St Thomas Becket Catholic School

Mobile Phone Policy 2026-2027

‘Love is always patient and kind; it is never jealous; love is never boastful or conceited; it is never rude or selfish; it does not take offence and is not resentful. Love takes no pleasure in other people’s sins but delights in the truth; it is always ready to excuse, to trust, to hope, and to endure whatever comes.’

1 Corinthians 13

‘Christ’s Love is our Foundation’

Approved by:	Local Academy Committee	**Date: October 2026**
Next review due by:	Local Academy Committee	**Date: September 2027**

1. Purpose

- St Thomas Becket Catholic School is committed to providing a calm, safe and purposeful learning environment where all pupils can flourish academically, socially and spiritually.
- Research and national guidance demonstrate that unrestricted access to mobile phones during the school day can have a detrimental impact on learning, concentration, wellbeing, relationships and safeguarding. Mobile phones can also increase opportunities for cyberbullying, unauthorised photography or filming, distraction from learning and unnecessary communication during the school day.
- The purpose of this policy is to create a **phone-free school environment** which enables pupils to focus fully on learning, build positive relationships and remain safe.
- This policy has been developed in line with Department for Education guidance and forms part of the school's wider Behaviour Policy and Safeguarding arrangements.

2. Policy Principles

- The school recognises that many parents wish their child to carry a mobile phone whilst travelling to and from school.
- The school therefore permits pupils to bring a mobile phone onto the school site **only** if it is managed in accordance with this policy.
- Pupils are **not required** to bring a mobile phone to school.
- Pupils choosing to bring a phone accept that it will be subject to the school's Mobile Phone Policy.
- The school's approach is based upon the following principles:
    - learning should be free from unnecessary distractions;
    - safeguarding is everyone's responsibility;
    - pupils should interact socially during break and lunchtime without reliance upon mobile technology;
    - staff should be able to teach without interruption;
    - parents should communicate through the school during the school day; and
    - expectations should be clear, fair and consistently applied.

3. Scope

- This policy applies to:
    - all pupils in Years 7–13;
    - all school buildings and grounds;
    - before school, throughout the school day and until pupils have left the school site via the main gate;

    - educational visits unless alternative arrangements are communicated by the Trip Leader; and
    - extracurricular activities where determined by the school.
- The policy applies from the moment a student enters the school site until they have completely left the site at the end of the school day.

4. Definition of a Mobile Phone

- For the purpose of this policy, a mobile phone includes any personal electronic device capable of:
    - making or receiving telephone calls;
    - sending or receiving messages;
    - accessing the internet;
    - recording photographs or video;
    - recording audio; or
    - performing similar communication functions.
- This definition applies regardless of whether the device contains a SIM card or active contract.

5. Gate-to-Gate Phone-Free Environment

- St Thomas Becket Catholic School operates a **gate-to-gate phone-free environment**.
- Pupils must not use a mobile phone at any point whilst on the school site unless specifically authorised under this policy.
- This includes:
    - before tutor time;
    - between lessons;
    - during break;
    - during lunchtime;
    - after school whilst still on the premises;
    - whilst waiting for transport; and
    - whilst attending school events.
- Pupils should unlock their phone pouch and leave the school site.
- The only routine exceptions are:
    - accessing an authorised bus pass immediately before boarding school transport; or
    - making an authorised payment where this has been agreed by the school.
- Any other use constitutes a breach of this policy.

6. Hush Phone Pouch System

- Pupils in Years 7–11 choosing to bring a mobile phone to school must secure their phone inside the school's approved Hush phone pouch.
- The pouch must remain locked throughout the school day.

- The phone must not be removed until the student has left the school site and has used an authorised unlocking station.
- Pupils remain responsible for:
    - bringing their pouch every day;
    - ensuring it is correctly locked;
    - looking after the pouch;
    - reporting damage immediately; and
    - complying with staff instructions relating to the pouch.

7. Sixth Form

- Sixth Form pupils are expected to model exemplary behaviour.
- They may use mobile phones only:
    - within the Sixth Form Centre; or
    - where a teacher has explicitly authorised their educational use during a lesson.
- Outside these circumstances, Sixth Form pupils are expected to follow the same gate-to-gate expectations as all other pupils.
- Pupils failing to comply may be issued with a temporary phone pouch and required to present this daily to their form tutor until the monitoring period ends.
- Breaches by Sixth Form pupils will be managed under the Sixth Form behaviour protocol; repeat serious breaches may affect Sixth Form privileges or result in pupils being placed on a monitoring contract.

8. Medical Arrangements

- The school recognises that a very small number of pupils require access to a mobile phone for agreed medical monitoring, such as diabetes management.
- Where appropriate, the school will provide a specialist medical pouch that allows the phone to remain accessible for approved medical purposes whilst demonstrating compliance with this policy.
- Pupils should keep the phone inside the medical pouch whenever it is not required.
- Where practicable, pupils should inform a member of staff before accessing their phone for medical reasons. In an emergency, pupils should prioritise their health and will not be sanctioned for doing so.
- For pupils with SEND, EHCPs or other specific communication or medical needs, the school will make reasonable adjustments to this policy. Requests for adjustments (for example, supervised access for assistive technology, separate secure storage, or more frequent access for regulated medical monitoring) should be made to the SENDCo/DSL in writing. Any adjustments will be recorded on the pupil's passport and shared with relevant staff. Decisions will be kept under review with parents/carers and recorded in the pupil's file.

9. Responsibilities

Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- comply with this policy at all times;
- bring their pouch each day;
- report forgotten pouches immediately;
- report late arrival immediately so their phone can be secured;
- cooperate with compliance checks and lawful searches;
- never attempt to bypass the phone pouch system; and
- never use another student's phone;
- never damage or break the pouch deliberately.

Parents and Carers

Parents and carers are expected to:

- support the school's phone-free approach;
- contact the school rather than their child during the school day;
- ensure replacement pouches are purchased where required;
- collect confiscated phones where applicable; and
- reinforce the expectations contained within this policy.

Staff

Staff are expected to:

- apply this policy consistently;
- record incidents appropriately;
- confiscate phones where required;
- conduct compliance checks and lawful searches proportionately; and
- support pupils in accordance with this policy.

10. Monitoring and Review

- The effectiveness of this policy will be monitored through:
    - behaviour data;
    - confiscation records;
    - Class Charts information;
    - safeguarding concerns;
    - staff feedback;
    - student feedback; and

    - parental feedback.
- The school will consult stakeholders following implementation and reserves the right to amend this policy at any time in response to changes in legislation, Department for Education guidance, operational experience or emerging technologies.
- The Local Academy Committee has approved this policy and will receive an annual report on implementation (incidents, confiscations, exclusions related to the policy, SEND adjustments, staff and pupil feedback). The policy will be reviewed annually or sooner if national guidance changes.

11. Related Documents

- This policy should be read alongside:
    - The school behaviour Policy;
    - Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy;
    - Searching, Screening and Confiscation Procedures;
    - Online Safety Policy; and
    - Mobile phones in schools - GOV.UK

12. Forgotten Phone Pouches

- Every student choosing to bring a mobile phone onto the school site is expected to have their own school-approved Hush phone pouch.
- Pupils who forget their pouch must report this immediately to a member of staff before the start of the school day. The phone must then be handed in for secure storage or placed into a temporary pouch where one is available.
- Failure to report a forgotten pouch immediately may be treated as an attempt to circumvent the Mobile Phone Policy.
- The following staged approach will apply when a student forgets their pouch and reports it:

Occasion	Outcome
First	Logged on ClassCharts – warning no sanction
Second	Logged on ClassCharts – detention issued
Third	Logged on ClassCharts – detention issued. The school may require a parent/carer to collect the phone.
Further occasions	The school may require the phone to be confiscated rather than accepted for secure storage. A parent/carer will need to collect the phone.

- Pupils remain responsible for collecting their phone from Reception at the end of the school day.

- Where temporary pouches are available, these may be issued. Temporary pouches cannot be guaranteed and remain the property of the school.

13. Pupils Arriving Late

- Pupils arriving after tutor time remain responsible for ensuring their phone is secured immediately upon entering the school site.
- Pupils must report directly to Reception and inform a member of staff that their phone requires locking within its pouch.
- Failure to report immediately may be treated as an attempt to bypass the school's procedures and may result in confiscation of the phone.
- Being late to school does not exempt a student from any part of this policy.

14. Searches, Screening and Compliance Checks

- The school reserves the right to carry out proportionate screening and searches to ensure compliance with this policy.
- These may include:
    - visual inspection of phone pouches;
    - handheld metal detector (wand) screening;
    - targeted searches where reasonable grounds for suspicion exist;
    - random compliance checks; and
    - classroom compliance checks where staff reasonably believe that a phone is being used.
- Screening and searches will always be carried out respectfully and in accordance with the relevant legislation and Department for Education guidance.
- Visual pouch inspections undertaken purely to monitor compliance will not normally be recorded.
- Where a formal search is undertaken, this will be recorded in accordance with the school's Behaviour and Searching procedures.

15. Recording on Class Charts

- Class Charts is used to maintain an accurate record of mobile phone incidents.
- The following recording categories will normally apply:
    - Student forgot their phone pouch
    - Suspected phone and search
    - Phone seen not in a pouch
    - Refused to hand over a phone
- Where a student is searched and no phone is found, a **Suspected Phone and Search** entry will be recorded with **zero behaviour points**. This entry is for information only and is intended to notify parents that a search has taken place.
- Where a phone is found, the incident will be recorded as **Phone seen not in a pouch** and managed in accordance with this policy.

16. Confiscation Procedures

- Where a student is found using, possessing or carrying a mobile phone contrary to this policy, the phone will normally be confiscated.
- If a student refuses to hand over a phone or place it into a pouch, they will be kept out of circulation, and a parent/carer will be contacted.
- Unless exceptional circumstances apply, confiscated phones will be retained for **five school days**. Headteacher/Designated senior leader may authorise alternative arrangements where proportionality or safeguarding requires it (for example, immediate parental collection in exceptional circumstances). Any retention longer than five school days must be agreed by the Headteacher (or their delegated senior leader), recorded with reasons and reviewed fortnightly. Parents/carers will be informed in writing when a device is retained for more than five days.
- Parents or carers will be required to collect the phone from school where this forms part of the published procedure.
- Following repeated breaches, the school reserves the right to retain the phone for a longer period, including until the end of the school term where appropriate.
- The school exercises its statutory powers to confiscate items in accordance with relevant legislation and Department for Education guidance.
- Confiscated devices will be stored securely and with reasonable care before being returned in accordance with this policy.

17. Circumventing the Phone Pouch System

- The integrity of the Hush phone pouch system relies upon honesty and cooperation.
- Any deliberate attempt to evade or undermine the system will be regarded as a serious breach of this policy.
- Examples include, but are not limited to:
- placing another object inside the pouch;
    - carrying an empty pouch;
    - pretending the phone is secured when it is not;
    - carrying multiple phones;
    - using another student's phone;
    - concealing a phone elsewhere;
    - damaging or tampering with a pouch;
    - removing the phone without permission; or
    - any other deliberate attempt to deceive staff.
- The normal consequence will be confiscation of the phone.
- Where repeated breaches occur, or where deception forms part of a wider behaviour incident, additional sanctions under the Behaviour Policy may be applied.

18. Refusal to Comply

- Pupils are expected to comply immediately with any reasonable instruction relating to this policy.
- This includes requests to surrender a mobile phone;
    - present a phone pouch;
    - cooperate with screening or lawful searches; and
    - follow staff instructions regarding the storage of a phone.
- Refusal to comply will be treated as a behaviour matter rather than solely a breach of the Mobile Phone Policy.
- Consequences will be determined under the school's Behaviour Policy and may include:
    - restorative conversations;
    - detention;
    - removal from lessons;
    - isolation;
    - suspension; or
    - other sanctions considered appropriate.
- Serious or persistent refusal may contribute towards consideration of permanent exclusion.
- Each case will be considered individually, taking account of all relevant circumstances.

19. Contacting Home

- Pupils must not use their personal mobile phone to contact parents or carers during the school day.
- This includes:
    - telephone calls;
    - text messages;
    - messaging applications;
    - social media messaging;
    - internet calling; and
    - any other electronic communication.
- Any student found to have contacted home using a personal mobile phone will be regarded as having used the device in breach of this policy.
- Pupils requiring contact with home should speak to Reception or a member of the pastoral team.
- The school will support genuine requests wherever possible. However, the school reserves the right to determine whether contact is necessary and the most appropriate method of communication.
- The availability of this support does not justify the use of a personal mobile phone.
- Contacting home in an emergency – parents/carers should not contact pupils via personal devices during the school day. If a parent needs to contact their child, they should phone the school reception, and we will ensure the pupil is

contacted promptly. In emergencies parents may request immediate contact via reception; the school will facilitate this.

20. Headphones and Smartwatches

- Pupils may carry headphones and smartwatches.
- These items must not be used during the school day unless expressly authorised by a member of staff.
- Use of these devices may give staff reasonable grounds to suspect that a student is using or possesses a mobile phone contrary to this policy.
- Pupils may therefore be required to demonstrate compliance with the Mobile Phone Policy.

21. Educational Visits, Fixtures and School Events

- This policy remains in force (unless alternative arrangements have been authorised during:
    - Whole school events;
    - Extracurricular activities;
    - Sporting fixtures; and
    - Educational visits,
- Trip Leaders may modify the operation of this policy following approval from the Headteacher.
- Where phones remain secured in pouches during visits, staff will have access to approved unlocking devices to allow pupils to access phones at appropriate times, such as immediately prior to travelling home.

22. Lost or Damaged Pouches

- Pupils are responsible for looking after their phone pouch.
- Parents and carers will need to purchase a new pouch for lost or deliberately damaged pouches that affects the operational use.