



Blessed Robert Widmerpool Catholic Voluntary Academy

Mobile Phone and Smart Devices Policy

'Teach a child in the way they should go, and when they are old, they will not depart from it.'
Proverbs 22: 6

Rationale

Mobile phones and smart technology have transformed everyday life and provide significant benefits and opportunities. However, within school settings, they present considerable safeguarding and behavioural risks.

The UK Government (2026 guidance) states:

"Every school has a duty to create an environment that is calm, safe and free from distraction so all pupils, whatever their background, can learn and thrive... Updated guidance urges schools to be mobile phone-free environments by default to minimise disruption and improve behaviour."

Blessed Robert Widmerpool Catholic Voluntary Academy fully aligns with this guidance and is a **mobile phone-free school during the school day**.

Mobile phones and smart devices:

- Cause distraction and disruption to learning
- Increase safeguarding risks including cyberbullying and exposure to harmful content
- Create social pressure and inequality
- Undermine pupils' full engagement in school life

To protect pupils and maintain a calm and purposeful learning environment, mobile phones and smart devices (including smart watches and devices capable of messaging, calling, recording, or internet access) are prohibited during the school day.

This policy is ratified by the Local Governing Body and supported by Our Lady of Lourdes CMAT.

Policy and Procedures

General Expectations

- Pupils must not use, show, or access mobile phones or personal smart devices anywhere on the school site.
- This includes use to:

- Show media
- Take photographs or videos
- Send messages
- Make calls
- Access the internet
- Use apps
- Share content

Any such use constitutes a breach of this policy.

Bringing Phones to School

The school recognises that some pupils may require a mobile phone for safety when travelling to and from school.

- Only pupils permitted to walk independently (Year 6 pupils, and Year 5 pupils in the second half of the summer term) may bring a mobile phone.
- Devices must be:
 - Switched off before entering school grounds
 - Out of sight at all times
 - Bluetooth, data, and Wi-Fi disabled
 - Clearly labelled

Upon entering school:

- Devices must be handed to the class teacher.
- Devices will be stored securely for the day.
- At the end of the school day, devices will be returned.
- Pupils must place the device directly into their bag or coat and keep it out of sight until off school premises.

Communication in Emergencies

Parents must not contact pupils directly during the school day.

In emergencies:

- Parents should contact the school office on 0115 915 2392.
- The school will contact pupils or parents using emergency contact information held on record.

Security and Liability

The school strongly discourages bringing valuable items onto site.

While reasonable care will be taken when devices are handed in as required by this policy, the school cannot guarantee against loss or damage. Pupils bring devices at their own risk.

Staff will not investigate loss or damage where devices have been brought to school contrary to this policy.

Breaches of the Policy

If a pupil:

- Fails to hand in a device
- Uses a device during the school day
- Has a device visible
- Allows a device to ring or alert

The device will be confiscated.

Sanctions will be applied in line with the school's Behaviour Policy. Parents will be informed and will be required to collect the device.

Serious breaches (e.g., recording pupils or staff, sharing harmful content, refusal to comply, repeated breaches) may result in escalated sanctions following the behaviour policy, including suspension.

Searching and Confiscation

Under statutory powers (Education Act 1996 and Education Act 2011), authorised staff may search a pupil or their possessions without consent if there are reasonable grounds to suspect they are carrying a prohibited item, including a mobile phone where this policy prohibits possession during the school day.

Searches will:

- Be proportionate and reasonable
- Be conducted by authorised staff
- Follow the school's Safeguarding and Behaviour policies
- Be recorded where appropriate

If a device is found, it will be confiscated and managed in accordance with this policy.

Exemptions

The school recognises that some pupils require technology to manage medical or SEND needs (e.g. Type 1 diabetes monitoring devices, Bluetooth hearing aids).

In such cases:

- Use will be agreed through a Medical Care Plan.

- Arrangements will be made in consultation with parents, the Headteacher, and the SENDCo.
- Devices will be managed appropriately by designated staff.

Exemptions apply only to agreed medical or SEND needs.

Staff and Visitors

Blessed Robert Widmerpool Catholic Voluntary Academy maintains high safeguarding standards.

All staff and visitors must:

- Keep phones on silent while on school grounds.
- Avoid using phones in areas where pupils are present.
- Use phones only in designated adult areas (e.g. staffroom, meeting rooms).
- Never have devices visible in front of pupils.
- Never take photographs or videos of pupils on personal devices.
- Report safeguarding concerns to a Designated Safeguarding Lead immediately.

Supply teachers, peripatetic staff, volunteers and guest speakers must adhere to this policy.

The school accepts no liability for loss, theft or damage to personal devices brought onto the premises.

Compliance and Monitoring

This policy will be:

- Applied consistently across the school
- Monitored by senior leaders
- Reviewed annually or in line with updated government guidance

Reviewed: March 2026

Ratified by LBG: March 2026

Review Date: March 2027