

St. Joseph's Catholic School & Sixth Form Centre
Ysgol Gatholig San Joseff

Mobile Phone Policy
2020-2021



Mobile Phone Policy agreed by Governors:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'P. Bellinger', is written over a light grey rectangular background.

Signed by Chair

Date: 8th September 2020

Mobile Phones: A Policy for Pupils

1. Introduction

1.1 The widespread ownership of mobile phones among young people requires that school administrators, teachers, students, parents and carers take steps to ensure that mobile phones are used responsibly. This policy is designed to ensure that potential issues involving mobile phones can be clearly identified and addressed, ensuring the benefits that mobile phones provide (such as increased safety) can continue to be enjoyed by our students.

1.2 The increasing sophistication of mobile phone technology presents issues for schools, particularly with regard to children's safety and wellbeing. The integration of cameras into phones and the accessibility of internet technology, for example, can lead to potential child protection and data protection issues. The high value of modern phones can also present a risk which is not necessary for young people.

1.3 Our core business of teaching and learning needs to be conducted in an environment free from unnecessary distractions or disruptions. Therefore, the school strongly discourages the bringing of mobile phones to school by pupils. Governors and staff at St Joseph's recognise that some children may need mobile phones when travelling unaccompanied to and from school. With this in mind, the following policy and procedures have been designed. The school is prepared to allow mobile phones on the premises but only within the parameters of the policy as stated below.

1.4 The term *parents* used in this policy should be interpreted to also include designated carers, guardians or other adults with specific responsibility for children.

1.5 The term *mobile phone* used in this policy should be interpreted to also include other personal electronic devices with similar features, connectivity and applications (e.g. tablets, smartwatches).

2. Principles

2.1 The staff and governors of St. Joseph's Catholic School & Sixth Form Centre recognise that many pupils and their families own a mobile phone. We also recognise that some parents request that their child brings a mobile phone to school for safety and security reasons on the way to and from school.

2.2 If parents take the judgement that their child needs to bring a mobile phone into school, either on a regular or occasional basis, they must complete and submit to school the 'Mobile Phone Agreement Form'. This will enable the school to have a full and accurate record of pupils who have a mobile device with them in school. Only pupils whose parents have submitted this form are allowed to have a phone in school. The form is available as an appendix of this policy and from the school office.

2.3 Pupils who bring their mobile phone into school must switch off their phone on arrival at the school site. *The school site* refers to all areas of the school both inside and outside. The phone should remain switched off throughout the day and be kept out of sight (e.g. in their bag). *Throughout the school day* means exactly that. No distinction is made between form-time, lesson-time, break, lunchtime or after-school activities. If a pupil urgently needs to use the phone whilst on the school site they must seek permission from their Head of Year or a member of the senior leadership team (SLT) and be supervised whilst using the phone. Alternatively, if a pupil needs to contact their parents, they may use the telephone in the school office. Such calls, however, should only be made in an emergency.

2.4 If, at the end of the day, a pupil needs to contact their parent using a mobile phone (e.g. to discuss collection), they may do this at the main school exit gates. They may remain on the school site but they must be at the gates. Pupils are not permitted to bring out their phones until they reach the school gates.

2.5 As usual, if parents want to contact their child or pass on a message to them during the school day, they should contact the school office and not their child's mobile device. Parents are reminded that in cases of emergency, the school office remains the appropriate point of contact and staff will ensure your child is reached quickly and assisted in any relevant way. Passing on messages through school reception also reduces the likelihood of disrupting lessons inadvertently.

2.6 Pupils who use a mobile or other device on the school site without permission will be required to hand over their phone to a member of staff. An appropriate sanction will follow (see below – 3). Pupils will also be required to hand over their phone if a member of staff suspects that a mobile phone contains unsuitable material, that pupils have taken photographs on the site or that they have used phones for any form of bullying. In circumstances where there is a suspicion that the material on the mobile may provide evidence relating to a criminal offence, then appropriate action will be taken which may involve the police. *[It should be noted that it can be a criminal offence to use a mobile phone to menace, harass or offend another person.]*

2.7 Sixth Form students are allowed to bring their mobile phones to school and may use them respectfully in the Sixth Form common rooms. These are the only locations on the school site that they may choose to use their mobile phones. Sixth Form students must comply with the principles set out above in relation to all other areas of the school. However, teachers of sixth-form classes *only* may request special permission from the headteacher to allow sixth-form students to make use of their personal mobile technology for specific educational activity (e.g. research) in a clearly controlled way. Each request will be assessed on its own merits and general principles may not be formulated on the basis of any previous permissions.

2.8 Pupils remain responsible for their own property and will bear the responsibility of any losses should they choose to bring a mobile phone to school. Parents should be aware if their child takes a mobile phone to school, it is assumed that household

or specialised insurance will provide the required cover in the event of loss or damage. The school accepts no responsibility for replacing lost, stolen or damaged mobile phones.

3. Sanctions

3.1 If a pupils infringes the principles set out in this policy, their mobile phone will be confiscated by the teacher and taken to a secure place within the school office. The pupil will be able to collect the mobile phone at the end of the school day. The pupil will be placed in detention (breaktime or lunchtime). The incident will be recorded and parents notified.

3.2 A repeated infringement will lead to the mobile phone being retained by the school for a parent to collect. Parents will need to speak with a member of the senior management team. The pupil will be placed in detention for a further session. The incident will be recorded.

3.3 Further infringements of the mobile phone principles will result in a ban on bringing a mobile phone onto the school site. In addition, the pupil will spend a day studying in our inclusion room, away from their regular classes.

3.4 Where infringement is frequent and persistent or where pupils have used their mobile phones to film or record members of staff or pupils, or used their mobile phones for malicious activity that humiliates, embarrasses or causes offence, then pupils will receive sanctions that are more substantial. Such sanctions are likely to include a fixed-term or even permanent exclusion. Refusal to comply with this policy will not be tolerated and will be considered a serious breach of the school's discipline code. An alleged criminal incident may be referred to the police for investigation. In such serious cases, the parent would be notified immediately.

3.5 Sixth Form students who infringe the principles set out in this policy will also be subject to the sanctions identified above.

4. Trips

4.1 The principles stated above will also apply to pupils taking part in school sports fixtures and routine educational visits. Pupils who need to contact their parents during or at the end of a fixture or visit (e.g. in relation to collection) must seek permission from the supervising member of staff who will supervise the call.

4.2 In the case of special reward or residential trips in the UK or overseas, consideration will be given to mobile phones being allowed. This will be reviewed on a trip-by-trip basis.

Mobile Phone Agreement

If you would like your child to have a mobile phone in school, you and your son/daughter are required to read and sign the 'Mobile Phone' form below and send it to your child's form tutor. Forms may be left in the school office.

1. Mobile phones must not be used on school premises by pupils at any time. Pupils should keep them switched off and out of sight.
2. If there is an urgent reason why a pupil must use their mobile phone, they must seek permission from a Head of Year or a member of the SLT who will supervise the use of the phone.
3. If, at the end of the school day, pupils need to contact parents on mobile devices to discuss collection, they should do so by the school exit gates. This will prevent the use of mobile phones within the main body of the school.
4. If parents need to contact their child or pass on a message to them during the school day, they should contact the school office and not their child's mobile device.
5. Pupils who use a mobile or other device on school premises without permission, will be required to hand over their phone to a member of staff. This will also apply if a member of staff has any suspicion that a mobile phone contains unsuitable material, pupils have taken photographs on the school site or used phones for any form of bullying.
6. Pupils remain responsible for their own property and will bear the responsibility of any losses should they choose to bring a mobile phone to school. The school accepts no responsibility for replacing lost, stolen or damaged mobile phones.

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Mobile Phone Agreement Return

We agree to the terms and conditions of the school's mobile phone agreement.

Name of child..... Form.....

Parent's/Guardian's signature Date.....

Pupil's signature..... Date.....