



St. Gregory's Catholic High School

Pupils' Personal Electronic Devices Policy

Monitoring

The implementation of this policy will be monitored by the Assistant Headteacher, Catholic Life

Evaluation

The policy was reviewed by the Deputy Headteacher (Pastoral) the Senior Leadership Team on 15th February 2024 prior to the submission of the policy to Governors Community Committee for scrutiny and recommendation to the Full Governing Board for approval

Policy Review Dates:

Date last approved by Full Governing Board: 30th March 2022

Date submitted to governor committee: 29th February 2024

Date submitted to Full Governing Board: 27th March 2024

Review Frequency: Every 2 years

Start date for policy review: January 2026

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Statement of intent

Mobile phones, tablets and other personal electronic devices have become widely available and accessible to pupils.

St. Gregory's High School accepts that personal mobile phones and tablets are often given to pupils by their parents to ensure their safety and personal security but understands that such devices pose inherent risks and may jeopardise the learning environment.

As a school, we must strike a balance between personal safety and a suitable educational setting. We understand that parents may wish for their child to carry a mobile phone for their personal safety, whilst pupils may wish to bring additional devices to school for other reasons. This policy establishes how personal electronic devices should be used by pupils in school to ensure both personal safety and an appropriate learning environment.

1. Legal framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- DfE (2023) 'Keeping children safe in education'
- DfE (2023) 'Searching, screening and confiscation'
- The Data Protection Act 2018
- The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)
- The Voyeurism (Offences) Act 2019

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Anti-bullying Policy
- E-safety Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Searching, Screening and Confiscation Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Complaints Procedures Policy
- Pupil Personal Electronic Devices Agreement

2. Key roles and responsibilities

The **governing board** has overall responsibility for:

- The implementation of the policy and procedures.
- Ensuring that the policy, as written, does not discriminate on any grounds.
- Reviewing the policy **annually**.

The **headteacher** has responsibility for:

- Handling complaints regarding this policy as outlined in the school's **Complaints Procedures Policy**.
- The day-to-day implementation and management of the policy.

Pupils are responsible for adhering to the provisions outlined in this policy.

3. Personal electronic devices (PED)

Personal electronic devices include, but are not limited to the following items:

- Mobile phones
- Wireless earpods
- Personal digital assistants (PDAs)

- Handheld entertainment systems, e.g. video games, CD players, compact DVD players, MP3 players
- Portable internet devices, e.g. tablets, iPads
- Wireless handheld technologies or portable information technology systems, e.g. devices used for word processing, wireless internet access, image capture/recording, sound recording, and information transmitting/receiving/storing

4. **Acceptable use**

- 4.1 Parents must be aware if their child takes a mobile phone, tablet or any other personal electronic device into school.
- 4.2 Personal electronic devices will be switched off and kept out of sight once a child enters the school premises through the outer gates in the morning and can only be switched on once they leave the school premises in the afternoon when they have exited the outer school gates.
- 4.3 Smart watches must be non-cellular and notifications must be switched off.
- 4.4 In **exceptional** circumstances to be determined by a senior teacher, a mobile phone may be used for a voice call and for emergencies only, in the reception area and designated pastoral offices.
- 4.5 Pupils are responsible for protecting their own personal information including their phone number.
- 4.6 In the event of on-line lessons using software platforms such as MS Teams, Google Classroom, ClassCharts (and other such media platforms), pupils must comply with the conditions of internet use which can be found on the school website. Teachers will always inform pupils that a lesson is being recorded and pupils do not have the right to record such lessons on their personal electronic devices.

5. **Unacceptable use**

- 5.1 Personal electronic devices will not be used in any manner or place that is disruptive to the normal routine of the school
- 5.2 Unless express permission is granted (e.g. residential trips abroad or other school trips), mobile devices will not be used to perform any of the following activities whilst on school grounds:
- Make phone calls or video calls
 - Send text messages, WhatsApp messages, iMessages or emails
 - Access social media
 - Play games
 - Take photographs
 - Use any other application during school lessons and other educational and pastoral activities

- 5.3 Files will not be sent between mobile devices, and Bluetooth and Wi-Fi functions will be disabled while on school premises.
- 5.4 If pupils fall ill during school hours or are involved in any disagreement with another pupil or teacher, they will not use their mobile device to contact parents; they must use the agreed procedures.
- 5.5 Under no circumstances should personal electronic devices be taken into examinations. Phones will be kept in bags or lockers or handed to a member of staff for safekeeping during the examination.
- 5.6 Under no circumstances will mobile devices be used in changing rooms or toilets.
- 5.7 Personal laptops, mobile phones or tablets will not be plugged in to outlets on the school premises without the express permission of the headteacher, and they must have an up-to-date portable appliance test (PAT).
- 5.8 Pupils will not attempt to befriend staff members on social media.
- 5.9 Under the Voyeurism (Offences) Act 2019, it is an offence to use devices to record an image beneath a person's clothing without consent and with the intention of observing, or enabling another person to observe, the victim's genitals or buttocks (whether exposed or covered with underwear), in circumstances where their genitals, buttocks or underwear would not otherwise be visible, for a specified purpose. This is known as upskirting and will not be tolerated by St. Gregory's High School. Despite the name, anyone (including both pupils and teachers), and any gender, can be a victim of upskirting.
- 5.10 A "specified purpose" is namely:
- Obtaining sexual gratification (either for themselves or for the person they are enabling to view the victim's genitals, buttocks or underwear).
 - To humiliate, distress or alarm the victim.
- 5.11 Any incidents of upskirting will be reported to the DSL and handled in accordance with the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.
- 5.12 Recording of pupils or staff in lessons or on the school premises is a serious breach of our behaviour policy and will be dealt with in line with the behaviour policy
6. **Residential trips abroad, other trips and acceptable use**
- 6.1 St. Gregory's Catholic High School recognises that on enrichment residential trips abroad it is desirable for safeguarding reasons that a pupil has the means to contact the designated teacher holding the school phone in case of an emergency.
- 6.2 It is accepted that pupils may wish to use their phone to take photographs whilst on such enrichment trips abroad.

6.3 Mobile devices should not be used in any manner or place on a school residential trip that is disruptive to the normal routine of the trip or inappropriate according to cultural, social or religious customs.

6.4 It will be at the discretion of the school trip leader on any enrichment visit other than abroad whether mobile phones can be used to take photographs. This will be communicated in a letter to parents and pupils.

7. **Photographs**

7.1 It is not acceptable to take any photographs without the permission of the subject, whilst on a residential trip abroad or any other trip. Misuse of photographs in relation to any social media platform will be treated as cyber bullying and dealt with in accordance with the school's anti-bullying policy.

7.2 It is not acceptable for a child to take any photograph of a member of St. Gregory's staff whilst on a school trip abroad, or any other trip without permission.

7.3 The lead teacher on a school residential trip, or any other trip, along with other members of staff on that trip, reserve the right to confiscate any personal electronic device until return to the UK.

8. **Cyberbullying**

8.1 All personal electronic devices will be used in line with our E-safety Policy.

8.2 Incidents of cyberbullying will be dealt with and reported in line with the Anti-bullying Policy.

8.3 As part of our on-going commitment to the prevention of cyberbullying, regular teaching and discussion about e-safety will take place as part of Personal Development lessons.

9. **Spot checks**

9.1 A staff member may ask a pupil to show them what they are doing on their mobile phone or tablet if they reasonably believe that the pupil is using the device to cause harm.

9.2 A staff member may ask a pupil to give them their portable flash drive at any time.

9.3 Pupils are required to comply with any request to check their mobile phone, tablet or flash drive.

9.4 Pupils are required to comply with any request to disable the screen lock function of their phone and show any staff member what they are doing.

9.5 All spot checks will be conducted in line with the school's **Behaviour Policy**

10. **Searching pupils**

10.1 School pupils have a right for their private life to be respected under article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR). This right is not absolute, and the

school can interfere with this right as long as it is justified, proportionate, and aligns with the powers to search in the Education Act 1996.

- 10.2 A search will be considered if a member of staff has reasonable grounds for suspecting that the pupil is in possession of a prohibited item, or any item identified in the school rules for which a search can be made. All searches will be conducted in line with the school's Searching, Screening and Confiscation Policy.
- 10.3 Under common law, school staff have the power to search a pupil for any item if the pupil agrees. Only the headteacher, or a member of staff authorised by the headteacher, will carry out a search. Where it is felt appropriate the headteacher will authorise individual members of staff to search for specific items, or all items set out in the school's behaviour policy.
- 10.4 In all cases the authorised member of staff will always:
- Seek the co-operation of the pupil before conducting a search.
 - Ensure the pupil understands the reason for the search and how it will be conducted.
 - Give the pupil the opportunity to ask any questions so that their agreement is informed.
- 10.5 Staff may search a pupil's outer clothing, pockets, possessions, desks or lockers. Staff conducting a search must not require the pupil to remove any clothing other than outer clothing - outer clothing means any item of clothing that is not worn wholly next to the skin or immediately over a garment that is being worn as underwear and includes hats, shoes, boots or scarves. Possessions means any goods over which the pupil has or appears to have control - this includes desks, lockers and bags.
- 10.6. A staff member may ask a pupil to show them what they are doing on their mobile phone or tablet if they reasonably believe that the pupil is using the device to cause harm. If it is judged reasonable, the staff member may inspect the files or data on a pupil's electronic device and delete them if necessary.
- 10.7. Staff members will ensure they have a good reason to examine and delete data on a pupil's electronic device. When determining a good reason to examine data, staff members will ensure they reasonably suspect that the data has been, or could be, used to cause harm, undermine the safe environment of the school and disrupt teaching, or be used to commit an offence.
- 10.8. When determining a good reason to delete data, staff members will consider whether the material found may constitute evidence relating to a suspected offence and if so, choose not to delete the data. The data may be deleted if it is found likely to cause harm to any person, and the pupil and/or parent refuses to delete the data themselves.
- 10.9. If a search uncovers a device that is being used to cause harm, or which contains prohibited material such as pornography, a staff member can confiscate the device. If a staff member finds child pornography, it must be given to the police as soon as

reasonably practicable. Where staff find stolen items like mobile devices, they must be given to the police as soon as reasonably practicable.

- 10.10. The staff member conducting the search must be the same sex as the pupil being searched. A witness to the search must be present; this should also be a staff member of the same sex as the pupil being searched.
- 10.11. Pupils are required to comply with any request to check their electronic device.
- 10.12. Pupils are required to comply with any request to disable the screen lock function of their electronic device and show any staff member what they are doing. Any pupil who refuses to comply with these requests will be disciplined in line with the Behaviour Policy.

11. **Accessing and storing data**

- 11.1 Downloading and accessing inappropriate websites and data on school-owned electronic devices is strictly prohibited.
- 11.2 Storing and using the personal data of any pupil or member of staff for non-work-related activity is strictly prohibited.
- 11.3 More information about accessing data can be found in our [Data Protection Policy](#).

12. **Sanctions**

- 12.1 It is entirely within the right of St. Gregory's Catholic High School to confiscate a personal electronic device if any aspect of this policy is not adhered to. If a personal electronic device is confiscated it will be switched off and held securely in the school safe.
- 12.2 Any pupil caught breaking the Personal Electronic Devices Policy will have their device confiscated immediately when it will be kept in the school safe until the following school day. The pupil will collect a form from the Pastoral Office which should be taken home and signed by a parent / carer and returned to the Pastoral Office **the next day** when the phone will be available to be collected at 3pm upon receipt of the signed slip. Slips signed ahead of the next day and brought in by parents / carers will not result in the return of the phone.
- 12.3 St. Gregory's recognises that it owes a duty to each child in its care to do what is reasonable to protect the health, safety and welfare of children in our school. Therefore, if a phone is confiscated, the relevant pupil progress manager (PPM)/ pastoral support manager (PSM) will inform parents that the phone has been confiscated. The child will be allowed to contact home to make appropriate arrangements, if needed, to go home.
- 12.4 Any pupil caught breaking the Personal Electronic Devices Policy for a second time will require their parent / carer to make an appointment and collect the device after a meeting with the relevant PPM or SLT.

- 12.5 If a phone or other personal electronic device is confiscated on a Friday or end of half term/ term the pupil will have the option of leaving the phone in school or collecting it and attending an afternoon detention at the next available time as arranged by the PPM. The pupil will sign a form agreeing to this sanction.
- 12.6 Bullying via mobile device will be disciplined in line with **St. Gregory's Catholic High School's** Anti-Bullying Policy.
- 12.7 Pupils taking public examinations, or any examinations under formal conditions must not take an electronic device into the room where the examinations are held. They will be required to hand their phones to the relevant Pastoral Support Manager. If a pupil is caught taking mobile phones, tablets, smart watches, wireless or wired headphones into any public GCSE examination they will be banned from bringing devices into school and will also be in breach of the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) regulations. The device will be confiscated, and parents will be informed. It is our duty to inform JCQ and it may result in disqualification from all public examinations.
13. **Complaints**
- 13.1 Complaints will be dealt with in accordance with the school complaints procedure available on the school's website or from school.