St Matthew's Primary

Use of Mobile Devices Policy

September 2026

St Matthew's Primary School - Use of Mobile Devices Policy

Rationale

This policy sets out the policy for St Matthew's Primary School in line with East Dunbartonshire Council Framework (Education Procedure Manual 3/42) on the use of mobile devices (e.g. phones, tablets and smartwatches) in schools. It aims to support learning and teaching, safeguard young people, promote consistency, and ensure equity of access across the establishment.

The policy aligns with Scottish Government guidance (2024) and reflects the outcomes of extensive stakeholder engagement carried out by East Dunbartonshire Council. Mobile device use should be guided by clear educational purposes that reflect teacher professionalism and context specific judgement.

Scope

This policy applies to all children, young people and staff (both teaching and non-teaching) in St Matthew's Primary School.

Stakeholder Engagement

This policy has been developed in consultation with:

- Pupils who provided feedback on both positive uses and potential disruptions;
- Parents/Carers who raised concerns related to pupil safety, distraction from learning, and fairness of implementation;
- Teaching Staff who highlighted the need for consistent policy enforcement and practical guidance.

Principles

The following principles underpin the policy:

- Maintaining consistently high levels of learning and teaching is one of the main aims of St Matthew's Primary School;
- Equity and inclusion for pupils is essential;
- Protecting wellbeing of staff and pupils is critical;
- Promoting respectful and responsible use of devices is the responsibility of all.

Operational Guidance

Pupils are strongly encouraged to leave personal mobile devices at home. Where mobile phones are brought solely for use during travel to and from school (e.g. for safety, communication during pickups, or family transition arrangements), they must remain switched off and stored securely in school bags throughout the school day or handed in to the school office where they can be collected at the end of the school day.

- Smartwatches must be set to airplane/school mode, to disable messaging, notifications, and camera functions;
- Personal mobile phones and smartwatches must not be used during lessons and not used during lunch or interval. On arrival into the playground each morning, phones must be switched off and placed in schoolbags;
- Exceptions may be granted for medical, communication, or additional support needs, with parental agreement and Head Teacher approval;
- If use of mobile devices is permitted, clear expectations and boundaries must be established to ensure wellbeing, inclusion, and responsible use.
- The majority of parent/carer school communication should be directed through the school office.

Safeguarding and Prohibited Uses

St Matthew's Primary School has rigorous measures in place to ensure that mobile technologies are not misused. Staff are required to be vigilant and report breaches to the Head Teacher.

The following are strictly prohibited:

- Recording or photographing staff, pupils, or premises without explicit consent;
- Audio recording of lessons or individuals;
- Sharing school-related content on social media without approval;
- Engaging in any form of online cyber-bullying;
- Accessing, viewing or sharing content which is of a violent or adult nature;

Teacher Responsibilities

- Staff may use personal mobile devices during lessons only for school-related professional purposes (access to teaching tools, Seesaw etc), in line with agreed school protocols. This professional distinction must be clearly communicated to pupils to ensure transparency and fairness. All use must comply with data protection and safeguarding standards;
- Staff are not expected to use personal mobile devices to communicate with colleagues about professional matters during the school day unless otherwise agreed e.g. WhatsApp for fast, operational communication. Glow email can be used to communicate with colleagues across the school;
- Staff may need access to a personal mobile device under exceptional circumstances. This is subject to approval by the Head Teacher and is anticipated for a limited period of time;
- Staff deliver clear, consistent and regular instruction on responsible device use to all pupils;
- Staff must intervene promptly and appropriately in instances of misuse by following school procedures to managing misuse;
- The School has secure storage solutions if a device is confiscated during a lesson, ensuring devices are switched off. The device will be stored in the school office until the end of the school day.

Policy Non-Compliance

Routine, unsupervised and unplanned use of devices is not permitted.

The following staged interventions are examples of the steps that may be taken in response to non-compliance. The specific approach takes into account factors such as age, ASN status, and alignment with the school's Promoting Positive Relationship Policy. However, severe or repeated breaches of the school's policy should be treated as a disciplinary matter.

1. First Instance - A verbal warning and clear reminder of the policy.
2. Second Instance - Immediate confiscation of the device during the lesson, device secured in the school office and returned at the end of the school day.
3. Repeat Violations - A formal parental meeting with Senior Leadership to discuss ongoing misuse, with potential suspension of device privileges.
4. Serious Breach - Immediate confiscation, potential safeguarding referral, and escalation to relevant partner agencies.

All confiscated devices must be handled with discretion and stored securely, strictly complying with agreed school procedures. Pupils are responsible for collecting a

confiscated device at the end of the school day. If uncollected, the device will be secured in a locked cupboard.

The Senior Leadership Team (SLT) will monitor pupils not adhering to the school policy. In such cases, parents will be contacted and may be requested to come to school to collect the device.

Policy Exceptions

Exceptions may be granted where justified and supported by appropriate documentation. This may include:

- A medical requirement (e.g. continuous glucose monitoring).
- A communication need (e.g. augmentative technology).
- A documented additional support need (e.g. ASN Action Plan).
- Young carers who require ongoing contact with family members.

Adjustments may be made for pupils with factors including medical, communication, and additional support needs. This will be outlined by the Team Around the Child and evaluated on an individual needs basis.

The Head Teacher maintains the authority to implement context operational measures within this policy framework.

Equity and Inclusion

St Matthew's Primary School must ensure that:

- No activity that requires the use of a personal device, the class teacher must provide alternative resources to ensure all young people can engage in the learning experience;
- We must actively monitor for any peer pressure or exclusion related to device ownership;
- No assumptions are made regarding pupils' access to personal mobile devices;
- All practices ensure fairness, equity and inclusion;
- Digital literacy support is provided for pupils with limited access or experience.

Liability

East Dunbartonshire Council and St Matthew's Primary School do not accept liability for:

- The loss, damage, or theft of personal mobile devices;
- The consequences of device confiscation due to non-compliance.

Policy Management, Review and Evaluation

This Policy will be subject to regular review. All staff must receive appropriate training and regular updates on school procedures, including Student Teachers. Serious incidents must be reported to the Education Service for further review.

The School Leadership Team will monitor and feedback the impact of its mobile device policy as part of school self-evaluation through existing mechanisms. This will include a review of compliance, equity, digital safety incidents, and stakeholder feedback.

Parental Engagement

We strongly encourage parents to delay providing smartphones to younger children, in line with developing good digital habits.

- We support digital wellbeing by promoting balanced and mindful technology use and encouraging healthy device habits among pupils;
- We regularly signpost parent workshops or seminars to explore the impacts of mobile technology and support home-school consistency in expectations;
- Provide regular guidance through newsletters on responsible device use and digital wellbeing at home.

The type of mobile device a young person carries is ultimately a family decision and lies out with the scope of this policy. Families may wish to consider basic mobile phones or limited-function smartwatches (e.g. those with GPS tracking and call/text capabilities only) where travel safety is the primary concern. Due consideration should be given to the Cost of the School Day to ensure that decisions around mobile devices do not place undue financial pressure on families.

Staff Training and Support

An annual update on mobile device policy will be provided by the school for staff at the start of the school session. Staff are signposted to professional development on current trends in mobile technology, digital safety, and pupil wellbeing.

The Head Teacher will equip staff with a clear, step-by-step protocol to address mobile device misuse consistently and confidently. Collaboration will take place regularly between teaching and support staff to reinforce policy expectations across all areas of the school.

Pupil Voice

Pupil voice is central to policy development. The school will consult with pupils when reviewing or updating the mobile device policy to ensure that it reflects the needs, rights, and responsibilities of learners. Peer-led campaigns or mentoring that support positive digital citizenship will be promoted through the Health and Wellbeing and Technologies Curriculum. Mobile Device Policy Education will form part of on-going class lessons and will be highlighted at assemblies and in newsletters.

Safe Device Guide

This interactive document supports families in making informed decisions about mobile and digital device use. It highlights safer options, digital safety strategies, and professional support networks (Click on link below).



Safe Device Guide PDF.pdf