

Mobile Phone Policy

Rationale

The Policy defines and describes the acceptable use of ICT (Information and Communications Technology) and mobile phones for all members of the school community. The phrase 'mobile phone' in this policy should be taken as referring to mobile phones and electronic devices.

The school does not take responsibility for loss or damage to mobile phones.

Introduction

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 e-mail 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 keep 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 communications 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.

Policy Statement

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 mobile 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 research indicates 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 Responsibilities

The Governing Body is responsible for ensuring that its employees act in a lawful manner; make appropriate use of school technologies for approved purposes only.

The Governing Body is responsible for adopting relevant policies and the Headteacher for ensuring that staff are aware of their contents.

If the Headteacher has reason to believe that any ICT equipment has been misused, they will consult the LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer) for advice without delay. Incidents will be investigated in a timely manner in accordance with agreed procedures.

The Headteacher will make it clear that internal school staff should not carry out any investigations unless they are both qualified and authorised to do so.

User Responsibilities

Staff found to be in breach of this policy may be disciplined in accordance with Local Authority disciplinary procedures. In certain circumstances, breach of this policy may be considered gross misconduct resulting in termination of employment. Users must report all suspected breaches of this policy to the Headteacher.

Users and Line Managers are responsible for ensuring that adequate induction, training and support is undertaken to implement this policy. By logging on to ICT systems, users agree to abide by this Acceptable Use policy and other policies that relate to the use of ICT.

Safeguarding

- Photographs are a valuable tool for recording and assessing children's activities and achievements at Oldfield
- The admission process requires parents/carers to sign a 'Standard Photography, Video and Voice Consent Form' giving permission for photographs to be taken of their child whilst a pupil.
- Mobile phones should not be used in a space where children are present (e.g., classroom, playground)

- Staff are not at any time permitted to use recording equipment on their mobile phones for example; to take photographs of videos of children
- Photographs will only be taken with a digital camera, or school device, **never with camera phone/mobile phones**. Any photographs not required will be deleted

Children and Mobiles

The following rules apply for the use of personal phones:

- Parents will be contacted if any child is found with a mobile phone during school time
- If a child brings a mobile phone into school, it must be given to the school office to store for safe keeping, to be returned at the end of the school day

Staff and Mobiles

- The school accepts that employees will bring their phone to work
- Staff must have their phones on 'silent' or switched off during class time
- Staff may not make or receive calls during teaching time. If there are extreme circumstances (e.g.; acutely sick relative) the member of staff will have made the Headteacher aware of this, and can have their phone in case of having to receive an emergency call
- Use of phones must be limited to non-contact time when no children are present
- Phones must be kept out of sight (e.g., drawer, handbag, pocket) when staff are with children
- Calls/texts must be made/received in private during non-contact time
- Phones will never be used to photographs of children or to store their personal data
- A mobile will be carried on an educational visit for contacting parents in the event of an emergency
- In the event that an employee has a particular reason for a specified period of time, they may request, via the Headteacher, that they leave their phone on during working hours
- Photographs will only be taken of children (with a digital camera, or school device only) during normal school activities. Cameras will never be taken into the toilets/changing areas. A child will never be photographed when they are changing clothes for an activity e.g., PE in school time
- Staff are not to give their home telephone number or their mobile phone number to parents/carers or pupils. Mobile phone communication should be used sparingly and only when deemed necessary in consultation with the headteacher.
- Photographs and videos of pupils should not be taken with mobile phones
- Staff are not to make use of pupils' mobile phone numbers, either to make or receive phone calls or to send to, or receive from pupils' text messages
- Staff should only communicate electronically with pupils from school accounts on approved school business e.g., Teams
- Staff should not enter into instant messaging communications with pupils

Parents and other visitors

- We request that parents do not use mobile phones in the school buildings

We very much appreciate our parent' support in implementing this policy in order to keep your children/our pupils safe.

Links with other policies:

ICT/Computing and Safeguarding Policies