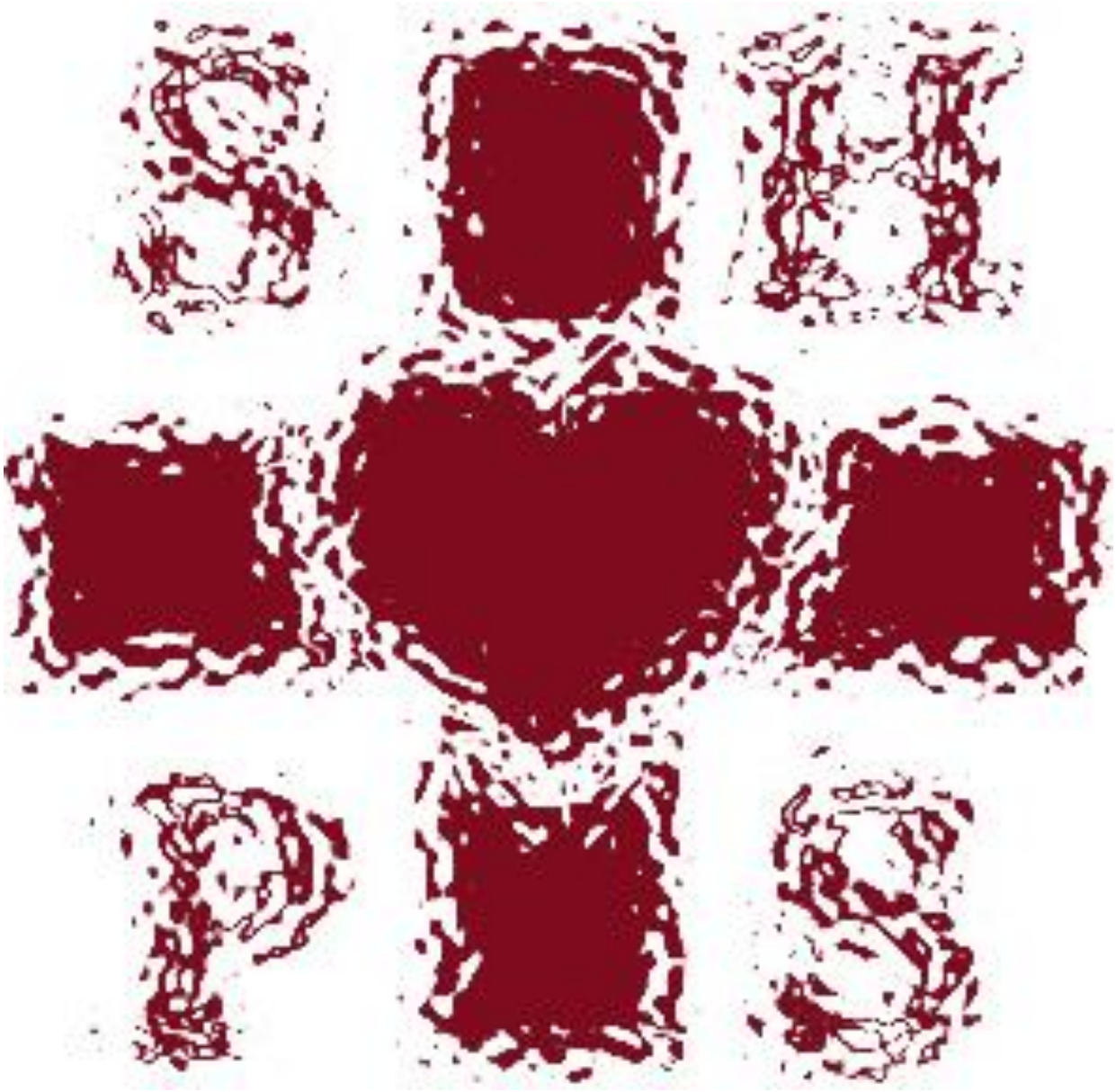

Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School

--Love One Another As I Have Loved You--

MOBILE PHONE POLICY

Date of implementation: Autumn 2026

Date of next review: Autumn 2028

1. Purpose

Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School is committed to providing a safe, calm and focused environment in which all children can learn, play and develop positive relationships.

Mobile phones and other personal digital communication devices can provide benefits outside school, particularly for children travelling independently. However, they can also cause distraction, disruption, safeguarding concerns, cyberbullying and inappropriate recording or communication.

The school therefore operates a **mobile phone-free school day**.

This policy has been developed in accordance with the Department for Education's statutory guidance, *Mobile Phones in Schools*. The guidance became statutory on 29th June 2026 and schools are expected to follow it from 1 September 2026. The DfE expects pupils not to have access to mobile phones throughout the school day, including during lessons, breaktimes and lunchtime.

2. Scope

This policy applies to:

- all pupils;
- all mobile phones and smartphones;
- smartwatches and similar wearable technology capable of communication;
- personal tablets or other devices capable of messaging, calling, recording or accessing the internet where these are not specifically authorised by the school;
- before-school provision, the normal school day, breaktimes and lunchtimes;
- after-school clubs and activities operated by the school.

For the purposes of this policy, the term **"mobile phone"** includes smartphones and any similar personal communication device.

3. School expectation

Children are **not permitted to have access to mobile phones during the school day**.

Where a child needs to bring a mobile phone to school, for example because they travel to or from school independently, the following procedure applies:

1. The phone must be switched off before entering school.
2. The child must hand the phone to the designated member of staff/class teacher on arrival.
3. The phone will be stored securely by the school for the duration of the school day.
4. The child will collect the phone at the end of the school day.
5. The phone must not be switched on or used until the child has left the school premises.

This approach is specifically identified by the DfE as an appropriate way for schools to achieve a mobile phone-free environment while allowing pupils to have a phone for their journey to and from school.

4. Arrival and collection

Children bringing a mobile phone to school must hand it in immediately upon arrival.

The school will establish a secure storage system for handed-in phones.

Children are responsible for ensuring that their phone is handed in correctly.

Phones will normally be returned at the end of the school day at a designated collection point or by the child's class teacher.

Children must not collect another child's phone.

Parents/carers should not contact their child directly on their mobile phone during the school day. If a parent/carer needs to contact their child urgently, they should contact the school office.

5. Phones must not be used on the school premises

Children must not use a mobile phone:

- in classrooms;
- in corridors;
- in the playground;
- during breaktime;
- during lunchtime;
- in toilets or changing areas;
- during assemblies, liturgies or worship;
- on educational visits unless specifically authorised;
- during breakfast club or after-school clubs;
- before or after school while on the school premises.

The prohibition includes:

- making or receiving calls;
- sending or receiving text messages;
- messaging through apps;
- accessing social media;
- taking photographs;
- taking videos;
- making audio recordings;

- gaming;
- accessing the internet;
- using a phone as a camera or recording device.

6. Smartwatches and wearable technology

Smartwatches and similar devices are subject to the same expectations as mobile phones where they are capable of:

- sending or receiving messages;
- making or receiving calls;
- accessing the internet;
- recording audio;
- taking photographs or video;
- displaying notifications from a mobile phone;
- communicating through apps.

Children may wear a basic watch that does not provide these functions.

Where a child has a smartwatch with communication functions, it must either be handed in with their mobile phone or have its communication functions disabled for the duration of the school day, as directed by the school.

7. Educational use

Children will not normally be permitted to use personal mobile phones or smart devices for educational purposes.

Where digital technology is required for learning, the school will provide or authorise an appropriate school device.

A member of staff may authorise the use of a personal device in exceptional circumstances where there is a clear educational or individual need.

8. Medical, SEND and accessibility exceptions

The school recognises that some children may require access to a mobile phone or similar device because of:

- a medical condition;
- a disability;
- special educational needs;
- the use of health-monitoring technology;
- the use of assistive technology;
- an individual safeguarding requirement;
- another significant individual need.

The DfE guidance specifically recognises that exceptions may be required for children with SEND, disabilities or medical conditions, including where a device is being used as health or assistive technology.

Any exception will be agreed by the Headteacher or designated senior leader and recorded in the child's individual support, medical or risk-management arrangements where appropriate.

The school will consider reasonable adjustments and individual circumstances when implementing this policy.

9. Educational visits and residentials

The same expectations apply to school trips and residential visits unless the trip leader or Headteacher has specifically authorised an alternative arrangement.

Where a mobile phone is required for a particular visit because of safeguarding, communication or travel arrangements, the school will establish clear expectations before the visit.

Children will not normally be permitted to use personal mobile phones to photograph or record other children or staff during school trips.

10. Before and after school provision

The mobile phone-free expectation applies to school-operated provision before and after the normal school day.

Children attending breakfast club or an after-school club who have brought a mobile phone must hand it in to the designated member of staff.

The phone will remain securely stored until the child leaves the school's care.

11. If a child is found with a mobile phone

If a child has failed to hand in their phone or is found in possession of a phone during the school day, the member of staff will instruct the child to hand it over.

The phone will be stored securely until the appropriate time for its return.

The incident will be dealt with in accordance with the school's Behaviour Policy.

Repeated breaches may result in the school requiring the phone to be handed directly to the school office by a parent/carer at the end of the school day, rather than being returned directly to the child.

12. If a child refuses to hand over a phone

If a child refuses a reasonable instruction to hand over a mobile phone:

- the matter will be treated as a behaviour incident;
- the child will be reminded of the school rule and the reason for it;
- the Headteacher or senior leader may become involved;
- the child's parent/carer may be contacted;
- an appropriate sanction may be applied in accordance with the Behaviour Policy.

The school will consider the child's age, developmental needs, SEND and individual circumstances when responding to any breach.

13. Confiscation

The school may confiscate a mobile phone or other prohibited device where this is necessary and proportionate in accordance with the school's Behaviour Policy and relevant DfE guidance.

Any confiscated device will be stored securely.

The school will determine an appropriate return arrangement, taking into account the circumstances of the incident and any previous breaches.

Where appropriate, the school may require a parent/carer to collect the device.

14. Searching

Where there is reasonable cause to believe that a pupil is in possession of a prohibited item or device in breach of the school's rules, the school may use its powers to search pupils in accordance with statutory guidance and the school's Behaviour Policy.

Staff will follow the school's procedures for searching, including requirements relating to same-sex searching, witnesses and informing parents/carers where applicable.

15. Photography, video and audio recording

Children must not use personal devices to photograph, film or record:

- other children;
- members of staff;
- visitors;
- lessons;
- assemblies;
- worship or liturgy;
- school activities;

unless specifically authorised by a member of staff for an appropriate purpose.

Any unauthorised recording may constitute a safeguarding or behaviour concern and will be dealt with appropriately.

16. Safeguarding

Mobile phones and personal digital devices can present safeguarding risks, including:

- inappropriate communication;
- cyberbullying;
- unauthorised photography or filming;
- sharing of images;
- access to inappropriate content;

- contact with unknown individuals;
- disruption to the learning environment.

Any safeguarding concern involving a mobile phone or personal device will be dealt with in accordance with the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

17. Staff mobile phones

Staff are expected to model the behaviour expected of pupils.

Personal mobile phones should not be used for personal purposes in front of pupils during the school day, except where there is a legitimate reason.

Staff may use personal mobile phones where necessary for:

- legitimate school business;
- safeguarding or emergency situations;
- two-factor authentication/MFA;
- authorised school activities;
- other circumstances agreed by the Headteacher.

Staff should not photograph or record children using personal devices unless this has been specifically authorised and is consistent with school and Trust procedures.

Where school-issued devices are available, these should be used in preference to personal devices.

18. Contacting parents and carers

Parents/carers should not attempt to contact their child directly by mobile phone during the school day.

The school office remains the appropriate route for urgent communication.

Similarly, children should not contact parents/carers using a personal device during the school day.

If a child needs to contact a parent/carer, this should normally be facilitated by the school office or a member of staff.

19. Loss, damage and responsibility

Children are strongly discouraged from bringing valuable personal devices to school.

Where a child is permitted to bring a mobile phone to school under this policy, the device is brought at the owner's risk.

The school will take reasonable steps to store handed-in devices securely but cannot accept responsibility for loss or damage arising from a device being brought onto the school premises.

Parents/carers are responsible for ensuring that their child understands this policy before allowing them to bring a mobile phone to school.

20. Communication with parents and pupils

The school will communicate this policy clearly to pupils and parents/carers.

The expectations will be explained to children in an age-appropriate manner.

Parents/carers will be informed of any significant changes to the policy.

The school expects parents/carers to support the policy and reinforce the importance of children following the school's expectations.

21. Equality and individual needs

The school will implement this policy fairly and consistently while recognising that individual children may have different needs.

The school will consider its duties under the Equality Act 2010 and make reasonable adjustments where required.

No child will be disadvantaged because they require an agreed medical, SEND, accessibility or assistive-technology exception.

22. Monitoring and review

The Headteacher and senior leadership team will monitor the implementation of this policy.

The effectiveness of the policy will be reviewed through:

- behaviour records;
- safeguarding records;
- staff feedback;
- pupil feedback;
- parent/carer feedback;
- incidents involving mobile phones or digital devices.

The policy will be reviewed every two years or sooner if there are changes to legislation, DfE guidance, Trust requirements or the school's circumstances.