

St Mary's Catholic Primary School

Mobile Phone, Social Media and Artificial Intelligence (AI) Policy

Introduction

- At St Mary's Catholic Primary School, the welfare, dignity and well-being of every child is at the heart of all we do. As a Catholic school, we are committed to living out the Gospel values of love, respect, honesty, compassion and responsibility. We believe that every child is created in the image and likeness of God and should be treated with dignity both in person and online.
- The purpose of this policy is to ensure that mobile phones, social media and Artificial Intelligence (AI) technologies are used safely, responsibly and in a way that reflects our Catholic ethos. While modern technologies can enhance communication and learning, they also present safeguarding risks, including distraction, cyberbullying, exploitation, exposure to inappropriate material and misuse of personal data.
- This policy applies to all members of the school community and covers mobile phones, smart watches, tablets, social media platforms, messaging services, camera-enabled devices and AI-powered applications.

Mobile Devices and Camera Phones

Mobile phones and smart devices now have advanced features including:

- High-resolution cameras
- Internet access
- Social media platforms
- Messaging services
- AI-powered applications

While these technologies can be beneficial, they can also:

- Disrupt teaching and learning
- Be used to bully or harass
- Enable the taking or sharing of inappropriate images
- Breach privacy and safeguarding regulations

For safeguarding reasons, this policy refers to **all mobile communication devices**, not just mobile phones.

Misuse of a device in school will be treated as a serious matter.

Artificial Intelligence (AI)

Artificial Intelligence tools (e.g. AI chatbots, homework support tools, image generators) are increasingly accessible through mobile devices and home computers.

At St Mary's:

- AI may only be used in school when directed and supervised by a teacher.
- Pupils must not use AI to complete homework or schoolwork unless explicitly permitted.
- AI must not be used to create harmful, misleading or inappropriate content.
- AI must never be used to impersonate others, generate fake images (including "deepfakes"), or produce content that could harm another person.

We expect all pupils to act with honesty and integrity. Submitting AI-generated work as their own, when not permitted, is considered dishonest and contrary to our Catholic values.

Staff Policy

Staff use of mobile phones during the working day must be:

- Outside of teaching hours unless being used for an authorised purpose such as authenticator
- Discreet and appropriate
- Not in the presence of pupils unless authorised for school purposes
- Switched off or on silent and stored safely during lesson times

The school cannot accept responsibility for lost or stolen personal items.

Staff must:

- Never contact pupils or parents from a personal mobile phone
- Never provide personal mobile numbers to pupils or parents
- Use the school telephone or official communication systems for contact
- Ensure phone numbers are withheld where appropriate
- Never send or accept inappropriate texts, images or AI-generated content
- Never use personal devices to photograph pupils
- Never allow pupils to photograph them using personal devices

Staff must not communicate with pupils via personal social media accounts. All online conduct must reflect professional standards and the values of the Catholic faith.

Social Media

St Mary's recognises that social media is widely used outside school. However:

- Pupils must not access social media during the school day.

- Social media must not be used to post images or comments about pupils, staff or the school without permission.
- Online behaviour that harms members of the school community may be addressed under the Behaviour and Safeguarding policies, even if it takes place outside school hours.

All members of the school community are expected to demonstrate kindness, respect and responsibility online, in keeping with our Gospel values.

Parents, Visitors and Volunteers

To safeguard all pupils:

- Mobile phones may only be used within the school office or designated staff areas.
- Personal cameras and mobile phone cameras must not be used to photograph pupils. This includes during school events on and off site, such as sports days for example.
- Parents accompanying school trips must not use personal mobile cameras to photograph children.

Visitors and volunteers must adhere to safeguarding and online safety expectations at all times.

Pupil Policy

While we recognise a parent's right to allow their child to bring a mobile phone to school (for example, if walking home independently), St Mary's discourages pupils from bringing mobile phones due to safeguarding concerns.

If a pupil needs to bring a phone:

- A signed parental permission slip must be completed.
- The phone must be turned off and handed in to the school office at the start of the day.
- The phone will be stored securely until the end of the school day.
- The school accepts no liability for loss or damage.

If a pupil is found:

- Using a phone without permission
- Taking photographs or videos of pupils or staff
- Accessing social media
- Using AI inappropriately
- Sharing inappropriate or harmful content

This will be treated as a serious breach of school rules and managed in line with the Behaviour, Safeguarding and Child Protection policies.

Where images have been taken, they must be deleted in the presence of a senior member of staff before the device is returned.

The school reserves the right to withdraw permission for a pupil to bring a phone onto school premises.

Communication During the School Day

Parents who need to contact their child during the school day must do so via the school office. Pupils needing to contact parents must also use the school office telephone.

We strongly encourage parents to speak with their children about:

- Responsible messaging
- The risks of cyberbullying
- Safe use of social media
- Ethical and honest use of AI
- Respectful online behaviour

Linked Policies

This policy should be read alongside:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Online Safety Policy
- Acceptable Use Policy

Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed at least every two years or earlier in response to changes in safeguarding guidance or developments in technology.