



PRIORY SCHOOL
EDGBASTON

MOBILE PHONES AND SMART WATCH POLICY

(STATUTORY)

Trustee Committee:	Education
Date Approved:	September 2026
Next of Review:	September 2029
Member of Staff Responsible:	AF Alex Flood Assistant Headteacher
Trustee Overseer:	SWR – Mrs Watts-Rai
Intended Audience:	Options: Employees, Parents, Volunteers and Pupils
Relevance:	Whole School No
	Early Years No
	Preparatory Yes
	Seniors Yes
Access:	Website Yes
	Internal No
	Restricted No

Our Mission Statement

Priory School is a thriving, co-educational independent school founded upon a rich Catholic heritage which welcomes those from all faiths and none.

In partnership with parents and guardians we provide a nurturing, family-based ethos, alongside high-standards of teaching and learning, enabling all pupils to achieve their potential.

We embrace diversity and interfaith understanding alongside awareness of environmental and global issues, in response to the needs of our time.

The Governors and staff at Priory School are committed to providing a fully accessible environment which values and includes all pupils, staff, parents and visitors, regardless of their education, physical, sensory, social, spiritual, emotional or cultural needs.

The Governors, staff, and pupils are committed to the safeguarding and welfare of pupils and staff.

To meet the needs of our school community, all our policies, including this policy, can be made available on different formats such as different font sizes or styles, colour, or alternate languages.

The Governing Council understands it has responsibility for ensuring the effective oversight of this policy and will assess, evaluate, and review as necessary.

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Statutory Framework

This policy has been developed with regard to:

- Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act 2026;
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026;
- DfE Mobile Phones in Schools Guidance (January 2026);
- Independent School Standards Regulations;
- Independent Schools Inspectorate Commentary and Guidance (April 2026), particularly paragraphs 3.21-3.23 under Standard 9;
- Searching, Screening and Confiscation Guidance;
- EYFS Statutory Framework (including paragraph 3.6).

Rationale

In accordance with the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act 2026, the school will have regard to Department for Education guidance relating to mobile phones in schools. The school's approach is founded upon safeguarding, wellbeing, behaviour, concentration, attendance and the promotion of a positive learning environment.

The mobile phone is an effective and quick means of communication. Mobile phones are now a feature of modern security, and most of our pupils own one.

In partnership with parents, we provide a caring community and appreciate that where unforeseen events occur, mobile phones provide pupils and their families with a ready means of communication. There is a need, however, to set clear guidelines and limit their use during the school day, in particular, to avoid unnecessary interference with teaching and learning.

This policy applies to all pupils, staff, governors, volunteers, contractors, visitors and any other adults working on behalf of the school.

The policy establishes clear expectations for the possession and use of mobile phones, smart watches, cameras, artificial intelligence applications and other internet-enabled personal devices in order to safeguard children, promote wellbeing, support learning and maintain a respectful and phone-free school environment.

The increasing sophistication of mobile phone technology presents a number of issues for schools:

- The high value of many phones.
- The integration of cameras into phones leads to potential child protection and data protection issues.
- The potential to use the phone e.g., for texting whilst on silent mode.
- The accessing of social networking sites and emails.
- Phones are causing classroom disruption.
- Students are getting too easily distracted.

Definitions

For the purposes of this policy, "personal devices" include:

- mobile phones;
- smartphones;
- smart watches;

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- tablets;
- personal laptops;
- cameras;
- video recording equipment;
- audio recording devices;
- wearable technology;
- devices capable of accessing generative AI applications;
- any internet-enabled communication device.

Phone Free Environment

Priory School operates a phone-free environment. The default expectation is that pupils will not access or use mobile phones, smart watches or other personal internet-enabled devices during the school day.

This prohibition applies:

- before registration;
- during lessons;
- during lesson changeovers;
- during supervised study periods;
- at break times;
- at lunchtime;
- whilst participating in educational visits unless specifically authorised;
- during co-curricular activities taking place within the school day.

This aims to improve teaching and learning using a system called Yondr. Yondr has been implemented in over 1,000 schools across 21 countries to facilitate an engaged learning environment. We believe that phones have great utility. We have also found that learning and social behaviour improve drastically when students are fully engaged with their teachers and classmates.

Yondr recently surveyed over 900 school partners to measure the effects of creating phone-free educational environments. These schools achieved notable progress in multiple areas:

65% of schools saw an improvement in academic performance.

74% of schools saw an improvement in student behaviour.

83% of schools saw an improvement in student engagement in the classroom.

The Yondr Program utilises a simple, secure pouch that stores a phone. Every student will secure their phone in a personally assigned Yondr pouch when they arrive at school. Students will maintain possession of their phones and will not use them until their pouches are opened at the end of the school day. Students are required to bring their Yondr pouch to and from school each day and are responsible for their pouch at all times.

Safeguarding Rationale

The school recognises that unrestricted mobile phone use can increase safeguarding risks, including:

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- cyberbullying;
- online abuse;
- exposure to harmful content;
- sharing of inappropriate images;
- online exploitation;
- distraction from learning;
- wellbeing concerns arising from excessive screen use.

The school's phone-free approach forms part of its wider safeguarding arrangements and promotes a safe, respectful and focused learning environment.

STUDENT Mobile Phone Policy & GUIDELINES

Mobile Phones are not to be used during school.

Every student is assigned a personal Yondr Pouch. While the Yondr Pouch is considered school property, it is each student's responsibility to bring their Pouch with them to school every day and keep it in good working condition.

DAILY PROCESS

As students **Arrive to School**, they will:

- 1) Turn their Mobile Phone off.
- 2) Open their Yondr Pouch by tapping against the Unlocking Base.
- 3) Place their Mobile Phone inside the Pouch and secure it in front of school staff.
- 4) Store it in their backpack for the day.

At the end of the day, students will open their Pouch, remove their phone, close their Pouch and put it in their backpack. Students must bring their Pouch to school with them each day.

*Students arriving late or leaving early will lock/unlock their phone pouches at Reception

VIOLATIONS

Pouch Damage / Lost Pouch / Using Mobile Phone During School

- If a student damages their Pouch or is caught on their phone, A member of the Leadership Team will collect the Mobile Phone/Pouch and call home to request a parent/guardian comes to school to pick up the mobile phone and pouch.
- This can lead to a headmaster's detention or suspension will be issued and a charge of £45 issued for a replacement pouch.

Examples of damage:

- Ripped fabric
- Cut or torn pouch
- Bent/damaged closure pin
- Signs of force to black button on flap

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Forgotten Pouch

If a student forgets their Pouch, **their Mobile Phone will be collected and a member of the Leadership Team will call home to remind the Parent/guardian of the policy.**

An after-school detention will be issued for a forgotten pouch.

The phone will be returned to the student at the end of the school day.

Communications

Parents or guardians wishing to leave messages for their children should do so by telephoning the school. Staff endeavour to ensure that messages are passed on during class breaks.

Front office staff also assist pupils, with the permission of a member of the Senior Management Team, who need to contact family or other persons in an emergency.

The Role of Staff

All staff should consistently enforce the school's policy on the use of mobile phones. Staff should not use their own mobile phone for personal reasons in front of pupils throughout the school day. This will empower staff to better challenge pupils to meet the school expectations and effectively enforce the prohibition of mobile phones throughout the school day.

The Role of Parents

Parents have an important role in supporting the school's policy on prohibiting the use of mobile phones and should be encouraged to reinforce and discuss the policy at home as appropriate, including the risks associated with mobile phone use and the benefits of a mobile phone-free environment.

Spot Checks

To ensure that pupils adhere to this policy, spot checks regularly take place following information received as well as repeat offenders being monitored more than others. The school may utilise appropriate screening measures where permitted within the Searching Policy and in accordance with statutory guidance

Searching and Confiscation

Where there are reasonable grounds to do so, authorised members of staff may search for, examine, confiscate or retain mobile phones and other electronic devices in accordance with:

- the school's Searching Policy;
- Searching, Screening and Confiscation Guidance;
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026.

Staff have the power to search mobile phones where permitted by legislation and relevant Department for Education guidance, particularly where there are safeguarding concerns, suspected breaches of school rules or concerns relating to harmful or illegal content.

Any examination of data stored on a device will be undertaken only by authorised staff and in accordance with safeguarding and data protection requirements.

Responsibility for Mobile Phones

Priory School accepts **no responsibility whatsoever** for theft, loss, damage or health effects (potential or

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actual) relating to mobile phones. It is the responsibility of parents and pupils to ensure mobile phones are properly insured.

Mobile Phones and the reputation of Priory School

Pupils must not use their phones or electronic devices to engage in an activity through SMS, social media apps, or online activity, both in school and outside school, which may bring the school's reputation into disrepute.

It should be noted that it is a criminal offence to use a mobile phone to menace, harass or offend another person. As such, if action as sanctioned by the school is deemed ineffective, as with all such incidents, the school may consider it appropriate to involve the police.

Use of Smart Watches

Smart watches, internet-enabled watches and similar wearable devices are subject to the same restrictions as mobile phones due to their ability to access messaging, internet services, cameras, audio recording functions and artificial intelligence applications.

Staff Conduct

Staff must model the expectations placed upon pupils.

- Personal mobile phones should not be used in pupil-facing areas except where authorised by the Headteacher for educational, safeguarding or operational reasons.
- Staff use of mobile phones and imaging devices is governed by the Staff Code of Conduct, Staff Mobile Phone Policy and safeguarding procedures.

Staff Use of Mobile Phones and Personal Devices

Staff are expected to model appropriate behaviour and support the school's phone-free environment.

Personal mobile phones should not be used in teaching rooms, pupil-facing areas or during direct supervision of pupils except where:

- authorised by a senior leader;
- required for safeguarding purposes;
- required in an emergency;
- required for specific school business.
- Personal devices should be stored securely during the school day.

Staff should avoid using personal devices in the presence of pupils wherever practicable.

Communication with Pupils

Staff must not:

- communicate with pupils using personal mobile phone numbers;
- communicate with pupils through personal social media accounts;
- communicate using personal messaging applications;
- exchange personal contact details with pupils.

Any communication with pupils must occur through approved school systems and platforms.

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Photography, Filming and Recording

No member of the school community may take photographs, videos or audio recordings of pupils using personal devices unless specifically authorised by the Headteacher.

Images of pupils may only be taken using school-approved equipment and for legitimate educational or safeguarding purposes.

All images must be stored and processed in accordance with the school's Data Protection Policy and Privacy Notices.

EYFS Arrangements

Separate procedures apply within the Early Years Foundation Stage in accordance with paragraph 3.6 of the EYFS Framework.

Staff personal mobile phones, cameras and other imaging devices must not be used when children are present except in emergency situations.

Personal devices may only be accessed during authorised non-contact time and in designated staff areas.

Images of EYFS children may only be taken using school-authorised devices and stored in accordance with data protection requirements.

Further information is contained within the Staff Mobile Phone Policy and EYFS Procedures.

In accordance with EYFS Framework paragraph 3.6:

- staff personal mobile phones must not be used whilst children are present;
- personal devices must be stored securely;
- personal cameras must not be used;
- photographs of children may only be taken using school-approved devices;
- personal devices may only be accessed during authorised non-contact time and away from children.

The EYFS Lead and Designated Safeguarding Lead will monitor compliance with these arrangements.

Governors, Volunteers and Visitors

Visitors, volunteers, governors and contractors must comply with the expectations set out within this policy whilst on site.

Personal devices should not be used in areas where pupils are present except for legitimate business purposes.

Visitors may be required to refrain from photography or video recording whilst on school premises.

Artificial Intelligence and Emerging Technology

The school recognises that many modern devices provide access to generative artificial intelligence platforms and content creation tools.

Staff and pupils must not use artificial intelligence applications to:

- create harmful content;
- generate inappropriate images;

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- impersonate others;
- produce deepfakes;
- facilitate bullying or harassment;
- bypass school safeguarding arrangements.

Any misuse will be addressed through the Behaviour Policy, Staff Disciplinary Procedures and Safeguarding Policy.

Expectations for School Issued devices

Staff and pupils provided with school-owned devices must use them in accordance with:

- Acceptable Use Agreements;
- Online Safety Policy;
- Data Protection Policy;
- Filtering and Monitoring arrangements.

Data Protection and Monitoring

The school may process information relating to the use of personal and school-issued devices where necessary to fulfil safeguarding, legal and operational responsibilities.

Relevant information regarding the processing of personal data can be found within:

- Staff Privacy Notice;
- Pupil Privacy Notice;
- Parent Privacy Notice;
- Data Protection Policy.

Searching and Confiscation

Where appropriate and lawful, the school may search, examine, confiscate or retain electronic devices in accordance with:

- the Searching Policy;
- Behaviour Policy;
- Safeguarding Policy;
- Searching, Screening and Confiscation Guidance.

Staff authorised by the Headteacher may inspect devices where safeguarding concerns, misconduct concerns or breaches of school rules are suspected.

Staff Misconduct

Misuse of personal devices by staff may constitute:

misconduct;

gross misconduct;

a safeguarding concern;

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a data protection breach.

Such matters may be addressed through disciplinary procedures and, where appropriate, referrals to external agencies.

Related Policies

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following policies:

- Behaviour Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Online Safety Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Acceptable Use Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Anti-Bullying Policy

Monitoring and Review

The curriculum and school procedures are constantly being reviewed to take account of educational initiatives and respond to the future priorities of the school.

This policy will be reviewed annually by:

- the Designated Safeguarding Lead;
- the Assistant Headteacher;
- the Safeguarding Governor;
- the Headteacher.

Reviews will take account of:

- safeguarding incidents;
- behavioural trends;
- technology developments;
- updates to statutory guidance;
- pupil and staff feedback.

Governors will receive regular assurance that the school's phone-free arrangements remain effective.