



Vita et Pax
PREPARATORY SCHOOL

Vita et Pax Preparatory School
Established 1936

Mobile Phone Policy

Policy Originator	Head Teacher
Approval	Pending ratification by the Governing Body
Date Approved	26 August 2026
Status	Statutory (KCSIE 2026, paragraph 168)
Review Period	Annually

1. Purpose and Scope

Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2026, paragraph 168, states that all schools should be mobile phone-free environments by default, and that anything other than this should be by exception only. It confirms that the department expects schools to implement a policy whereby pupils do not have access to their mobile phone throughout the school day, including during lessons, the time between lessons, breaktimes and lunchtime.

Vita et Pax Preparatory School already operates on that basis. This policy does not introduce a new position; it brings the school's existing mobile phone arrangements — previously set out across the Behaviour & Discipline Policy, the IT Acceptable Use Policy and the Online Safety Policy — together into a single document, so that pupils, parents, staff, visitors and inspectors can find the school's position in one place.

This policy applies to all members of the school community — pupils, staff, governors, parents, visitors, volunteers and contractors — while on the school site or otherwise in the presence of pupils in the course of school activity. It covers all pupils from Nursery (Little Vitas) to Year 6, including those in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS).

2. The Phone-Free School Day

In line with statutory KCSIE 2026 guidance that schools should be mobile phone-free environments by default, Vita et Pax operates a whole-school policy under which pupils do not have access to a mobile phone at any point during the school day — including lessons, time between lessons, breaktimes and lunchtime.

- Pupils are not permitted to bring mobile phones or smart devices into school.
- Any device brought into school must be handed to the school office.
- Any exception to this policy is agreed in advance with the Head Teacher. The standing exceptions for educational visits and emergencies are set out in section 6.
- The school does not require or expect pupils to use a personal device for any part of the taught curriculum. Where technology is needed for learning, school-owned devices are provided, filtered and monitored in accordance with the IT Acceptable Use Policy.

3. Pupils Who Travel Independently

The school recognises that a small number of pupils may need a phone for the journey to and from school. Where a phone is brought for safety reasons (for example, walking home), the existing arrangement applies:

- The phone is handed to the school office on arrival and collected at the end of the day.
- The arrangement is agreed in advance with the Head Teacher.
- The phone remains switched off and in the office's keeping for the whole school day. The pupil has no access to it during the school day.

Parents who need to pass a message to their child during the school day should telephone the school office on 020 8449 8336, as they would if their child had no phone at all. Parents should not attempt to contact a pupil directly during the school day.

4. Smart Devices and Other Internet-Enabled Devices

The school's position covers mobile phones and smart devices. A device that can send or receive messages, browse the internet, take photographs or make calls is treated in the same way as a mobile phone, whatever its form — including smartwatches and similar wearable or internet-enabled devices. Such devices must be handed to the school office on arrival on the same terms as a mobile phone.

Ordinary analogue or digital watches that only tell the time are not affected by this policy.

5. Staff

- Personal mobile phones must not be used in teaching areas or anywhere in the presence of children, except as section 6 provides for off-site activity and emergencies.
- Personal phones are kept out of sight and stored securely when not in use — in a bag, locker or the staffroom — and must be stored securely during teaching time.
- Staff may use personal phones in the staffroom or during designated breaks, away from children.
- EYFS: personal mobile phones and cameras are strictly prohibited in EYFS areas at all times. This applies to all adults, including staff, parents, visitors and volunteers. For EYFS outings, see section 6.
- Staff must not use personal email or social media accounts to contact pupils or parents. All school business is conducted on school systems.

Deliberate breaches of this policy by staff are dealt with as a disciplinary matter under the IT Acceptable Use Policy and the Staff Code of Conduct.

6. Educational Visits, Off-Site Activity and Emergencies

The phone-free position set out above is a position about the school day on the school site. It is not a bar on the use of a mobile phone where one is needed to supervise children safely away from school or to deal with an emergency. Off-site activity is planned and run under the Educational Visits Policy, which relies on staff being contactable and able to summon help; the EYFS statutory framework likewise requires a setting to be able to summon emergency help (paragraph 3.41). The following exceptions therefore apply, and they take precedence over sections 2 to 5 to the extent of any inconsistency.

- Staff on an educational visit may carry and use a mobile phone — a school device where one is available, otherwise a personal one — for headcounts and registers, contact with the school office, the contact tree, contact with the venue or transport provider, and calling the emergency services on 999.
- Emergencies on site. Any member of staff may use a mobile phone to summon help or to manage an incident, wherever they are in the school.
- A phone carried for these purposes is used for those purposes only. It is not used for personal calls, messaging or social media while staff are responsible for children, and it is never used to photograph or record pupils — section 8 applies in full off site.
- EYFS. The prohibition on personal phones and cameras applies to the school's EYFS areas. On an outing with EYFS children, staff carry a phone so that the group is contactable and can summon help, and use it only as set out above.
- Pupil phones on residential visits. Pupils do not bring phones on day visits. On a residential visit, any phone a pupil brings is held centrally by staff for the duration of the visit, as the Educational Visits Policy provides. Any supervised access is at the Visit Leader's discretion and is arranged with parents in advance.

7. Visitors, Parents, Volunteers and Contractors

- Visitors are informed of the school's mobile phone and camera policy on arrival and are expected to comply.
- Visitors must not use personal devices to photograph or record in school.
- Personal mobile phones and cameras are strictly prohibited in EYFS areas at all times, including for parents and visitors.

8. Photography and Recording

- Only school-owned devices may be used to photograph or record pupils.
- Staff must not use personal devices to photograph or record pupils.
- Parental consent is obtained for all pupil photography.
- Images are stored securely on school systems only, and never on personal devices.

9. Sanctions

Breaches of this policy by pupils are dealt with under the school's Behaviour & Discipline Policy, using the same graduated approach that applies to any other breach of school rules — beginning with a verbal reminder and escalating through warning, loss of privilege, reflection task, parental communication and, for repeated or more serious incidents, a meeting with the Head Teacher.

Sanctions are applied fairly, proportionately and consistently, and are never used to humiliate or degrade a child. A pupil's SEND is always considered before any sanction is imposed, and reasonable adjustments are made in line with the Equality Act 2010. Age-appropriate expectations apply in the EYFS.

Where a mobile phone or smart device has been used in a way that raises a safeguarding concern — including cyberbullying, or the making or sharing of nudes or semi-nudes — the DSL (Darren May) is informed immediately and the Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy and Online Safety Policy apply. Cyberbullying is dealt with under the Behaviour & Discipline Policy and the Anti-Bullying Policy.

10. Searching, Screening and Confiscation

The school follows DfE guidance: 'Searching, Screening and Confiscation' (2022). The Head Teacher and authorised staff may search pupils for prohibited items with their consent. Searching without consent is only permitted for items specified in law.

- Confiscated items are stored securely and returned to parents or, where illegal, passed to the police.
- Electronic devices may be examined if there is good reason to suspect they contain evidence relating to an offence or a breach of school rules.
- The school may search devices in accordance with the Education Act 2011 (staff powers to search and delete).
- Devices may be confiscated and secured for the police if a criminal offence may have been committed.
- Where an incident involves nudes or semi-nudes, images must never be viewed, copied, printed or shared by staff unless specifically directed by the police or children's social care. The incident is referred to the DSL immediately.

11. Relationship to Other Policies

This policy consolidates and does not replace the mobile phone provisions of the school's other policies. It should be read alongside:

- Behaviour & Discipline Policy — the phone-free school day as a school rule, the graduated approach to sanctions, and searching, screening and confiscation.
- IT Acceptable Use Policy — mobile phones and cameras, staff and visitor expectations, personal devices, photography, and filtering and monitoring (NeuralShield).
- Online Safety Policy — use of personal devices and mobile phones, cyberbullying, nudes and semi-nudes, and online safety education.
- Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy — the school's overarching safeguarding response, including the role of the DSL. In line with KCSIE 2026 paragraph 167, online safety and the school's approach to it are reflected in the child protection policy.
- Educational Visits Policy — off-site activity and residential visits, including staff communication and emergency contact arrangements and the central holding of pupil phones on residential (see section 6).
- Anti-Bullying Policy — cyberbullying and child-on-child abuse.
- SEND Policy — reasonable adjustments where a pupil's needs are relevant.

Where any other school policy addresses mobile phones, it is to be read consistently with this policy.

12. Communication, Monitoring and Review

This policy is published on the school website and drawn to the attention of parents at admission and at the start of each academic year. It forms part of staff induction and is reinforced with pupils through assemblies and PSHE.

The Head Teacher monitors the operation of this policy, including any exceptions agreed and any incidents recorded, and reports to the Governing Body. The Governing Body reviews this policy annually.

This policy consolidates the school's existing position from the Behaviour, IT Acceptable Use and Online Safety policies. It takes effect on issue and is submitted to the Governing Body for ratification at its next meeting.