

ST THOMAS MORE CATHOLIC SCHOOL



Mobile Phone and Electronic Devices Policy

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Table of Contents

Introduction & Aims	2
Definitions:	3
Relevant Guidance	3
Scope	3
Our Core Rule	4
Sixth Form Expectations	4
The Yondr Phone Pouch System	5
Daily Procedures	5
Responsibilities	7
Communication During the School Day	7
Exceptions	8
Non-Compliance and Consequences	9
Lost, Stolen or Damaged Devices	10
School Trips and Visits	10
Implementation and Review	11
Impact Statement	11



Introduction & Aims

At Bishop Wilkinson Catholic Education Trust, we recognise that everyone is created in God's image, and we therefore educate the whole person, so that all can flourish.

We recognise that mobile telephones and similar electronic devices are an important part of everyday life for our pupils, families and staff, as well as the wider school community, and we acknowledge the valuable contribution that smart devices can make to our quality of life.

However, we know that mobile phones and other electronic devices do not just offer connection, they also potentially open the door to harmful content for our pupils. We also know that smart devices can be addictive for pupils and can increase peer pressure and distraction. Even with good intentions, they can expose children to things they are simply not ready for.

This policy recognises the benefits of technology. However, at St Thomas More School we want pupils to be given the time and space to develop the foundations they need to navigate smart technology well, at an appropriate age and stage.

Our policy aims to:

- Promote safe and responsible phone use
- Set clear guidelines for the use of mobile phones and smart devices for pupils, staff, parents/carers, visitors and volunteers
- Support other policies including:
 - BWCET GDPR Acceptable Use of IT Systems Policy
 - BWCET Employee Code of Conduct
 - School safeguarding and behaviour policies

This policy also addresses risks such as:

- Safeguarding concerns
- Data protection issues
- Lesson disruption
- Risk of theft, loss or damage
- Appropriate use of technology in school



Definitions:

- “Mobile phones” refers to all mobile phones including smartphones and similar devices including smartwatches, smart glasses, tracking devices and any device enabling communication. It also refers to other electronic devices including tablets and gaming devices.
- “Staff” refers to all staff, governors, clergy, volunteers, contractors and others working in the school

Relevant Guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the Department for Education’s non-statutory mobile phone and behaviour guidance.

It should be read alongside:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (GOV.UK)
- Data Protection in Schools Guidance (GOV.UK)
- Searching, Screening and Confiscation Guidance
- St Thomas More’s Behaviour Policy
- St Thomas More’s Safeguarding Policy

Scope

This policy applies to:

- All pupils in Years 7-11
- All mobile phones and smart devices, including:
 - Smartphones
 - Smartwatches
 - Earbuds/headphones
 - Tablets or gaming devices
 - Any internet-enabled wearable device



Our Core Rule

St Thomas More is a **mobile phone-free environment during the school day**.

- Mobile devices **must not be used, seen or heard** at any time on the school site during the school day
- All devices must be **secured in a Yondr pouch from arrival to dismissal**

Sixth Form Expectations

Sixth form students are not required to follow the same procedures as lower school students regarding the use of a Yondr pouch. However, they are expected to use mobile devices responsibly and only within designated areas.

At St Thomas More, mobile device use is permitted **only within the Sixth Form Centre**.

If a student is seen using a mobile device outside of this area, they will be asked to hand it to a member of the Sixth Form team for safe keeping until the end of the school day.

Repeated misuse may result in further sanctions in line with the school's behaviour policy.



The Yondr Phone Pouch System

If pupils in Year 7 to 11 choose to bring a mobile device to school, it must be secured in a Yondr pouch in accordance with this policy. Each pupil will be provided with one Yondr pouch free of charge, they are expected to keep this damage free and safe for the duration of their time at the school. When pupils leave the school, they are expected to return the phone pouch.

Pupils are responsible for the care and daily use of their pouch. In the event that a pouch is lost or damaged, a replacement will need to be purchased by the pupil's family.

Please note that bringing a mobile device to school is not a requirement. Pupils may choose to leave their devices at home and, in this case, will not need a Yondr pouch.

How it Works

- Pupils place their phone into a **Yondr pouch on arrival**
- The pouch is **locked using a secure magnetic system**
- Pupils **keep the pouch with them**, but cannot access the phone
- Pouches are **unlocked at designated stations at the end of the day**

The system:

- Keeps devices safe and with the student
- Prevents access during learning time
- Removes the need for staff to monitor pupils' phone use and prevents the need for confiscation of devices.



Daily Procedures

Start of Day

- Pupils:
 - Switch off phones before entering school
 - Place phones into their Yondr pouch
 - Lock pouches at designated entry points or in tutor time
- Staff:
 - Conduct **visual pouch checks** to ensure compliance

During the Day

- Pouches must remain:
 - Locked
 - Stored safely (e.g. in bag or blazer)

End of Day

- Pupils unlock pouches at school exit points
- Devices may be used once pupils leave the school site



Responsibilities

Students

- Bring their Yondr pouch into school daily
- Ensure their device is secured correctly
- Maintain the pouch in good condition

If a pupil arrives at school and they have forgotten their Yondr pouch, pupils' mobile phones will be kept safe for the remainder of that day. It is the pupils responsibility to share their phone with their tutor during the routine pastoral check. Pupils will be permitted to collect their mobile phone at the end of the school day from Reception as they have not misused their phone during the school day whilst on school site.

Staff

- Consistently enforce the policy
- Support students in following procedures
- Carry out checks where necessary
- Confiscate devices where pupils have not complied with this policy.

Families

- Support the school's phone-free approach
- Contact the school office if urgent communication is required



Communication During the School Day

- Pupils **must not use mobile phones to contact home**
- Families should contact the **school office** for urgent messages
- The school will contact parents in case of emergency



Exceptions

Exceptions may be made for:

- Medical needs (e.g. diabetes monitoring devices)
- Specific SEND requirements
- Authorised educational use (pre arranged by the Headteacher)

These will be managed through:

- Individual risk assessment
- Alternative pouch arrangements (e.g. emergency-access pouches)

Where a student requires access to a mobile device due to a medical need, families must provide **supporting evidence from a relevant medical or healthcare professional.**

This evidence should clearly outline the necessity for access and how the device supports the student's medical condition.

The school will review this information and make reasonable adjustments where appropriate, ensuring that any agreed arrangements are clearly communicated to staff and recorded.

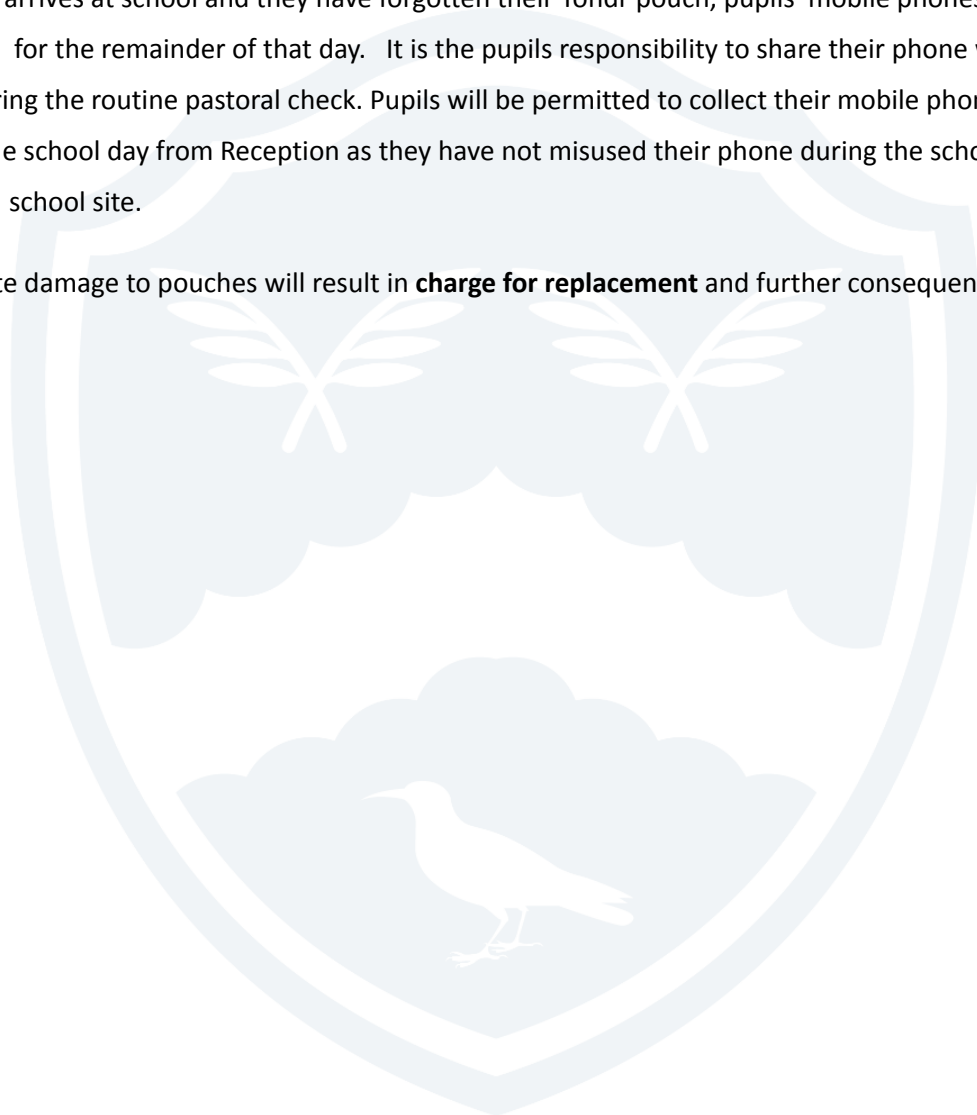


Non-Compliance and Consequences

If a pupil is found to have any mobile device on them during the school day and it is not stored in their pouch, it will be confiscated and families will need to collect this from the school reception. Repeat incidents of this will be dealt with in line with our typical response framework which can be seen in our behaviour policy.

If a pupil arrives at school and they have forgotten their Yondr pouch, pupils' mobile phones will be kept safe for the remainder of that day. It is the pupils responsibility to share their phone with their tutor during the routine pastoral check. Pupils will be permitted to collect their mobile phone at the end of the school day from Reception as they have not misused their phone during the school day whilst on school site.

Deliberate damage to pouches will result in **charge for replacement** and further consequences.

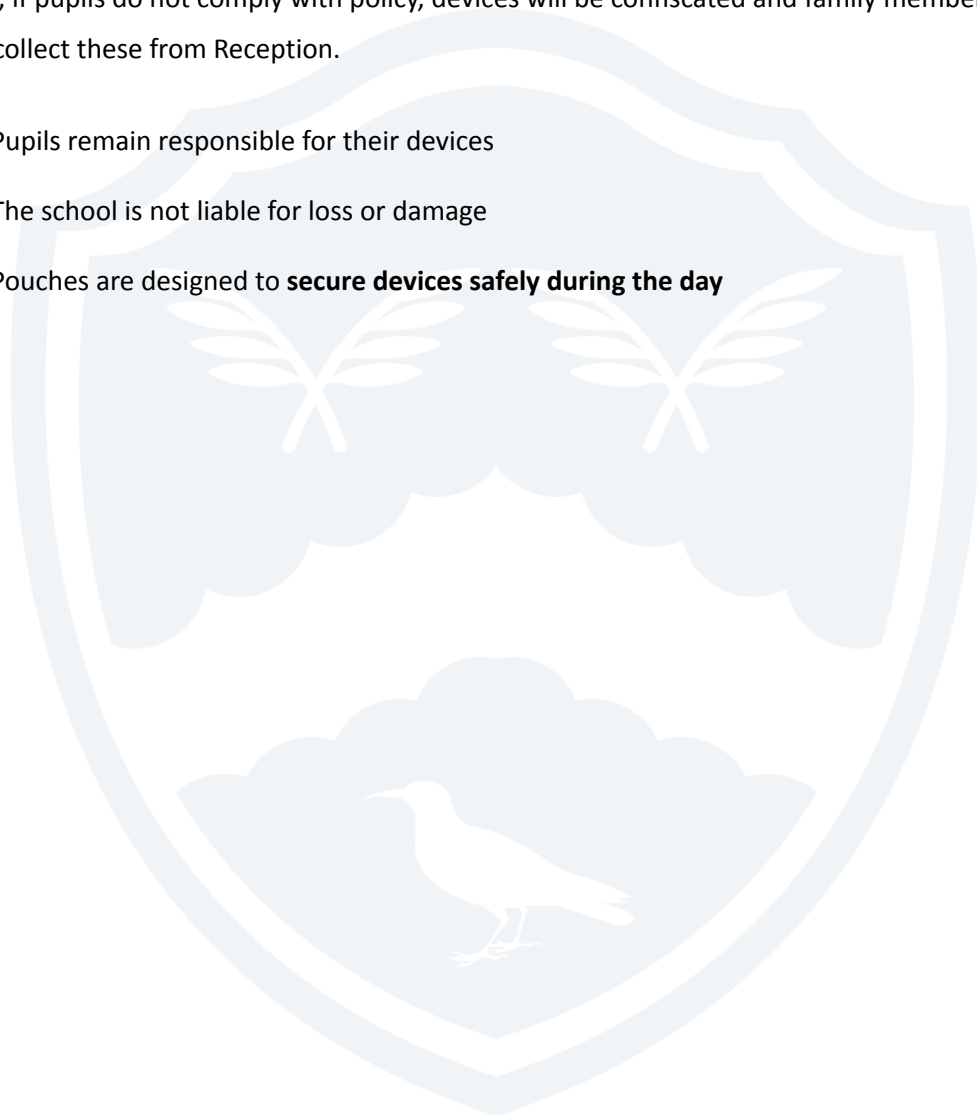


Lost, Stolen or Damaged Devices

If pupils choose to bring a mobile device to school, it must be secured in a Yondr pouch in accordance with this policy. Each pupil will be provided with one Yondr pouch free of charge, they are expected to keep this damage free and safe for the duration of their time at the school. When pupils leave the school, they are expected to return the phone pouch.

However, if pupils do not comply with policy, devices will be confiscated and family members will need to collect these from Reception.

- Pupils remain responsible for their devices
- The school is not liable for loss or damage
- Pouches are designed to **secure devices safely during the day**

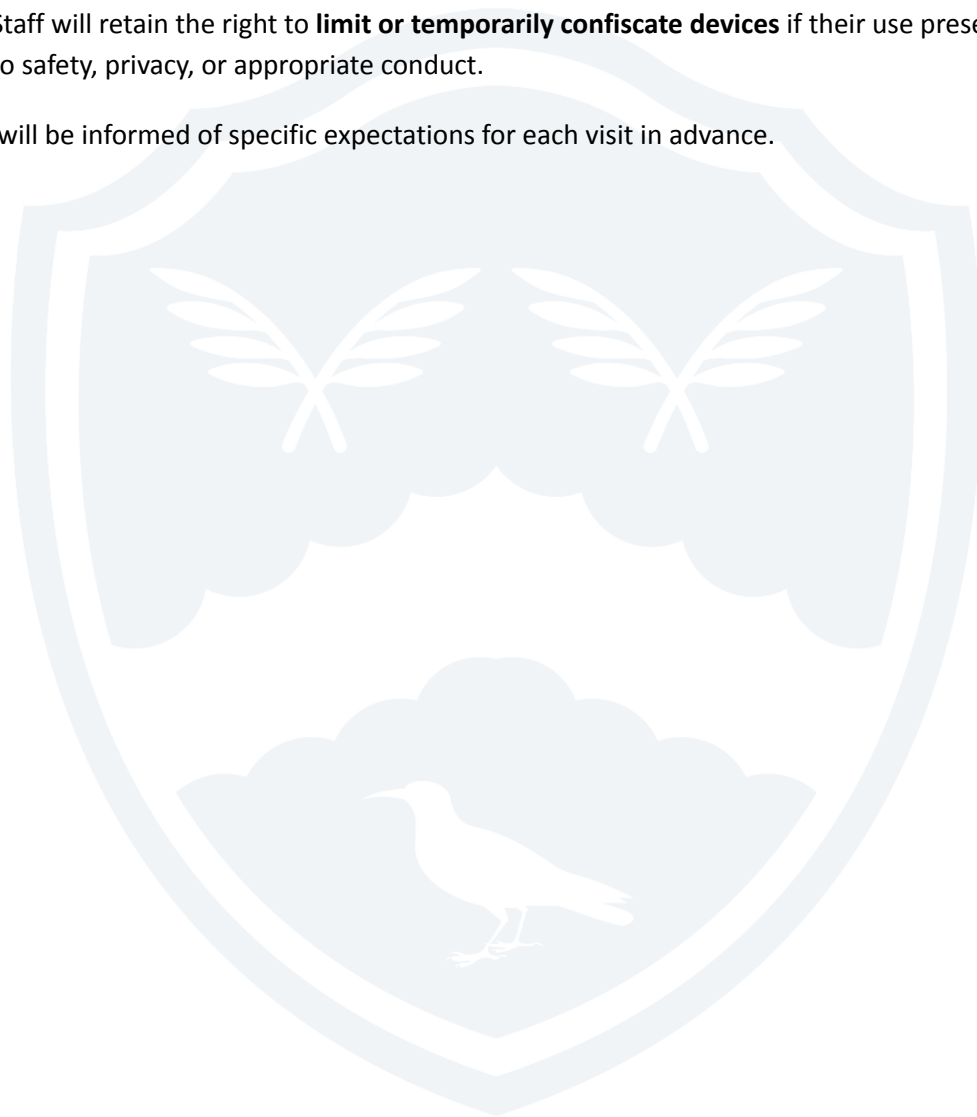


School Trips and Visits

In line with Department for Education (DfE) guidance on educational visits and safeguarding:

- The use of mobile phones during trips and visits will be **risk-assessed** as part of the visit planning process.
- Staff will clearly communicate expectations for mobile phone use before the visit takes place.
- Staff will retain the right to **limit or temporarily confiscate devices** if their use presents a risk to safety, privacy, or appropriate conduct.

Families will be informed of specific expectations for each visit in advance.



Implementation and Review

- The school will provide:
 - Staff training
 - Clear communication to families
 - Ongoing monitoring and evaluation
- This policy will be reviewed annually or as required



Impact Statement

By implementing this policy, St Thomas More aims to:

- Improve **learning outcomes and concentration**
- Enhance **behaviour and school culture**
- Strengthen **relationships and social interaction**
- Provide pupils with a **healthy balance from technology**

