St Hilda's School
HARPENDEN
Caring, Curious & Confident

MOBILE PHONE USAGE POLICY (INCLUDING OTHER FORMS OF SMART TECHNOLOGY)

Name of Policy	Mobile Phone Usage Policy
Reviewed by	Dan Sayers
Review Date	September 2026
Next Review Date	September 2029
To be Read in Conjunction with	• Safeguarding Policy • Health & Safety Management Policy • Preventing & Tackling Bullying Policy • Online Safety and Computing Acceptable Usage Policy
Legislation Referenced	• Mobile Phones in Schools, DfE Statutory Guidance 2026 • KCSIE statutory guidance currently in force.

Unless otherwise stated, all Policies of St Hilda's School apply to the school in its entirety. This comprises all staff and pupils in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), the Junior School (Key Stage 1) and the Senior School (Key Stage 2).

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1. INTRODUCTION

This policy provides guidance on the use of mobile phones in school by staff, pupils and visitors. While this Policy refers to mobile phones, this includes all other forms of smart technology and devices with similar functionality to mobile phones, for example the ability to access the internet, the ability to send and/or receive notifications or messages via the internet or mobile phone networks, or the ability to record images, audio and/or video (for example ipads, tablets and "smart" watches / gadgets).

Built in cameras enable users to take pictures which can be instantly distributed. There is the potential for safeguarding to be compromised, and for images to become an instrument of bullying or harassment.

2. USE OF MOBILE PHONES / SMART TECHNOLOGY BY STAFF

The use of mobile phones or other forms of smart technology by staff within the School environment, and around pupils more generally, has safeguarding implications.

Staff are not allowed to use their personal mobile phones or other personal smart technology devices during the School day when in the presence of pupils, including but not limited to in classrooms or communal areas (including outside within School grounds). Mobile phones should be switched off and left in a safe place during lesson times. As an exception to this, the School mobile phone may be used for the sole purpose of School business, for example the taking of photographs for displays or for School social media updates, or personal mobile phones may be used for short instances solely for allowing access to school online systems which require multi-factor authentication.

Any staff use of personal mobile phones during their working school day, other than for the exceptions specified above, should only be during breaks or free periods and must be discreet and appropriate, and not in the presence of pupils e.g. in the staff room or office.

Members of staff are permitted the use of mobile phones at times when no pupils are on site.

Staff should never contact pupils or parents from their personal mobile phone, or give their mobile phone number to pupils or parents, unless in an emergency or on a school trip. If a member of staff needs to make telephone contact with a pupil, a school telephone is to be used wherever possible. Staff should never send to, or accept from, colleagues or pupils, texts or images that could be viewed as inappropriate.

Failure to comply with this policy is likely to result in the enforcement of the disciplinary procedures as outlined in the Staff Code of Conduct and Employee Handbook.

3. USE OF MOBILE PHONES / SMART TECHNOLOGY BY PUPILS

St Hilda's School is phone-free by default, in accordance with the Mobile Phones in Schools, DfE Statutory Guidance 2026. Pupils are not permitted to have mobile phones, or other forms of smart technology, whilst at School. Other forms of smart technology encompass all devices with similar functionality to mobile phones, for example the ability to access the internet, the ability to send and/or receive notifications or messages via the internet or mobile phone networks, or the ability to record images, audio and/or video.

Pupils in Form VI who walk to school unaccompanied by an adult are permitted to bring a non-Internet enabled 'brick' phone for the purposes of being contactable during their travel to and/or from school. All such phones must be turned off at the school gate upon arrival and handed in to the school office for the day. At home time, pupils can collect their phones and turn on once off site.

Where a pupil is found by a member of staff to be using a mobile phone, the phone will be confiscated from the pupil, handed to a member of the school office team. The mobile phone will be stored by the School Office. The pupil may collect the phone at the end of the school day.

If a pupil is found taking photographs or video footage with a mobile phone or other device of either other pupils or teachers, this will be regarded as a serious offence and disciplinary action will be taken according to the school's Behaviour Policy and the Pupil Code of Conduct policy.

If images of other pupils or teachers have been taken, the device will not be returned to the pupil until the images have been removed by the pupil in the presence of a senior teacher.

St Hilda's recognises that there may be exceptional circumstances in which adaptations may be made to the school's mobile phone policy to allow a pupil to have access to a mobile phone or other smart technology device during the school day. Each case will be assessed on its own merits. Any adjustments made for individual pupils under exceptional circumstances will be proportionate to the circumstances and individual need, for example any permitted use of a mobile device may still be restricted to a specific purpose, time and/or location.

Should parents need to contact pupils, or vice versa, this should be done following the usual school procedures: via the school office. (tel no. 01582 712307)

4. VISITOR POLICY (INCLUDING PARENTS, PROFESSIONALS AND CONTRACTORS)

Visitors may bring mobile phones on to the school site but are asked to switch them off and place them out-of-sight until they leave. This is done as part of the meet-and-greet process in a way that makes clear our safeguarding priorities.

Visitors are given a Safeguarding & Safety Information for Visitors leaflet upon arrival, whereby all visitors are made aware of the mobile phone policy. Notices are also displayed throughout the school.

Visitors found to be using their phones in contravention of this guidance will initially be reminded of the policy and ultimately asked to leave.

It is the responsibility of all staff members to exercise vigilance at all times and to raise concerns as soon as possible, either directly with the person who is contravening expectations or by reporting the incident to a senior leader as soon as possible after the event.

5. LOST PROPERTY

The School does not take responsibility for personal mobile phones or other devices that are lost, stolen or damaged.

6. RELATED POLICIES

This policy supports the school's Safeguarding Policy, Health and Safety, Preventing & Tackling Bullying Policy, Safeguarding and Online Safety and Computing Acceptable Usage Policy. It will be monitored, reviewed and amended as required, and at maximum every 3 years.