ST. MARY'S *Catholic High School, Dubai*

MOBILE PHONE POLICY

2025-2026

St. Mary's Catholic High School, Dubai

At St. Mary's Catholic High School, Dubai, we believe that every child has the right to learn in a safe and caring environment without fear of being bullied. By having a written policy outlining the definition of Cyber-Bullying in all its forms, we believe that we are taking the first and most essential steps to tackling bullying and ensuring the school creates a safe learning environment where risk of harm is minimized and students feel socially and emotionally secure.
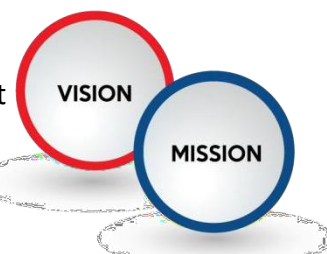
As with all the policies of the school, we believe that our stated mission and vision for the next five years underlies the ethos of the school and underpins everything that the school stands for,

MISSION STATEMENT

We serve with compassion to develop a deep sense of integrity, mutual respect and tolerance within the Marian family so that the uniqueness of each person is celebrated, allowing them to holistically develop as successful learners and responsible citizens.

VISION:

Within the next 5 years, we envision ourselves as a school community that consistently strives to develop highly independent learners who confidently showcase innovation through meaningful reflection and purposeful collaboration. We aim to achieve this by ensuring every teacher inspires students through effective questioning and feedback to reach their highest potential in a culturally diverse society.

Objectives:

This policy has been developed in order to ensure that all stake holders including the students, teachers, senior leadership team and other members are well versed and aware of how to report cyber-bullying and what to do in the event that cyber-bullying is reported. The school also makes it clear that cyber-bullying is not tolerated and when dealing with cyber-bullying there is a clear message that the offender will be firmly dealt with.

Why We Are a Phone Free School

At SMCHS, Dubai, we are proud to be a phone-free learning environment during the school day. This approach reflects our safeguarding responsibilities, our commitment to student wellbeing and our dedication to creating a calm, focused and inclusive culture where every learner can thrive.

We believe in the use of technology when it is used purposefully and in support of learning. Digital tools, when introduced in a structured and intentional way at the right age, can enhance engagement, deepen understanding and open up new possibilities for collaboration and creativity.

Extensive global research has shown that limiting phone use during the school day leads to improved academic focus, stronger student engagement and enhanced social development. Evidence also highlights that excessive mobile phone use negatively impacts memory, attention and emotional wellbeing, particularly among adolescents. Students who are free from digital distraction are more likely to participate fully in lessons, collaborate effectively with peers, and make sustained academic progress.

Promoting Safety

We also understand that for those children who travel by public transport, a mobile phone is a means of communication between the child and parent. It is for these reasons of safety that phones are required to be surrendered at the start of the day, and phones are returned at the end of the school day.

This policy is not about restriction; it is about creating the best possible conditions for learning and personal growth. By removing the distraction of mobile phones during the day, we are giving students the space to think deeply, connect authentically and flourish both academically and socially.

1. Purpose and Principles

At SMCHS, Dubai, our phone free policy reflects our commitment to our core values:

Respect, Excellence, Collaboration and Integrity. This policy is in place to:

- Maximise learning time and academic focus by removing digital distractions.
- Promote positive learning behaviours such as attentiveness, communication and collaboration.
- Support student wellbeing by promoting face-to-face interaction and screen breaks. Students will build stronger communication skills, empathy and emotional intelligence.
- To reinforce respect and safety by creating a safe, calm and respectful school environment where every student can thrive.

Being phone free enables students to remain fully present in their learning and school experience.

2. Further Education: Supporting Responsible Digital Citizens

At SMCHS, Dubai, we recognise that digital literacy is part of modern life. Alongside our

phone policy, we are committed to educating students on how to use technology safely,

respectfully and responsibly. Throughout the year, we will:

- Deliver assemblies and registration sessions focused on digital responsibility, online safety and social media awareness.
- Provide awareness on topics such as:
- Managing screen time
- Online reputation and digital footprints
- Cyberbullying and respectful online communication
- Understanding privacy and consent
- Social Media
- Invite guest speakers and run special awareness campaigns during Safer Internet Week and other relevant times.
- Share regular resources and guidance with students and parents to support healthy tech habits at home and at school.
- Encourage open conversations between staff, students and families about the role of technology in students' lives.

3. Phone Use Expectations

- All phones should be labelled clearly with student's name and class.
- Students should switch off their phones before the school day begins.
- If a student needs to contact home during the day, they must do so via the school office.
- Likewise, we kindly ask parents not to call or message their child during the school day. Please contact the school office for any urgent communication.
- Headphones and earbuds are not allowed to be used unless it is required for an International Benchmark test.
- Later comers up to Year 11, must hand over their phones to the principal's secretary.
- Later comers from Year 12 and Year 13 must hand over their phones to Ms. Leocardia.

4. Sanctions for Non Compliance

If a phone is not handed in to the class teacher in the morning, a clear escalation process will be followed for any breach of the phone policy:

Stage	Consequence	Details
1	First Incident - Phone confiscated.	Phone returned at the end of the day. Students are reminded of the policy.
2	Second Incident - Phone confiscated and warning letter issued to parents.	Formal letter sent home. Phone returned before the weekend.
3	Third Incident - Phone confiscation, parent informed, and parent meeting scheduled final warning letter issued.	If phone is confiscated, it will be returned to parents NOT the student.
4	Any further incidents and external suspension.	Students are not allowed to bring their phone to school for the remainder of the term. If phone is confiscated, it will be returned to parents NOT the student.

***All incidents will be recorded and tracked by the leadership teams.

5. Serious Breach

If a student, who has failed to hand in their phone and uses their phone in a manner that constitutes a serious breach of safeguarding (e.g., recording or photographing another student without consent, sharing harmful or inappropriate content, or using the phone to bully or intimidate others), this will result in an immediate external suspension and a permanent phone ban. The incident will be escalated to the Designated Safeguarding Lead and may involve KHDA and other external agencies if necessary.

6. Parent and Student Communication

All student-parent communication during the school day must go through the school office.

Students are not permitted to call, message, or receive calls from parents directly during school hours.

Parents are kindly asked to follow this procedure to support consistency and safety.

7. Responsibility

- Please ensure that all phones are in a protective cover (Covering both front screen and back).
- Please ensure that all phones are labelled on the back with the student's name.

Next Review : June 2026