

Mission Statement Motto: *Building relationships with God and each other, working hard in faith and hope to give our best in all things*



**Holy Cross Catholic Primary School**

# **Mobile Phone Policy**

**Reviewed: Autumn 2024**

**Next Review: Autumn 2026**

Core Values: *Respect, Honesty, Tolerance, Justice, Forgiveness*

# Holy Cross Catholic Primary School

## Mobile Phone Policy

### Introduction and Aims

At Holy Cross Catholic Primary School the welfare and well-being of our pupils and staff is paramount. The aim of the Mobile Phone Policy is to allow users to benefit from modern communication technologies, whilst promoting safe and appropriate practice through establishing clear and robust acceptable mobile user guidelines. This is achieved through balancing protection against potential misuse with the recognition that mobile phones are effective communication tools. It is recognised that it is the enhanced functions of many mobile phones that cause the most concern, offering distractions and disruption to the working day, and which are most susceptible to misuse - including the taking and distribution of indecent images, exploitation and bullying. However, as it is difficult to detect specific usage, this policy refers to ALL mobile communication devices (i.e mobile phones, tablets, i-pods, smart watches. This list is not exhaustive).

### Scope

This policy applies to all individuals who have access to personal mobile phones on site. This includes staff, volunteers, committee members, children, young people, parents, carers, visitors and contractors. This list is not exhaustive.

### Personal Mobiles – Pupils

At Holy Cross Catholic Primary School, we acknowledge that mobile phones are a feature of modern society and many children own one. However, increasing sophistication of mobile phone technology presents a number of issues for our school:

- Mobile phones can be valuable items and might render a child vulnerable to theft
- Mobile phones [and their cost and level of sophistication- or otherwise] can make children objects of envy and this could have implications with regard to discipline and potential cyber bullying
- Even when apparently silent, the use of mobile phones for texting purposes could be potentially undermining of the classroom discipline
- Use of phones with integrated cameras could lead to child protection and data protection issues with regard to inappropriate capture, use or distribution of images

### Restricted Use (February 2024)

- At Holy Cross, we prohibit the use of mobile phones and other smart technology throughout the school day, this includes during lessons, between lessons, breaktimes and lunchtime
- At Holy Cross, we follow a tailored policy on the use of mobile phones and other similar devices in school.
- **At Holy Cross, mobile phones handed in on arrival** – phones will be returned to pupils at the end of the school day
- **At Holy Cross, we ensure mobile phones kept in secure location** –in the school office

We believe that we have a duty to help all children to understand the social and moral issues associated with the use of new technologies. Problems with mobile phones fall into three categories - text, speech and images:

- Extreme examples include 'cyber bullying' [When a person or a group of people uses the Internet, email, online games or any other kind of digital technology to threaten, tease, upset or humiliate someone else.]

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- Camera and video phones combined with wireless technology enable children to make still images or videos of themselves or others and 'send' them to other phones or post them on the Internet. Sometimes these can be images that have been taken without the consent or even knowledge of the person involved. Occasionally, it can be with malicious intent
- Children with 'wireless' or blue tooth phones can have unrestricted access to the Internet and are able to download material from other similar devices. Many Internet sites aim their content [text, music, images and videos] at children who can download or upload files and then share them by sending them to other mobile phones. On some sites, acceptable material, such as songs, cartoons or 'funny' videos, is presented alongside unacceptable material putting children at risk

It is not realistic to prohibit phones being brought into school, especially given that many are now so slim that they are easily hidden. We also accept that many parents have concerns about children who make their own way to and from school.

We have agreed to allow children in Year Five or Year Six to bring mobile phones with them to school under the conditions outlined in our policy.

Holy Cross Catholic Primary School discourages, and advises all parents to discourage children from bringing mobile phones to school on the grounds that they are valuable and may be lost or stolen.

Only children in Year Five or Year Six who come to school or go home independently are allowed to bring a phone to school and only after the parent and child has signed the school mobile phone agreement and it has been agreed by the Head Teacher. (Appendix 1)

### **Responsibility for Pupil Mobile Phones**

The school accepts no responsibility or liability whatsoever for theft, loss or damage to mobile phones which are brought into the school and handed in to the school office or concealed.

It is the responsibility of the parent to ensure the mobile phone is:

- properly insured
- clearly labelled with the child's name
- in a protective cover for additional protection

It is the responsibility of the child to ensure their mobile phone is:

- switched off before coming on to school grounds and handed in to the mobile phone box in a protective cover on arrival
- collected at the end of the day via the mobile phone box
- switched off until they have left the school grounds

Where a child is found with a mobile in school, including the playground:

- the phone will be taken from the child and placed in the office
- parents will be contacted to collect the phone
- if the child is in Year Five or Year Six and they come to or go home on their own, any further breach of this policy may result in the withdrawal of the agreement to allow the child to bring the mobile phone to school

If any child is found taking [or is believed to have taken] photographs or video footage with a mobile phone of a child/children or an adult/adults, this will be regarded as a serious offence and the Head Teacher will decide on appropriate disciplinary action. In certain circumstances, the child may be referred to the Police. If images of other children or staff have been taken or circulated using texting or social media, the phone will not be returned to the

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child until the parent has been contacted and the images have been removed by the police or the child or an appropriate adult under the supervision of the Head Teacher or the Deputy in their absence.

## **Sexting**

'Sexting' is one of a number of 'risk-taking' behaviours associated with the use of digital devices, social media or the internet. It is accepted that young people experiment and challenge boundaries and therefore the risks associated with 'online' activity can never be completely eliminated.

However Holy Cross Catholic Primary School takes a pro-active approach to help students to understand, assess, manage and avoid the risks associated with 'online activity'. The school recognises its duty of care to its young people who do find themselves involved in such activity as well as its responsibility to report such behaviours where legal or safeguarding boundaries are crossed.

There are a number of definitions of 'sexting' but for the purposes of this policy sexting is simply defined as:

- Images or videos generated by children under the age of 18, or of children under the age of 18 that are of a sexual nature or are indecent.
- These images are shared between young people and/or adults via a mobile phone, handheld device, computer, 'tablet' or website with people they may not even know.

When searching a mobile device the following conditions should apply:

- The search is conducted by the Head Teacher or a person authorised by them and one other person
- A member of the safeguarding team should normally be present
- The search should normally be conducted by a member of the same gender as the person being searched.
- However if the image being searched for is likely to be of a different gender to the person 'in possession' then
- the device should only be viewed by a member of the same gender as the person whose image it is.
- If any illegal images of a young person are found the Safeguarding Team will discuss this with the Police.

The Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) advise that as a general rule it will almost always be proportionate to refer any incident involving 'aggravated' sharing of images to the Police, whereas purely 'experimental' conduct may proportionately dealt with without such referral, most particularly if it involves the young person sharing images of themselves. 'Experimental conduct' commonly refers to that shared between two individuals (e.g. girlfriend and boyfriend) with no intention to publish the images further.

Coercion is not a feature of such conduct, neither are requests for images sent from one person to multiple other young persons. Any conduct involving, or possibly involving, the knowledge or participation of adults should always be referred to the police. If an 'experimental' incident is not referred to the Police, the reasons for this should be recorded in the school's 'Safeguarding Incidents Log'.

Always put the young person first. Do not search the device if this will cause additional stress to the student/person whose image has been distributed. Instead rely on the description by the young person, secure the advice and contact the Police.

## **Code of Conduct for Staff**

A code of conduct is promoted with the aim of creating a cooperative workforce, where staff work as a team, have high values and respect each other; thus creating a strong morale and sense of commitment leading to increased productivity.

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**Our aim is therefore that all practitioners:**

- have a clear understanding of what constitutes misuse.
- know how to minimise risk.
- avoid putting themselves into compromising situations which could be misinterpreted and lead to possible allegations.
- understand the need for professional boundaries and clear guidance regarding acceptable use.
- are responsible for self-moderation of their own behaviours.
- are aware of the importance of reporting concerns promptly.

It is fully recognised that imposing rigid regulations on the actions of others can be counterproductive. An agreement of trust is therefore promoted regarding the carrying and use of mobile phones within the setting, which is agreed to by all users (appendix 2):

**Personal Mobile Phones – Staff**

- Staff are not permitted to make/receive calls/texts during contact time with children. Emergency contact should be made via the school office. Should there be exceptional circumstances (e.g. acutely sick relative), then staff should make the Head Teacher aware of this and exceptions may be made at the discretion of the Head Teacher.
- Staff should have their phones on silent or switched off (not vibrate) and out of sight (e.g. in a drawer, handbag or locker but not pockets) during class time.
- Mobile phones should not be used in a space where children are present (eg. 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 are not permitted to share their personal mobile details with children and parents.
- Staff are not at any time permitted to use recording equipment on their mobile phones, for example: to take recordings of children, or sharing images. Legitimate recordings and photographs should be captured using school equipment such as cameras and tablets.
- Staff should report any usage of mobile devices that causes them concern to the Head Teacher.
- Only the Head Teacher and Assistant Head Teacher may be seen using a mobile phone throughout the school for school purposes e.g. safeguarding.

**Mobile Phones for Work Related Purposes**

We recognise that mobile phones provide a useful means of communication on offsite activities. However staff should ensure that:

- Mobile use on these occasions is appropriate and professional (and will never include taking photographs of children)
- Mobile phones should not be used to make contact with parents during school trips – all relevant communications should be made via the school office or by following the school emergency procedures policy.
- When using the authenticator app to access secure log ins, this is away from children

Only the Head Teacher and Deputy Head Teacher should be seen with mobile phones during the day, in order to be contactable to ensure the smooth running of the school.

**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 i.e, they must be turned off or onto silent when in assemblies, Masses or parent meetings.

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We also allow parents to photograph or video school events (of their own child only, no other children can be in the photograph) such as shows or sports day using their mobile phones – but insist that parents do not publish images (e.g. on social networking sites). Please refer to Guidance on the Use of Photographic Images and Videos of Children in Schools.

Where parents are accompanying trips, they are not to use their mobile phones during the trip, in front of the children and should not make contact with other parents (via calls, text, email or social networking) during the trip or use their phone to take photographs of children.

#### **Mobile Phones – 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.

The mobile phone policy will be shared with staff and volunteers as part of their induction. It will also be available to parents and pupils via the school office and website.

This policy should also be read in relation to the following documentation:

- Safeguarding Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- E-Safety Policy
- Social Media Policy
- Guidance on the Use of Photographic Images and Videos of Children in Schools

**Reviewed:** Autumn 2024

**Next Review:** Autumn 2026

## **Appendix 1 – Acceptable Use of Pupil Mobile Phone Policy and Permission**

Dear Parent/Carer

### **Acceptable Use of Pupil Mobile Phones Policy**

At Holy Cross Catholic Primary School we acknowledge that mobile phones are a feature of modern society and many children own one. However, increasing sophistication of mobile phone technology presents a number of issues for our school:

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- Mobile phones [and their cost and level of sophistication- or otherwise] can make children objects of envy and this could have implications with regard to discipline and potential cyber bullying
- Even when apparently silent, the use of mobile phones for texting purposes could be potentially undermining of the classroom discipline
- Use of phones with integrated cameras could lead to child protection and data protection issues with regard to inappropriate capture, use or distribution of images

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- clearly labelled with the child's name
- in a protective cover for additional protection

It is the responsibility of the child to ensure their mobile phone is:

- switched off before coming on to school grounds and handed in to the mobile phone box in a protective cover on arrival
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- switched off until they have left the school grounds

Where a child is found with a mobile in school, including the playground:

- the phone will be taken from the child and placed in the office
- parents will be contacted to collect the phone
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If any child is found taking [or is believed to have taken] photographs or video footage with a mobile phone of a child/children or an adult/adults, this will be regarded as a serious offence and the Head Teacher will decide on appropriate disciplinary action. In certain circumstances, the child may be referred to the Police. If images of other children or staff have been taken or circulated using texting or social media, the phone will not be returned to the child until the parent has been contacted and the images have been removed by the police or the child or an appropriate adult under the supervision of the Head Teacher or the Deputy in their absence.

I have read and understood the above information about appropriate use of mobile phones in school and I understand that this form will be kept on file at the school and that the details may be used (and shared with a third party, if necessary) to assist identification of a phone should the need arise e.g. if the phone is being used inappropriately.

I give my child permission to carry a mobile phone to school because they travel to and from school alone. I understand that my child will be responsible for ensuring that the mobile phone is used appropriately and correctly while under the school's supervision, as outlined in this document.

I understand and agree that this permission may be revoked by the Head Teacher at any time if there is a breach of school policy.

I understand that the school will accept no responsibility or liability whatsoever for theft, loss or damage to the mobile phone.

Parent name (print): \_\_\_\_\_ Parent signature: \_\_\_\_\_  
Child's name (print): \_\_\_\_\_ Child's signature: \_\_\_\_\_  
Mobile Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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Permission is given for your child to bring a mobile phone to school.

Head Teacher signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

A copy of this form will be returned to the parent once permission is given and must be surrendered to the school if permission is revoked due to misuse of the phone.

## **Appendix 2 – Acceptable Use of Staff and Governor Mobile Phone Policy and Agreement**

### **Acceptable Use of Staff and Governor Mobile Phones Policy and Agreement**

#### **Code of Conduct for Staff**

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#### **Our aim is therefore that all practitioners:**

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#### **Personal Mobile Phones – Staff/Governors**

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- 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/Governors are not at any time permitted to use recording equipment on their mobile phones, for example: to take recordings of children, or sharing images. Legitimate recordings and photographs should be captured using school equipment such as cameras and tablets.
- Staff/Governors should report any usage of mobile devices that causes them concern to the Head Teacher.

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I understand and agree with this policy and that action will be taken by the Head Teacher at any time if there is a breach of school policy.

I understand that the school will accept no responsibility or liability whatsoever for theft, loss or damage to the mobile phone.

Staff/Governor name (print): \_\_\_\_\_ Staff/Governor signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_