

Mobile Phone Policy



St. Peter's C of E Primary Academy

Executive Principal: Sarah Cockshott

Head of School: James Dean

Chair of Local Academy Committee: Michelle Painter

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Principles

Mobile phone technology has advanced significantly over the last few years - and it continues to evolve.

Wireless connections in particular have extended the capabilities of mobile phones, enabling access to a wide range of new content and services globally. Many phones now offer Internet and email access, alongside the most often standard functions of messaging, camera, video and sound recording.

Mobile phones, alongside other forms of technology are changing the way and speed in which we communicate. They can provide security and reassurance; however, there are also associated risks.

Children and young people need to understand these risks in order to help them develop appropriate strategies for keeping themselves safe. As with e-safety issues generally, risks to children and young people can be broadly categorised under the headings of content, contact and conduct and managed by reducing availability, restricting access and increasing resilience.

Aim

The aim of the Mobile Phone Policy is to promote safe and appropriate practice through establishing clear and robust acceptable use guidelines. This is achieved through balancing protection against potential misuse with the recognition that mobile phones are effective communication tools - which in turn can contribute to safeguarding practice and protection.

Scope

This policy applies to all individuals who have access to personal or work-related mobile phones on site.

This includes practitioners, volunteers, committee members, children, young people, parents, carers, visitors and community users. This list is not exhaustive.

It is recognised that it is the enhanced functions of many mobile phones that cause the most concern, and which are most susceptible to misuse. Misuse includes the taking and distribution of indecent images, exploitation and bullying.

It is also recognised that mobile phones can cause an unnecessary distraction during the working day and can be intrusive when used in the company of others.

When mobiles phones are misused it can impact on an individual's dignity, privacy and right to confidentiality. Such concerns are not exclusive to children and young people; hence there is a duty to protect the needs and vulnerabilities of all.

It is appreciated that it can be very difficult to detect when such devices are present or being used, particularly in relation to enhanced functions, such as cameras. The use of all mobile phones is therefore limited, regardless of their capabilities. The aim is to avoid distraction and disruption of the working day, and to minimise the opportunities for any individual to make any covert images or misuse functions in any other way.

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.

It is therefore ensured that all practitioners:

- have a clear understanding of what constitutes misuse.
- are vigilant and alert to potential warning signs.
- 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 studies consistently indicate that imposing rigid regulations and/or 'bans' on the actions of others can be counterproductive, leading to a culture of suspicion, uncertainty and secrecy.

The imposition of rigorous, inflexible rules is therefore avoided, unless the potential risks of not enforcing them far out-weigh the benefits. An agreement of trust is therefore promoted regarding the carrying and use of mobile phones within the setting environment, which is agreed to by all practitioners.

School procedures

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.

In the interests of equality, and to further promote safety, the guidance applies to any individual who has a mobile phone on site, including children, parents and visitors, as detailed below:

Staff are permitted to have their mobile phones about their person; however, there is a clear expectation that all personal use is limited to allocated lunch and/or breaks.

Other than in agreed exceptional circumstances, phones must be switched off and calls and texts must not be taken or made during lesson time.

Staff are not permitted, in any circumstance to use their phones or their own cameras for taking, recording or sharing images.

Staff should not, under normal circumstances, use their own personal phones for contacting children, young people and their families within or outside of the setting.

Mobile Phones and Cameras in Early Years and Foundation Stage

Appropriate use of mobile phones is essential within Early Years and The Foundation Stage. The use of mobile phones does not detract from the quality of supervision and care of children. Practitioners are able to use their personal mobile phones during their break times. During working hours, they must be kept out of the reach of children, in a secure area accessible only to staff. All staff are made aware of their duty to follow this procedure which is set out in the Code of Conduct. In order to safeguard children and adults and to maintain privacy, cameras are expressly forbidden from being taken into the toilets by adults or children. All adults whether teachers, practitioners or volunteers understand the difference between appropriate and inappropriate sharing of images. All images are kept securely in compliance with the Data Protection Act/GDPR.

Parents, visitors and contractors

Are respectfully requested to use their mobile phones only in areas not accessed by children, in order to avoid any unnecessary disturbance or disruption to others.

Under every day circumstances **no** individual is permitted to take images or make recordings on a mobile phone. The main exception to this is parental use of mobile devices to record or photograph their own children during assemblies or school productions with specific agreement that such images and recordings are not shared on social media and are for personal use only.

Any individual bringing a personal device into the setting must ensure that it contains no inappropriate or illegal content.