

# Mobile Phones and Smart Devices Policy

## 1. Introduction and aims

While mobile phones and personal communication devices are commonplace in today's society, it is recognised that personal mobile phones including smart phones have the potential to be used inappropriately. Most mobile phones now offer Internet and email access, alongside messaging, camera, video and sound recording. They can provide security and reassurance; however there also associated risks. Safeguarding of children within the school is paramount.

Effective guidance is in place to avoid the use of mobile phones causing unnecessary disruptions and distractions within the workplace, and to ensure effective safeguarding practice is promoted to protect against potential misuse.

The terms 'phone' or 'mobile phone' in this guidance denotes mobile phones, iPods, iPads, tablets, MP3 players, MP4 players and smart watches.

### 1.1 The guidance aims to:

- Set out clear guidance for the use of mobile phones for staff (including supply staff), pupils and volunteers
- Set out clear guidance for visitors and contractors
- Ensure robust safeguarding
- Support schools' other policies relating to child protection and behaviour

## Staff responsibilities

All staff (including teachers, support staff, and supply staff) may wish to have their personal mobile phones at work for use in case of emergencies, however there is a clear expectation that all personal use is limited to areas and times when there are no children present or likely to be present.

### 2.1 All staff:

- The school expects staff to lead by example and therefore should not make or receive personal calls or respond to texts/messages, whilst children are present or during contact time.
- Staff (including volunteers and supply staff) should only use their mobile phones for personal contact in designated areas such as the Team Room.

- Other than in agreed exceptional circumstances, mobile phones should be switched off or on silent and left in a safe place during lesson times.
- It is advisable to password protect mobile phones when not in use.

## **2.2 Safeguarding**

- Staff should not contact pupils or parents from their personal mobile phone in or out of school time or give their mobile phone number to pupils or parents. If a member of staff needs to make telephone contact with a pupil, a school telephone should be used.
- Staff should not share personal contact details through social media and messaging apps.
- Staff should never send to, or accept from, colleagues or pupils, texts or images that could be viewed as inappropriate.
- Staff are not permitted to take photos or videos of pupils or anything else (e.g. work) that might identify the pupil on a personal mobile.
- If photos or videos are being taken as part of the school curriculum or for a professional capacity, the school equipment will be used for this. Staff should not allow themselves to be photographed by a pupil(s).

## **2.3 Using a personal mobile for work purposes**

In some circumstances, it may be appropriate for staff to use a personal mobile phone for work purposes. Where possible this should always be agreed with a line manager or Senior Leader in advance. Such circumstances may include, but are not limited to:

- Emergency evacuations
- Parental contact in emergencies (mobile phones setting that allow for the number not to be identified should be used)

This guidance should be seen as a safeguard for members of staff and the school. Any breach of school policy may result in disciplinary action against that member of staff.

## **3 Pupils:**

We recognise that older pupils may bring mobile phones to school. Expectations around phone usage should be clearly communicated to all pupils and parents.

### **3.1 Primary**

- Pupils are dissuaded from bringing mobile phones to school.
- If it is deemed necessary for a pupil to bring a mobile phone to school, (e.g. in the case of older pupils because they travel to and from school independently), then the expectation is that the pupil hands their phone into the class teacher. They will put the device in a safe place for the day, such as a draw or cupboard. It will be returned to the pupil at the end of the school day, for the journey home.

#### **4 Parents, visitors and contractors:**

Parents, visitors and contractors are respectfully requested not to use their mobile phones at all on the school site/in any area where children/young people are present.

- Should phone calls and/or texts/messages need to be taken or made, use is restricted to those areas not accessed by children to avoid any unnecessary disturbance or disruption to others.
- Should phone calls/and or texts/messages need to be taken or made, visitors are asked to do this in the school car park or to request a space away from pupils.
- Photos of children must not be taken without prior discussion with a member of the Senior Management Team and in accordance with the UK General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018 and using the 'Use of images consent form' (please refer to the school's document "Guidance for schools and other establishments on the use of images").
- Any individual bringing a personal device into the school must ensure that it contains no inappropriate or illegal content.

#### **5 Inappropriate or illegal content:**

Where there is a suspicion that the material on a mobile phone may be unsuitable and may constitute evidence relating to a criminal offence, the 'Allegations of Abuse' process will be followed (please refer to the school's 'Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy').

- For both staff and pupils, the school retains no liability for any phone that is brought into school which is either lost, stolen or damaged
- For both staff and pupils, the school retains no liability for any phone that is used in a manner that is against the owners consent.

#### **Related Policies and guidance:**

Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy (September 2023)

Guidance for Safer Working Practice for Adults who work with Children and Young People in Education Settings (Feb 2022)

Keeping Children Safe in Education (September 2023)

Guidance for schools and other establishments on the use of images (Sep 21)

Data Protection: A toolkit for schools, DfE, (August 2018)

Online Safety Policy (July 2023)

Acceptable Use of ICT Policy & Agreement (July 2023)