

# Federation of St Charles and St Mary's Catholic Primary Schools



## Mobile Phone Policy

Date policy reviewed by the Governing Body: Autumn 2025  
Date policy to be reviewed: Autumn 2028

## **The Federation of St Charles and St Mary's Catholic Primary Schools**

### **Vision and Values**

#### **Together in faith, we love and learn**

The Federation of St Charles and St Mary's is a welcoming and nurturing community where every child, family, and staff member is valued and supported. We embrace and celebrate the richness of our diverse backgrounds, fostering a sense of belonging for all—those of all faiths and those with no religious belief. Within this inclusive environment, we are guided by a distinctive Catholic ethos that shapes our shared values:

- Respect
- Inclusion
- Aspiration
- Responsibility
- Harmony.

We respect and value the cultural diversity of our community, in which everyone works together in harmony to uphold the dignity of each individual. We provide high standards of education, a love of learning and pastoral care, all guided by the Gospel values.

Recognising parents as the first educators, we work in partnership with our families to create an inclusive environment where everyone feels happy, safe, and valued and each child flourishes and achieves success.

Our Federation aims to:

- Put Christ at the heart of all that we do;
- Work in partnership with families, the parish and the wider community to ensure all children fulfil their full potential academically, spiritually, socially and morally and to develop children's unique talents;
- Provide a high quality, fully inclusive education for all pupils across the curriculum that builds independence and responsibility;
- Foster a culture where children are enabled to build self-esteem and positive relationships with those around them, together with a respect for the values, beliefs and feelings of others and where they feel safe, valued and loved;
- Ensure all children are well-prepared for the next stage of education and beyond so they can become respectful citizens contributing to the common good and serving others;
- Foster environmental stewardship and empower our children to take action to care for and protect our planet, now and for the future;
- Support children to deepen their faith, developing their relationship with God and others.

We deliver a carefully designed, aspirational curriculum that promotes curiosity, confidence, and resilience, enabling children to take responsibility for their own learning. Children engage in all subjects both academic and creative with daily reflection reinforcing their personal growth. We carefully plan for progression for each child, enabling them to become skilled learners in a wide range of disciplines.

Together, we remain dedicated to providing a nurturing, faith-filled, and aspirational environment, instilling confidence, purpose, and belief in every child as they embark on their educational journey and beyond.

## **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).

### **Federation Rules for the Acceptable Use of a Mobile Phones in Our Schools 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 appropriate designated staff member 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 or an alternative secure place during the school day.
- The school will not be held responsible for the security of a mobile phone brought into school unless they are handed in 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 our schools' Behaviour Policies, 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.

Our schools 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.

Our schools 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 the appropriate 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 appropriate School's behaviour policy. In addition

- Pupils and their parents should be very clear that the pupil's school is within its rights to confiscate the phone where the guidelines have been breached. If a phone is confiscated, the pupil's 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. The pupil's 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 of the procedure to be followed for its return.
- 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 pupil's 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 preserved 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. The pupil's 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 first from the appropriate staff member and put it straight into their bag until the end of the session. The Phone will then now be 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. Our schools 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.
- Ensure that the perpetrators, and any others involved, are educated about the impact of their actions on the victim.
- 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 curriculums 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 Federation 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 our schools. 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 (e.g. 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 not use their mobile phones-**

- to take photographs of children for sharing on their School's media platforms, Facebook and Instagram. However, they may use their School's IPads. 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.

## Appendix 1

### RECORD OF CONTENTS OF MOBILE PHONE EXAMINATION

| Pupil/Class | Date | Time | Examined By | Witnessed by | Phone Contents |
|-------------|------|------|-------------|--------------|----------------|
|             |      |      |             |              |                |
|             |      |      |             |              |                |
|             |      |      |             |              |                |
|             |      |      |             |              |                |
|             |      |      |             |              |                |
|             |      |      |             |              |                |
|             |      |      |             |              |                |
|             |      |      |             |              |                |
|             |      |      |             |              |                |
|             |      |      |             |              |                |
|             |      |      |             |              |                |
|             |      |      |             |              |                |
|             |      |      |             |              |                |
|             |      |      |             |              |                |

RECORD OF PHONECONFISCATION

| Pupil/Class | Date | Time | Removed<br>by | Returned<br>to | Returned<br>by |
|-------------|------|------|---------------|----------------|----------------|
|             |      |      |               |                |                |
|             |      |      |               |                |                |
|             |      |      |               |                |                |
|             |      |      |               |                |                |
|             |      |      |               |                |                |
|             |      |      |               |                |                |
|             |      |      |               |                |                |
|             |      |      |               |                |                |
|             |      |      |               |                |                |
|             |      |      |               |                |                |
|             |      |      |               |                |                |
|             |      |      |               |                |                |
|             |      |      |               |                |                |
|             |      |      |               |                |                |
|             |      |      |               |                |                |