



EDITH STEIN **CATHOLIC ACADEMY TRUST**

MOBILE PHONE AND SMART DEVICE STATEMENT **JULY 2026**

Introduction

Mobile phones have changed day-to-day life for almost everyone in the country in the past 30 years. Mobile phones and smart technology open up a wondrous sense of opportunity, and they have in many ways made our lives much better.

As of April 2026, the Education (Digital Safety) Act 2026 makes it a legal requirement for all schools in England to maintain a phone-free environment throughout the school day, including lessons, break times, and lunchtime. The DfE issues further statutory guidance in June 2026.

ESCAT is committed to providing calm, safe and purposeful learning environments in which all pupils can thrive. Mobile phones and other personal smart devices can disrupt learning, reduce social interaction, increase opportunities for cyberbullying, and expose children to inappropriate online content.

All ESCAT Schools have mobile phone policy, that included references another smart technologies, and must implement one of several approved methods to ensure compliance for students from reception to the end of Year 11:

- Total Ban: Phones are left at home or confiscated at the gate.
- Secure Storage: Phones stored in lockers or magnetically sealed pouches.
- Front Desk Deposit: Devices handed to staff at the start of the day.
- Controlled Purpose: Phones used only for teacher-led curriculum tasks or specific SEND needs

ESCAT schools, within their policy must also consider how restrictions may apply to BOYD.

Ofsted inspections now include checks on how effectively schools enforce these policies, ensuring consistency and adherence.

Managing situations that contravene school policies.

ESCAT schools must make it clear to students and parents what the consequences are for contravening the school policy, this must be included within the behaviour policy or a separate policy on mobile phones. Schools are also expected to educate students on why phones are prohibited from the school environment.

Sixth Forms

ESCAT schools with Sixth Forms may adopt proportionate arrangements recognising the greater independence of older students. Schools with Sixth forms are required to have published arrangements for Year 12 and Year 13

Medical and SEND exceptions

Schools must make reasonable adjustments where a pupil requires access to a mobile device because of:

- medical needs;
- diabetes monitoring;
- an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP);
- disability;
- other exceptional circumstances approved by the Headteacher.

Where the use of a phone is required for medical needs including anxiety, it will be up to the school to decide the level of proof it expects from medical professionals to allow a student to have access to a phone. These arrangements shall be documented.

Educational use

In ESCAT schools, personal mobile phones shall not normally be used for teaching or learning. Schools must publish the circumstances where the use of mobile devices is acceptable, for example filming content for media coursework. Where digital technology is required, schools should provide school-managed devices wherever practicable.

Where it has become common practice for students to record homework, or check their timetable on a mobile device schools must now introduce systems that are student focused that do not place additional burden on staff. Schools may wish to consider returning to homework diaries, or printed out timetables.

In the spirit of this statement and the school's policy, schools should give careful consideration to the use of mobile devices for homework. Where the school seeks to limit or prohibit mobile phone use during the school day, setting homework that requires access to a mobile device may appear inconsistent with the principles underpinning the policy.

Mobile Phones on educational trips and visits

ESCAT recognises that educational visits may require different arrangements for the use of mobile phones from those that apply during the normal school day.

Decisions regarding pupil access to and use of mobile phones during educational visits will be determined by the school, taking account of the age and maturity of pupils, the nature and purpose of the visit, safeguarding considerations, health and safety requirements, and the need to maintain effective communication. Where students are permitted to carry mobile phones, clear expectations will be communicated in advance regarding when and how they may be used.

On residential visits, overseas visits or activities involving independent travel schools may decide to operate alternative arrangements.

Staff use of mobile phones

ESCAT schools must determine the appropriateness of staff using mobile phones. ESCAT recognises that restrictions on pupil use of mobile phones do not apply in the same way to staff, whose roles may require access to mobile technology to support teaching, safeguarding, operational communication or emergency response.

Staff are expected to model the standards of behaviour and professionalism that the Trust seeks to promote. Personal mobile phones should therefore be used discreetly and only where appropriate during the working day. Where possible, staff should use a school approved communication systems, for example Teams or Google Classroom, via a PC in preference to personal mobile phones. The use of personal devices must comply with the school's Safeguarding, Data Protection and Acceptable Use policies.

The role of parents

Parents have an important role in supporting the school's policy on prohibiting the use of mobile phones. The school policy on mobile phones should be clearly explained to parents, including the reasons behind the policy and the school's expectations.

Parents should also 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.

Where parents need to contact their child during the school day, they it should be clear that they contact the school office.

Visitors

Visitors must be made aware of the school's policy on mobile phones. Schools can determine the policy and procedure that allows for visitors to use phones

Measures taken by schools for visitors could include:

- Keep mobile phone on silent/vibrate while on the school grounds.
- Not using phones where pupils are present.
- Not taking photographs or recordings of pupils
- Not using a phone in lessons, or when working with pupils.