

# St Mary's CE High School

*Everyone is equal, everyone deserves the best*

## Mobile Phone, Digital and Electronic Devices Acceptable Use Policy

***Date of Next Review: Summer 2024***

*"Our vision, as a school with a Christian ethos, is founded on The Parable of the Sower, where*

***Through God's love, we are the rich soil where seeds flourish and roots grow,***  
*based on the Parable of the Sower, Mark 4: 3-9*

*This underpins our motto, **We believe everyone is equal, everyone deserves the best,** and is key to what we do. We believe that we are all equal, irrespective of our background and beliefs. We provide a safe, nurturing environment in which we can all flourish. We have the very highest aspirations for our students, their families, our local community, and ourselves, and want nothing but the best. We challenge students by having a rich and exciting curriculum provision and by making learning practical, engaging and enjoyable. We enable students to succeed by providing the best possible personalised support."*

Nicholas Simms – Head Teacher

### **SAFEGUARDING STATEMENT**

The Governors of St Mary's have made safeguarding a fundamental priority and are committed to ensuring that safeguarding of children and young people remains at the core of their work. For this reason, the principles of excellent safeguarding practice are integral to the culture of St Mary's and every aspect of the school's work. This policy supports this commitment to safeguarding and should be read in conjunction with other school policies as appropriate.

**It is every person's responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and it remains a paramount concern of all who work in and who are part of the St Mary's community.**

Please note: The term 'Mobile phone and electronic device' is used throughout this policy to refer to any device (including digital) that might exist or be developed in the future, to electronically communicate, store or transfer information and/or data including images.

Examples of such devices include:

- Android mobile phones
- Smart phones / iPhones
- Watch phones / cameras
- iPad/Tablets
- Laptops (including those students bring into school from home)
- Digital cameras or devices
- Hand held games consoles
- Any other electronic items
- e-Readers (e.g., Kindle)
- Other devices that are developed and may be used by staff/students in the future

## **1 Context and Rationale**

1.1 Mobile phones and electronic devices are now a feature of everyday life and most staff and students own and use them regularly. It is recognised that they can have multi-functional uses that includes use as a learning tool; use as a safety device; and use as multi and social media devices. They allow access to a wide range of communication technology and sources of information.

Consideration also needs to be given to consequences that the misuse of mobile phones and electronic devices can have. These can impact on student safety; student wellbeing; staff and student safeguarding; and student attainment and progress\*.

*\* A study from the Centre for Economic Performance at the London School of Economics and research by Louis Philippe Beland and Richard Murphy who surveyed schools in Birmingham, Leicester, London and Manchester about their mobile phone policies since*

*2001 and combined it with results data from externally marked national exams found that:*

- *After schools banned mobile phones, the test scores of students aged 16 improved by 6.4% which equates to “adding five days to the school year”*
- *Pupil achievement improves as a result of a ban and low-achieving and low-income pupils gain the most*
- *Mobile phone bans had a greater impact on special education needs pupils and those eligible for free school meals but had no marked effect on high achievers*

- 1.2 St Mary’s CE High School accepts the need to recognise that the technology that our staff and students use in their everyday lives needs to be part of student education, both in terms of learning how to use electronic devices effectively and how to employ them to facilitate and enhance their learning whilst keeping themselves safe. This is supported through the school PSHCE curriculum; IT curriculum; Acceptable User Agreement; and through the provision of school laptops, Ipads and IT access where required. However, the School also recognises the need to ensure that staff and students are kept safe; do not become over reliant on these technologies; and that they do not become a barrier or distraction to learning or social development
- 1.3 In addition, electronic devices can also provide increasing opportunities for teachers and classroom based staff to enhance the quality of teaching and learning provision. Where this is identified, the School provides appropriate technologies such as laptops, ipads, and IT access.
- 1.4 Our teachers, administrative and support staff also need to be supported in the use of the latest electronic technology to carry out their duties and support the quality of provision for the learning community
- 1.5 The Governors are committed to ensuring that the School is clear about acceptable use in school and for learning in order to keep students safe and to avoid inappropriate use of technology detracting from teaching and learning

## **2 Protocol for the use of all electronic devices**

- 2.1 Electronic devices of all kinds that are brought in to school are the responsibility of the user. The school accepts no responsibility for the loss, theft or damage of such items. The School will not engage in actions to retrieve or investigate loss of mobile phones or electronic devices.
- 2.2 The school will not accept responsibility for any adverse health effects caused by any such devices either potential or actual.
- 2.3 Students may bring a basic mobile phone/s (calls and texts only) to school for use to and from school as required. However, this phone must **not** be a smart phone which we define as a mobile phone that performs many of the functions of a computer, typically having a touchscreen interface, internet access, a camera and an operating system capable of running downloaded apps. Please note that once inside the main school

building, the School operates a “no mobile” policy. This means that all mobile phones and electronic devices:

- Should not be used or seen on the school site at any time. This includes in the Main Building (including all classrooms, locker areas, toilets, corridors, communal areas, Main Hall, Sports Hall, Gym, Changing rooms, Dining Room, LRC, Reception area); on the school fields; on the courts; or in any other areas of the site. This includes before school; during break and lunch times; after school
- May be used by students in the car park, prior to the start of the school day, and after the school day has finished. They are not permitted to use them in the car park during break or lunch times.
- Must be switched off and secured in a locker at all times when on site
- May not be accessed in any area of the school site

Post 16 students who may access their mobile phones in the Sixth Form Centre only. The “no mobile” policy is applicable to all Post 16 students in all other areas of the School site as detailed above

- 2.4 Parents/carers are encouraged to support the school and their child’s safety in that mobile phones and electronic items provided to be brought into school are not of high value or latest design, and where possible are marked with the owner’s name or home post code. They are also asked to remind students that these need to be placed in school bags before coming onto the school site and that they should be kept securely in individual lockers and not be accessed during the school day
- 2.5 Classroom based staff who wish to use students’ mobile phones or electronic devices as a legitimate aspect of a lesson are not allowed. The school does support learning using electronic devices e.g. iPad and chromebooks but must these devices must be organised and booked by the teacher. The teacher must also ensure that the purpose is clearly written into the objectives and activities of the lesson plan. When using school electronic devices in classrooms, students are expected to follow all instructions of staff with regard to their use.
- 2.7 It is advisable to protect phones and electronic devices with security marking and codes
- 2.9 Students must not use phones or electronic devices to broadcast music or sound (i.e. out loud so that it can be heard by those other than the user) when traveling to and from school. The use of earphones to listen to music is encouraged where appropriate and safe
- 2.10 Phones and/or electronic devices must not be taken into the exam hall under any circumstances in accordance with examination board regulations. Breach of this rule will lead to invalidation of that examination and potentially other examinations. (Please refer to Examination Notices and guidance for more details)

2.11 The principles relating to the use of mobile phones and electronic devices outlined in this policy will apply to any school activity, including fieldwork and offsite activities (see 4.2 for further guidance). Students will be expected to follow specific guidance about acceptable use provided by the Offsite Visit Leader. Any mobile phone/electronic device taken on fieldwork or off site remains the responsibility of the student

2.12 If phones and/or electronic devices are either seen onsite during the school day or used inappropriately, students will have their phones and/or electronic devices confiscated, to be returned after a period of confiscation.

The period of confiscation will be on a sliding scale consisting of:

- First offence (within an academic year) **1-week confiscation; phone to be returned to the student**
- Second offence **2-week confiscation; phone to be returned to the student**
- Third offence **3-week confiscation; phone to be returned only to parent/carers - parent /carers meeting/ consideration of exclusion from school in line with the Behaviour for Learning Policy**
- Fourth offence **4-week confiscation; phone to be returned only to parent/carers - parent /carers meeting / consideration of exclusion from school in line with the Behaviour for Learning Policy**
- Smartphones that are seen will be confiscated and returned after 10 school days or at the end of half-term (if before 10 school days). **Phone to be returned only to parent/carers - parent /carers meeting / consideration of exclusion from school in line with the Behaviour for Learning Policy**

This includes confiscation of the phone SIM card.

At the end of the confiscation period, parent/carers are expected to arrange with the school for the collection of the mobile phone. **Note** – if this is a third or fourth confiscation, the phone must be collected by a parent/carers and a meeting organised with a senior member of staff.

Please note for Post 16 students, if they are using a mobile phone then it will be confiscated for three consecutive days from the day of confiscation. If the day of pick-up is not a day, they are in school then they will have to come in to collect it. If the phone is seen in their hand, then it will be confiscated until the end of the day. **Note** – Post 16 students do not require parent/carers to collect their phones.

Should a student who is in breach of the Mobile Phone, Digital and Electronic Devices Acceptable Use Policy choose not to comply with a request to hand over their phone, the student will be withdrawn from lessons immediately and will remain in the Reflect and Reset room for the duration of the confiscated period and /or will face a further sanction in line with the School's Behaviour For Learning Policy.

Students and parents/carers will not be expected to dispute the confiscation of phones or electronic items, in view of their knowledge of this policy.

The School reserves the right to review and adjust the period of confiscation termly. Any changes to this will be communicated to parents / carers in writing at the end of term for implementation at the start of the following term.

- 2.13 Students are not permitted to charge any mobile phone or electrical device on school property. Any devices that are found charging on site will be confiscated in line with the guidance above (2.12). The charging device will be confiscated and retained to the end of the school year. Repeated transgression of this rule will be treated as an incident of theft from the School
- 2.14 Misuse of any electrical device may lead to confiscation or investigation under the schools disciplinary and behavioural policy, anti-bullying policy or child protection policy. This could include referral to the Police and / or safeguarding, or other, authorities
- 2.15 It is the responsibility of all parents / carers to ensure that their son / daughter uses any electronic device, particularly mobile phones, responsibly. This includes the expectation that all parents/carers will monitor their son / daughter's use of these items. It remains the responsibility of parents / carers to be aware of any content contained on, and usage of, these devices. The School reserves the right not to investigate any incidents of misuse and will refer immediately to the police any such incidents. There will be support and intervention offered to victim and perpetrator.

### **3 Additional Guidance - Mobile Phones**

- 3.1 Mobile phones must not be accessed or used by students at any time during the school day (except Post 16 students within the Sixth Form Centre only). This includes use to contact home in cases of medical need or any other emergency / non-emergency. Any student needing to contact home for this purpose should go to their Student Manager, the General Office and/or First Aider on duty who will make contact with parents/carers, if required. Parents / carers are asked not to accept calls from their son / daughter during the day
- 3.2 Students must ensure that files stored on their phones do not contain violent, offensive, degrading or pornographic images. The transmission of such images is a criminal offence. Students found to be engaging in such activities will have their phone/device confiscated and it will be returned only to their parents/carers or passed to the police (see ICT AUP and eSafety Policy). It is likely that students will also face sanction in line with the Behaviour for Learning (B4L) Policy
- 3.3 Cyber-bullying is completely unacceptable. It is a criminal offence under Section 43 of the Telecommunication Act 1984 and the Malicious Communications Act 1988 to use a mobile phone to menace, harass or offend another person. The School may involve the police should such actions occur. Students found to be responsible for such activities will have their phone confiscated after which it will be returned to parents/carers (see

ICT AUP and eSafety Policy) or passed to the police. It is likely that students will also face sanction in line with the Behaviour for Learning (B4L) Policy

- 3.4 Mobile phones should never be used to send unsolicited messages (e.g., voice, SMS, BBM or other types) to people without their permission. This also includes postings on social media sites such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter or YouTube. Students found to be responsible for such activities will have their phone confiscated after which it will be returned to parents/carers (see ICT AUP and eSafety Policy) or passed to the police. It is likely that students will also face sanction in line with the Behaviour for Learning (B4L) Policy
- 3.5 It is expected that mobile phones brought into school by staff, visitors and other adults will be switched off or to 'silent'. This is particularly important when in classrooms or during presentations. Visitors will be reminded of the need to switch phones off at the start of all school events, meetings and performances.
- 3.6 The use of any device to record any meeting is strictly prohibited, unless specifically agreed, in writing, by all parties involved. Should this occur, the School will stop the meeting with immediate effect. The School will consider a further response in guidance with advice from the Head Teacher, Governing Body and / or other agencies as required.
- 3.7 Communication between staff and students using mobile phones, whether by text or phone must be avoided at all times, both in and out of school
- 3.8 The leaders of an educational visit will carry mobile phones supplied by the school and as part of the preparation for the visit student/parent/carer phone numbers may be exchanged. These numbers should be deleted after the visit and communication with students and parents/carers will only be made using the mobile phone supplied by the school

#### **4 Additional Guidance - cameras, photographs and video**

- 4.1 Pictures / videos of people should only be taken with their full permission. Pictures / videos taken on mobile phones or other devices must not be taken in school. Any images / videos of students in school uniform should not be published on the internet or any other social networking site. Students must respect the wishes of others who do not give permission for their photograph / work / voice to be recorded
- 4.2 Pictures / videos taken during school based activities (e.g. Fieldwork; offsite visits) may be taken with the knowledge and agreement of the party leader and only with the knowledge and agreement of the staff or students being photographed. Any images / videos of students taken during school based activities should not be published on the internet or any other social networking site. Students must respect the wishes of others who do not give permission for their photograph / work / voice to be recorded
- 4.3 Any such pictures / videos if found will be deleted and may result in confiscation of the device



- 4.4 If a mobile phone or digital camera contains any inappropriate photos, videos or other digital content then the school reserves the right to delete this content. If appropriate, the school will take copies of the inappropriate content and pass this copy or the phone or electronic device to the relevant agencies including the Police or safeguarding authorities. Any material the School retains will be deleted once subsequent investigations have taken place (please see ICT AUP and eSafety)
- 4.5 Mobile phones and electronic devices should not be taken into toilets and changing areas. Any infringement of this guideline will be considered as a serious breach of discipline and will be sanctioned in line with the Behaviour for Learning Policy and within the guidance in the Mobile Phone, Digital and Electronic Devices Acceptable Use Policy
- 4.6 The use of photographic or video material to bully, harass or intimidate others will be treated as a serious breach of school discipline. It will be investigated under the School's Behaviour for Learning Policy, Anti-Bullying Policy and/or Child Protection Policy or the School reserves the right not to investigate such instances of that occur outside of school, but to pass directly to the Police. Students found to be responsible for such activities will have their phone confiscated after which it will be returned to parents/carers (see ICT AUP and eSafety Policy) or passed to the Police

**5. Other Policies related to Mobile Phone, Digital and Electronic Devices Acceptable User Policy:**

**This policy should be read and used in conjunction with:**

- ICT AUP and eSafety Policy
- Behaviour For Learning Policy
- Conduct in Examinations/Public Examination Guidance
- Health & Safety Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Social Media Policy
- School Code of Conduct
- Home School Agreement
- Offsite Visits Policy

**6. Monitoring and Evaluation**

This policy will be reviewed by the governors every two years. Review will involve staff, students, governors and parents/carers.

All staff remain responsible for implementing this policy, although stakeholders are expected to uphold the policy.

The success of the policy will be evaluated using data from behaviour and safety monitoring.