

St Charles Catholic Primary School



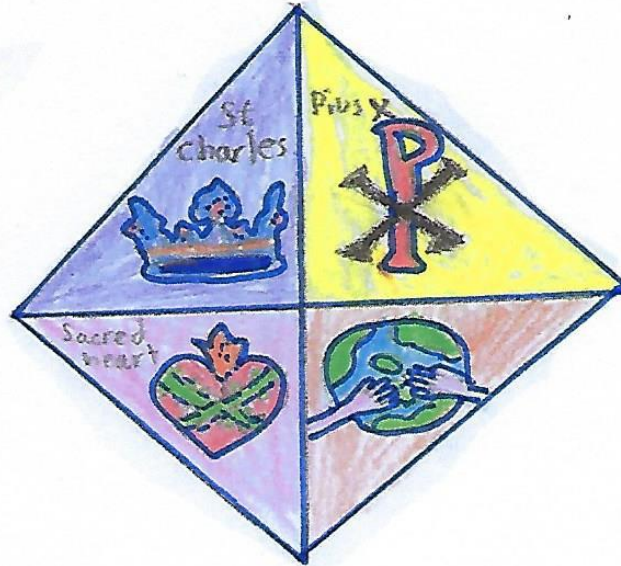
Mobile Phone Policy

Designated Teacher: Tony Lynch
Date policy adopted by SLT: Autumn 2023
Date policy to be reviewed: Autumn 2026

St Charles Catholic Primary school

Our Mission Statement

✠ *Love God, Love your Neighbour* ✠



(Design by Claudia 5A - 2020)

Through God's love, and with guidance from the Holy Spirit, we, the Community of St Charles, share our Catholic faith together. We seek to nurture in our children an understanding of the importance of Christian values and a deep love and lifelong commitment to God.

We value the unique strengths and gifts of the children entrusted to us and strive to provide an excellent education, so that through our teaching the children may realise their full potential.

In partnership with our families, Governors and Parish, and inspired by our faith, we support the children of St Charles. We encourage them to shine, to have pride in their achievements, to show concern for others and contribute to society as responsible citizens.

Our Aims

- *To appreciate that we are all uniquely created and loved by God.*
 - *To deepen each child's understanding of the Catholic faith.*
- *To nurture in the children an understanding of Christian values and how these help shape our lives and the lives of others.*
 - *To understand the importance of forgiveness and reconciliation.*
- *To work in partnership with parents and Parish to create a Christian atmosphere enriched through prayer.*
 - *To provide an excellent education so children learn and achieve their potential.*
 - *To respect and care for one another in a happy, welcoming and nurturing community.*
 - *To ensure children care and respect others, develop an understanding of the world and contribute to society as responsible citizens.*

St Charles Mobile Phone Policy

Introduction

For many young people today, the ownership of a mobile phone is considered a necessary and vital part of their social life. There are a growing number of primary pupils who now have personal ownership of a mobile phone, including smart phones with internet capability, an integrated camera and video recording capability. When used creatively and responsibly this type of phone has great potential to support pupils' learning experiences outside of School. However, when they are misused, they can also be a distraction in school and can provide a means of bullying or intimidating others. Mobile phones can also make a child a target for bullies and thieves if they become aware that they have one. For these reasons, we ask parents/carers to read this policy carefully and be sure to understand the School's expectations and practices.

Examples of misuse of mobile phones

- Online bullying by text, image and email messaging
- Taking and sharing inappropriate pictures of children and/or adults
- Access to inappropriate websites bypassing the school filtering system
- General disruption to learning caused by pupils accessing phones in lessons
- Making disrespectful comments, misrepresenting events or making defamatory remarks about teachers or other pupils
- Pupils phoning parents immediately following an incident so that the ability of staff to deal with an incident is compromised
- Pupils posting material on social network sites with no thought to the risks to their personal reputation and sometimes with the deliberate intention of causing harm to others
- The deliberate engineering of situations where people's reactions are filmed or photographed in order to humiliate, embarrass and intimidate by publishing to a wider audience such as on Facebook, YouTube or Tiktok
- Publishing photographs of vulnerable pupils, who may be on a child protection plan, where this may put them at additional risk
- The use of a mobile phone for 'sexting' (the deliberate taking and sending of provocative images or text messages).

School Rules for the Acceptable Use of a Mobile Phone in School by Pupils

Reception to Year 4 pupils are forbidden from bringing a personal mobile phone to school. If a child in these year groups brings a phone to school, the agreed procedure is that this will be handed over to a member of staff who will send it to the office for safekeeping during the day. This can then be collected at the end of the day from the office by a parent.

Pupils in Year 5 and 6 are permitted to bring a mobile phone to school, to support safety issues if they travel to and from school independently. All mobile phones should be named and handed into the school office at the beginning of the day and collected at the end of the day. If parents want their child to bring a phone, it is on the understanding that they agree with the following limitations on use, namely,

- Mobile phones must be switched off at all times during the school day, including break and lunchtimes, and remain off whilst pupils are on the school premises.
- It is not permitted to film, photograph anyone on school grounds.
- The phone will be kept in the main office during the day.
- The school will not be held responsible for the security of a mobile phone brought into school unless they are handed/ sent to the office for safekeeping.
- Content on the phone (e.g. messages, emails, pictures, videos, sound files) will be shown to a teacher when requested.

Misuse of mobile phones

Appropriate action will be taken against those who are in breach of the acceptable use guidelines following the school's discipline and behaviour policy. In the case of repeated misuse, the phone will only be returned to a parent/carer who will be required to visit the school by appointment to collect the phone. This may be at the end of a week, a half term or longer.

Serious misuse may lead to the confiscation of the mobile phone, communication with parents and the imposition of other sanctions, up to and including exclusion from school. In some instances, an offence may have to be reported to the Police.

If a pupil commits an act which causes serious harassment, alarm or distress to another pupil or member of staff, the ultimate sanction may be permanent exclusion. School will consider the impact on the victim of the act in deciding the sanction and parents will be involved.

Dealing with the misuse of mobile phones.

It is expected that most incidents of misuse of the mobile phone will be dealt with using the same principles set out in the school Behaviour and Expectations policy, with the response being proportionate to the severity of the misuse.

However, more serious incidents of misuse of the mobile phone (see below) may result in more severe sanctions and involve the governing body.

The school will consider any of the following unacceptable uses of the mobile phone as a serious breach of the school's behaviour policy resulting in more serious sanctions being taken:

- Photographing or filming staff or other pupils during the school day and on organised school events
- Photographing or filming in toilets, swimming pools, changing rooms and similar areas
- Bullying, harassing or intimidating staff or pupils by the use of text, email or multimedia messaging, sending inappropriate messages or posts to social networking or blogging sites
- Refusing to switch a phone off or handing over the phone at the request of a member of staff
- Using the mobile phone outside school hours to intimidate or upset staff and/or pupils will be considered a breach of these guidelines in the same way as unacceptable use which takes place in school time.

**Where it is deemed necessary to examine the contents of a mobile phone this will be done by a designated member of staff, usually a member of the senior leadership team. The action will be properly recorded including the time, who was present and what was found. We reserve the right to record or download evidence from mobile phones to support investigations. See Appendix 1.*

Serious misuse may lead to the confiscation of the mobile phone, communication with parents and the imposition of other sanctions, up to and including exclusion from school. In some instances, an offence may have to be reported to the Police.

School will ensure all staff know the correct procedure to follow where a mobile phone has been confiscated. This will ensure that the confiscation is correctly recorded and that the phone is kept securely. Should an incident occur then school will also need to ensure that support is provided for the victim.

Sanctions

Appropriate action will be taken against those who are in breach of the acceptable use guidelines following the School's behaviour policy. In addition

- Pupils and their parents should be very clear that the school is within its rights to confiscate the phone where the guidelines have been breached. If a phone is confiscated, the school will make it clear for how long this will be and the procedure to be followed for its return.
- Police will be informed if there is a serious misuse of the mobile phone where criminal activity is suspected.
- If a pupil commits an act which causes serious harassment, alarm or distress to another pupil or member of staff, the ultimate sanction may be permanent exclusion. School will consider the impact on the victim of the act in deciding the sanction and parents will be involved.

Confiscation Procedure

If it becomes necessary to confiscate a mobile phone:

- The pupil or their parent will be informed that the phone can be collected at the end of school day from the designated person.
- The confiscation will be recorded by the school for monitoring purposes (See Appendix 1)
- Schools will ensure that confiscated equipment is stored in a named bag so that it is returned to the correct person.
- In the case of repeated misuse the phone will only be returned to a parent/carer who will be required to visit the school by appointment to collect the phone. This may be at the end of a week, a half term or longer.
- Where a pupil persistently breaches the guidelines, following a clear warning, the Executive Head/Head of school may impose an outright ban from bringing a mobile phone to school. This may be a fixed period or permanent ban.

Where The Phone Has Been Used For An Unacceptable Purpose

The Executive Head/Head of School or a member of the senior leadership team will have the right to view files stored in confiscated equipment and will seek the cooperation of parents in deleting any files which are in clear breach of these guidelines unless these are being preserve as evidence. If required, evidence of the offence will be preserved, preferably by confiscation of the device and keeping it secure, or by taking photographs of the screen. School should consider whether an incident should be reported to the school Designated Safeguarding Lead. The designated staff member will monitor repeat offences to see if there is any pattern in the perpetrator or the victim which needs further investigation.

Using mobile phones during After School Clubs

If a child is attending an after School club, they must collect their mobile phone from the Office first and put it straight into their bag until the end of the session. The Phone is now their own responsibility and the school will take no liability for its loss or damage.

The phone should remain switched off and out of site during a club session. If a child misuses their phone during a Club Session, (See Dealing with the misuse of mobile phones section above) they will still be governed by this policy and will be sanctioned appropriately.

Support for the Victim

Where an incident has involved the victimisation, harassment, alarm or distress of another pupil or member of staff, the school will provide support for the victim. This should be discussed with the victim's family or, where the incident involves a member of staff, appropriate support will be obtained. This might be the designated staff welfare person or the victim's union. To support the rehabilitation of a victim, the following support may be offered in consultation with the victim and their family or support person. The school may:

- Follow up with the victim and family and agree a suitable way forward to facilitate an effective closure for the victim to the incident.
- Offer one to one support through the mental Health First Aiders.
- School will also ensure that the perpetrators, and any others involved, are educated about the impact of their actions on the victim.
- School will ensure a fully documented case history of the incident is recorded and secured in the relevant file.
- Senior staff will review the PSHE & E-Safety curriculum to ensure all areas are appropriately covered.
- Where material has been posted online about a victim, school will provide support in getting the material removed.

Smart Watches

Smart watches are designed to look like an ordinary wrist watch but can have some, or all of the functions of a mobile phone. As such, it can be misused in the same way as a mobile phone (see examples of misuse above). The school does not consider smart watches to be necessary as a smart watch requires a pupil to carry a mobile phone anyway. For these reasons smart watches are banned across the School. If smart watches are found in School, they will be confiscated using the confiscated procedure as set out above for mobile phones.

Personal Mobiles – Staff

- Staff are not permitted to make/receive calls/texts during contact time with children.
- Staff should have their phones on silent or switched off and out of sight (e.g. in a drawer, handbag or pocket) during class time.
- Mobile phones should not be used in a space where children are present (eg. classroom, playground).
- Use of phones (Inc. Receiving/sending texts and emails) should be limited to non-contact time when no children are present e.g. in office areas, staff room, empty classrooms.
- It is also advised that staff security protect access to functions of their phone.
- Staff should report any usage of mobile devices that causes them concern by other staff members to the Executive Head/Head of School.

Mobile Phones for work related purposes

We recognise that mobile phones provide a useful means of communication on offsite activities and in emergencies on site, such as a lockdown situation. However, staff should ensure that:

- Mobile use on these occasions is appropriate and professional.
- Mobile phones should not be used to make contact with parents/carers during school trips – all relevant communications should be made via the school office. The exception to this is during a residential trip or during an evening event held outside of the school office hours. At these times Staff may use their personal phones to call parents/cares but they are advised to dial *67 before hand to keep their number private.
- Where parents are accompanying trips, they are informed not to make contact with other parents (via calls, text, email or social networking) during the trip or use their phone to take photographs of children.

Staff may use their mobile phones-

- to take photographs of children for sharing on the School's media platforms, Twitter, Facebook and Instagram. However, they must only use the Google security platform set up by the School which prevents images being stored or saved on the device. Parents' permission will be obtained first. These are used solely to promote the School, share learning, etc.

Under no circumstances must photographs of children be stored on personal devices. If members of staff, parents/carers or visitors are discovered with images of children the matter may be reported to the police.

Volunteers, Visitors, Governors and Contractors

All volunteers, visitors, governors and contractors are expected to follow our mobile phone policy as it relates to staff whilst on the premises.

On arrival, such visitors will be informed of our expectations around the use of mobile phones.

Parents

While we would prefer parents not to use their mobile phones while at school, we recognise that this would be impossible to regulate and that many parents see their phones as essential means of communication at all times.

We therefore ask that parents' usage of mobile phones, whilst on the school site, is *courteous* and *appropriate* to the school environment.

We also allow parents to photograph or video school events such as shows or sports day using their mobile phones – **but insist that parents do not publish images (e.g. on social networking sites) that include any children other than their own.**

Please refer to the safety agreement form all parents are asked to sign and the guidance on the Use of Photographic Images and Videos of Children.

