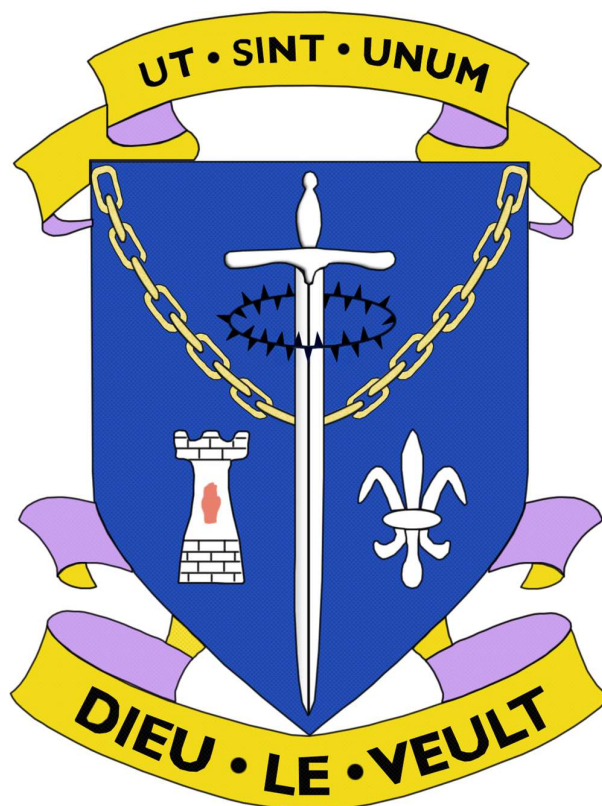


St Louis Grammar School Kilkeel



Mobile Phone Policy September 2026

Date of Policy	September 2026
Date Ratified	June 2026
Reviewed by	Senior Leadership Team in consultation with the Board of Governors.
Review Date	June 2026

Mobile Phone Policy

Date of Policy: June 2026

Reviewed by: The Senior Leadership Team in consultation with the Board of Governors.

1. Rationale and Legal Context

As a school community, we have a statutory duty under Article 17 of the Education and Libraries (Northern Ireland) Order 2003 to safeguard and promote the welfare of our registered pupils. In response to mounting evidence regarding the impact of mobile devices on pupil behaviour, mental health, and the unacceptable digital abuse of staff and peers, St Louis Grammar School is updating its approach to mobile technology.

This policy aligns with **Department of Education (DE) Circular 2024/14**, which advises that the personal use of pupil mobile phones should be restricted during the school day for the vast majority of pupils, including during lunch and recreational periods. To eliminate the temptation of covert phone use and to ensure consistent enforcement, we are introducing a "Gate-to-Gate - Unseen / unheard" ban facilitated by signal-blocking mobile phone pouches.

2. The "Gate-to-Gate" PhoneLocker Pouch Rule

To create a safe, distraction-free environment, the school will operate a strict "Gate-to-Gate" policy. Phones must be locked inside the pouch on arrival to school until 3:00pm, during which time all personal smart devices must be secured in a school issued PhoneLocker pouch.

- **Compulsory PhoneLocker Pouch:** A £10 payment must be made via ParentPay for all pupils to receive their designated pouch. If a pouch is not purchased, the pupil cannot bring their phone onto school premises.
- **Signal Blocking:** The PhoneLocker pouches are specially designed to block all cellular signals and internet access while the device is locked inside.
- **Morning Routine :** Upon arrival at school pupils must turn their phones off, place the phone (along with any other smart tech devices) inside the pouch, and lock it. Form Tutors will check compliance during registration.
- **End of the Day:** Pupils will unlock their pouches using designated magnetic unlocking stations located at all pupil entrances, exits, and the Bus Bay at 3:00 PM.

3. Compliance and Sanctions

- **Forgotten Pouches:** If a pupil forgets to bring their pouch their phone must be left in the school office and collected at the end of the school day.
- **Misuse and Confiscation:** Any pupil caught unlocking their pouch, causing damage to it, attempting to use an alternate/dummy phone, or found using their phone during the school day will have their phone confiscated and will be subject to sanctions as

outlined in the mobile phone policy and positive behaviour policy.

- **Damage/Loss:** Pupils are responsible for the care of their pouch. If a pupil intentionally damages or loses their pouch, they will be required to pay for a replacement.

Issue	Sanction
Pupil forgets mobile phone pouch	Phones must be submitted to the school office and collected at the end of the day.
Pupil caught with mobile phone not in pouch	Phone confiscated - parent to pick up phone after 3:15pm from the school office
Pupil caught unlocking pouch outside of the allowed times	Phone confiscated - parent to pick up phone after 3:15pm from the school office
Pupil has lost or damaged pouch	Required to pay for a replacement

4. Medical and SEN Exceptions

Exceptions to the standard locking policy are strictly reserved for students with documented medical requirements, such as those using continuous glucose monitors for diabetes management, who depend on their devices for health tracking.

- Students with approved medical needs will be issued a specialized, non-locking PhoneLocker pouch featuring a Velcro closure.
- Written requests for Velcro pouches based on specific Special Educational Needs (SEN) must be submitted to the Vice Principal for formal review.

5. Sixth Form Expectations

Mobile phone use remains prohibited for Sixth Form students (Years 13 and 14) during school hours. To support independent learning and Google Classroom assignments, senior pupils are required to use personal laptops within designated Sixth Form Study zones.

6. Off-Site Activities and Academic Exceptions

- **Authorised Early Leave:** Students signing out before 3:00 PM for approved reasons, such as medical appointments, will have their pouches opened by administrative staff at the office. Should a student return later that day, the device must be re-secured immediately.
- **Extra curricular sport and school trips:** Trip leaders will be guided by the mobile phone policy, school trips policy and other relevant school policies.
- **Educational Integration:** On occasion teachers may unlock phone pouches if students are required to use their personal device for a specific task. Pupils must lock their phones back in the pouches at the end of the lesson before leaving the classroom.

- **After school extra curricular activities:** The Gate-to-Gate approach extends to and includes those pupils who are involved in any sort of after school extra curricular activities. Therefore pupils may only unlock their phone when they are leaving the school grounds.

7. Students Who Need their Phones for Medical Apps

Students who have a documented medical condition and who need a personal device for monitoring their condition will be provided with a non-locking Mobile Phone Pouch that has a velcro seal. Any other requests for a velcro pouch must be submitted in writing to the Vice Principal for consideration.

SEN students who need to regulate by listening to music are permitted to use a dedicated music player (such as an iPod). Written requests to use these devices during the school day must be submitted to the SENCo for approval.

6. Appointments

- **Early Departures:** Pupils leaving the building before 3:00 PM for an authorised reason (e.g., medical appointments) will have their pouches unlocked by office staff as they sign out. If returning during the school day, the pouch must be locked immediately upon re-entry by the office staff.

7. Emergencies and Communication

- **Parental Contact:** The established school procedures apply. Parents must phone the office if they need to relay a message to their child.
- **Student Contact:** Similarly, the established school procedures still apply. If a pupil needs to contact a parent or guardian during the school day for a valid reason, they must go to the school reception to make the call. For pastoral or welfare issues, pupils should approach their Head of Year, who will facilitate a private call.
- **School-Wide Emergencies:** In the event of a school-wide emergency where immediate access to personal devices is required for safety (e.g., an evacuation where re-entry is prohibited), the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) will deploy portable unlocking stations to provide pupils with access to their phones.

8. Responsibility and Liability

While phones are in their locked pouches, they remain the responsibility of the pupil and should be kept securely in their school bags. The school accepts **no responsibility whatsoever** for theft, loss, or damage to mobile phones or electronic devices including the Phone Pouches. It is the responsibility of parents and pupils to ensure devices are properly insured.