

Mobile Phone Policy

February 2016

At Wadebridge Primary Academy the welfare and well-being of our pupils is paramount. The aim of the Mobile Phone Policy is to allow users to benefit from modern communication technologies, whilst promoting safe and appropriate practice through establishing clear and robust acceptable mobile user guidelines. This is achieved through balancing protection against potential misuse with the recognition that mobile phones are effective communication tools. It is recognised that it is the enhanced functions of many mobile phones that cause the most concern, offering distractions and disruption to the working day, and which are most susceptible to misuse - including the taking and distribution of indecent images, exploitation and bullying. However as it is difficult to detect specific usage, this policy refers to ALL mobile communication devices.

Scope

This policy applies to all individuals who have access to personal mobile phones on site. This includes staff, volunteers, governors, children, young people, parents, carers, visitors and contractors. This list is not exhaustive.

This policy should also be read in relation to the following documentation:

- Safeguarding
- Esafety
- Acceptable use policy (for visitors)
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Visitor policy
- Volunteering leaflet
- Guidance on the Use of Photographic Images and Videos of Children in Schools

Code of conduct

A code of conduct is promoted with the aim of creating a cooperative workforce, where staff work as a team, have high values and respect each other; thus creating a strong morale and sense of commitment leading to increased productivity.

Our aim is therefore that all practitioners:

- have a clear understanding of what constitutes misuse.
- know how to minimise risk.
- avoid putting themselves into compromising situations which could be misinterpreted and lead to possible allegations.
- understand the need for professional boundaries and clear guidance regarding acceptable use.
- are responsible for self-moderation of their own behaviours.
- are aware of the importance of reporting concerns promptly.

It is fully recognised that imposing rigid regulations on the actions of others can be counterproductive. An agreement of trust is therefore promoted regarding the carrying and use of mobile phones within the setting, which is agreed to by all users:

Personal Mobiles - Staff

- Staff are not permitted to make/receive calls/texts during contact time with Children. Emergency contact should be made via the school office.
- Staff should have their phones on silent or switched off and out of sight (e.g. in a drawer, handbag or pocket) during class time.
- Mobile phones should not be used in a space where children are present (eg. classroom, playground).
- Use of phones (inc.receiving/sending texts and emails) should be limited to non-contact time when no children are present e.g. in office areas, staff room, empty classrooms.
- It is also advised that staff security protect access to functions of their phone.
- Should there be exceptional circumstances (e.g. acutely sick relative), then staff should make the Headteacher aware of this and can have their phone in case of having to receive an emergency call.
- Staff are not at any time permitted to use recording equipment on their mobile phones, for example: to take recordings of children, or sharing images. Legitimate recordings and photographs should be captured using school equipment such as cameras and ipads.
- Staff should report any usage of mobile devices that causes them concern to the Headteacher.

Mobile Phones for work related purposes

We recognise that mobile phones provide a useful means of communication on offsite activities and we provide a school mobile phone to be used when offsite. Should the school mobile be unavailable, personal mobile phone use is permitted to facilitate the health and safety of the members of the party. Staff should ensure that:

- Mobile use on these occasions is appropriate and professional (and will never include taking photographs of children).
- Mobile phones should not be used to make contact with parents during school trips – all relevant communications should be made via the school office.
- Where parents are accompanying trip's they are informed not to make contact with other parents (via calls, text, email or social networking) during the trip or use their phone to take photographs of children.

Personal Mobiles - Pupils

We recognise that mobile phones are part of everyday life for many children and that they can play an important role in helping pupils to feel safe and secure. However we also recognise that they can prove a distraction in school and can provide a means of bullying or intimidating others.

We do recognise that in Year 5 and 6, mobile phones may have a part to play in securing pupils' personal safety before and after school and on journeys to and from school. Moreover, a ban would be difficult to enforce and would not be consistent with the aim of developing a culture of responsible use of mobile phone and other digital devices by pupils.

Therefore:

- Pupils are not permitted to have mobile phones at school or on trips

- If in the rare event of a parent wishing for his/her child to bring a mobile phone to school to contact the parent after school / or secure personal safety before/after school:
 - the parent must discuss the issue first with their child's teacher and complete a permission form.
- the phone must be clearly marked with the child's name, handed in, switched off, to the school office first thing in the morning and collected from them by the child at home time (it is to be made clear to parents that where they have been given permission for their child to bring a mobile phone to school they do so entirely at their own risk. The school accepts no responsibility for any loss or damage whilst the device is on school premises).
- This policy and procedure will be posted on the school website.
- Mobile phones brought to school without permission or which should have been handed in to the office will be confiscated and only returned to the parent or carer of the child at the end of the day. Under no circumstances should there be access to phones during the school day or be left in pupils' bags, coats or folders.
- Where mobile phones are used in or out of school to bully or intimidate others, the head teacher does have the power to intervene 'to such an extent as it is reasonable to regulate the behaviour of pupils when they are off the school site' - refer to Anti-Bullying Policy.

Volunteers, Visitors, Governors and Contractors

All Volunteers, Visitors, Governors and Contractors are expected to follow our mobile phone policy as it relates to staff whilst on the premises. On arrival, such visitors will be informed of our expectations around the use of mobile phones.

Parents

While we would prefer parents not to use their mobile phones while at school, we recognise that this would be impossible to regulate and that many parents see their phones as essential means of communication at all times. We therefore ask that parents' usage of mobile phones, whilst on the school site is *courteous* and *appropriate* to the school environment.

We also allow parents to photograph or video school events such as shows or sports day using their mobile phones – **but insist that parents do not publish images (e.g. on social networking sites) that include any children other than their own.** Please refer to Guidance on the Use of Photographic Images and Videos of Children in Schools.

Inappropriate use of a mobile phone

If a pupil is found taking photographs or video footage with a mobile phone of either pupils or teachers, this will be regarded as a serious offence and a member of the Senior Management Team should be involved from the outset. If images of other pupils or teachers have been taken the phone will not be returned to the pupil until the images have been deleted.

The parent/guardian will be contacted by a member of the SMT. If this is not possible, then a letter will be sent notifying them of the seriousness of this action.

In the rare circumstance that there is evidence of harassment and/or bullying, the phone or digital device should be confiscated, retained in a secure place by an appropriate member of staff, taking care not to delete any images or recordings which could be used as evidence. Accurate records of any incidents should be logged.

Sanctions

Pupils who infringe the agreement set out in this policy may not be allowed to bring their mobile phone into school.

On the first infringement the mobile phone would be confiscated by the teacher and taken to a secure place within the school office. The student will be able to collect the mobile phone at the end of the school day and a record will be made of the incident. A letter will also be sent to the parent/carer to inform them of the incident.

On the second infringement the mobile phone would be confiscated by the teacher and taken to a secure place within the school office. Parents will be notified and the pupil will not be permitted to collect the phone without a parent/carer's consent. If a parent/carer is unable to attend the school they are permitted to phone and give verbal consent for their child to collect the phone and must speak to a member of the management team. The incident will be recorded.

On the third infringement the mobile phone would be confiscated by the teacher and taken to a secure place within the school office. Parents will be notified and the pupil will not be permitted to collect the phone without a parent/carer present. After the third infringement the school will withdraw the agreement to allow the student to bring the mobile telephone to school.

The school will treat breaches of this policy as they would treat any other breach of school rules or staff discipline policy.

Dissemination

The mobile phone policy will be shared with staff and volunteers as part of their induction. It will also be available to parents via the school office and website.