

7 September 2026

Dear Parent/Carer

Mobile Phones and Similar Technology Policy – from September 2026

From 1 September 2026, St Thomas More will operate as a mobile phone-free school. Our purpose is simple: to provide a calm, safe and purposeful environment in which pupils can learn, build positive relationships and be fully present to one another.

A national expectation for schools in England

This is not a decision taken by St Thomas More in isolation. The Department for Education's guidance became statutory on 29 June 2026 and schools should follow it from 1 September 2026. It applies nationally to schools and trusts in England. The guidance states:

"This publication provides statutory guidance to individual schools and trusts on how to implement a policy that prohibits the use of mobile phones throughout the school day, including during lessons, the time between lessons, breaktimes and lunchtime."

The government's clear expectation is therefore that schools should be mobile phone-free by default.

The Department for Education identifies several reasons for this national approach:

- mobile phone use distracts the pupil using the device and can disrupt learning for an entire class;
- notifications, messaging and social media can divert attention and teachers' time away from learning;
- screen time can displace face-to-face socialising, physical activity and good sleep, all of which support wellbeing;
- access to cameras, recording and online communication can contribute to bullying, harassment, safeguarding concerns and the inappropriate sharing of images; and
- a consistent phone-free environment supports calm behaviour, stronger relationships and pupils' full engagement in school life.

The expectation for every pupil

The simplest and safest option is not to bring a phone or similar device to school. We recognise, however, that some families want their child to carry a phone for safety when travelling to and from school. If a device is brought onto the premises, every part of the following rule must be followed:

Pupils MUST	Pupils MUST NOT
• switch the device off completely before entering the school premises; • place it securely at the bottom of their school bag before entering; • leave it switched off and in that position for the whole school day; • wait until they have left the school premises before switching it on or accessing it; and • hand it over immediately if instructed by a member of staff.	• have it on their person, in clothing or anywhere other than at the bottom of their bag; • have it seen, heard, switched on, used or accessed anywhere on the premises; • use silent mode, flight mode or 'do not disturb' instead of switching it off; • make or receive calls, messages or notifications; or • use another pupil's device or bring a second or 'spare' device.

These expectations apply everywhere on the school premises and throughout the whole school day: before registration, during lessons, between lessons, at breaktime and lunchtime, and after the final lesson while a pupil remains on site, including for an after-school club.

Phones are not a classroom resource

There are no classroom or curriculum exceptions. Pupils must not use a personal phone or similar device:

- to listen to music or use personal headphones or connected earbuds;
- for research, internet searches, calculators, translation, timing or any other learning task;
- to display an image, artwork, photograph, revision material or homework;
- to photograph work, the board or another person; or
- to film, make an audio recording or access social media, games or entertainment.

School equipment and approved school systems must be used instead. For example, if a pupil finds an image or resource at home that they need in school, they should send it to their own school email or save it to their MSTEams account so that it can be accessed on a school device.

Similar technology is included

The policy covers mobile phones and any personal smart or communication technology with similar functionality, including smartwatches, connected earbuds, tablets and devices capable of calls, messages, notifications, internet access, photography, filming or audio recording. Pupils must not communicate through a smartwatch, earbuds or another connected device.

Contact during the school day

Pupils must not use a personal device to contact home. If a pupil needs to contact a parent or carer, a member of staff will facilitate this through the school office or pastoral team. Similarly, parents and carers must not call, message or otherwise contact their child through a personal device during the school day. Please contact the school office; we will relay an appropriate message or facilitate communication.

Confiscation and consequences

If a breach occurs	The device will be confiscated immediately, recorded and stored securely. The school will contact the parent/carers.
Return of device	A confiscated device will not be returned to the pupil. It must be collected from the school office by a parent/carers, or by another responsible adult authorised in advance. The adult collecting it will sign the school acknowledgement record.
First breach	Parent/carers collection and a signed acknowledgement.
Second/further breach	A second breach also results in a Headteacher Detention. Further breaches, refusal to hand over a device, deliberate concealment, deception, a second device or a serious incident will be dealt with under the Behaviour Policy and may lead to further action.

Photographing or recording others, using a device in toilets or changing rooms, bullying, harassment, sexual-image sharing or suspected criminal conduct may result in additional safeguarding action, sanctions and referral to the police or another agency.

Medical needs and individual adjustments

The only routine exception is where a pupil has a significant medical need requiring access to a phone or associated technology, such as continuous glucose monitoring for diabetes. This is not automatic and must be formally authorised by the Headteacher following consideration of the individual need and relevant evidence.

Any agreed arrangement will permit only the specific medical purpose, times and locations recorded in the pupil's plan; it will not allow general communication, entertainment, photography, recording or social-media use.

Working together

We ask parents and carers to reinforce these expectations at home, avoid sending a phone to school unless it is needed for the journey, and make clear to their child that there will be no exceptions for ordinary school use. A device brought to school remains at the owner's risk; the school cannot accept responsibility for loss, theft or damage.

This consistent approach will help us protect learning, safety, wellbeing and positive relationships across our school family. Thank you for your support in ensuring that every pupil understands and follows the policy from the first day of the new academic year.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D Redfern', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Mr D Redfern
Headteacher