carer. The phone can be collected by a parent/carer only 24 hours later from the main office and must be signed for.

- If a student was seen using their mobile phone either to message/film/record/take a photo/make or receive a call, then the mobile phone will be confiscated and placed in the main office and a phone call made to the parent/carer. The phone can be collected by a parent/carer a minimum of 24 hours later or depending on the severity (Footage/content may be linked to a safeguarding issue), the phone may remain confiscated for up to 5 days.
- Any safeguarding concerns with content found on a pupil's mobile will automatically lead to the phone being confiscated and our Safer Schools Police Officer being contacted. The mobile phone will then remain confiscated until the police inform the parent/carer of next steps.

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

Staff have the power to search pupils' phones in specific circumstances, as set out in the DfE's guidance on searching, screening and confiscation. The DfE guidance allows school staff to search a pupil's phone if there is a good reason to do so (such as having reason to believe the phone contains pornographic images, or if it is being/has been used to commit an offence or cause harm to another person). At St Augustine's the only staff that will search a pupil's phone will be a member of staff from SLT, the safeguarding Team, SENCO, DOL or PYC. If any member of staff suspects that there may be inappropriate content on a phone, they should alert a member of SLT immediately.

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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 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.

Parent/Carers must also not use any inappropriate language or behaviour whilst using a mobile phone towards either staff members or other students. If parent/carers have any issues at all, please contact the school to resolve the issue appropriately.

7. Loss, theft or damage

Pupils bringing mobile phones to school must ensure that the phones are appropriately labelled and are stored (For example, at the bottom of their school bag) securely when not in use.

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 school office in a locked safe. Details of which staff member confiscated the phone, and the students full name and year group will be logged. Once the phone is collected by a parent/carer, the phone is signed out on the log.

Lost phones 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 of pupils' education, behaviour and welfare. When reviewing the policy, the school will consider:

- 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

If there are any concerns regarding this policy, these should be brought to the attention of the Head of School, in a timely manner.