Mobile Phone and Devices in School Policy

Agreed on: Summer Term 2025
Next Reviewed: Summer Term 2027

1.0 Introduction

It is widely recognised that many children have access to personal communication devices including mobile phones, smart phones and smart watches. Children using these devices are likely to have unlimited and unrestricted access to the internet via mobile networks such as 3G, 4G, 5G, Airdropping and 'Nearby Share' (see Annex 1 for more details). For many these devices 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, smart phone and smart watches 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, smart phones, airpods, iPods, iPads, 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

2.0 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 texts (via mobile phone or smart watch), whilst children are present or during contact time.

- Staff (including volunteers and supply staff) should only use their mobile phones and smart devices for personal contact in designated areas such as a staff room.

- Other than in agreed exceptional circumstances, mobile phones should be switched off or on silent and left in a safe place and smart watches silenced during lesson times.

- ## 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 regularly monitor and update their privacy settings on social media sites

- Staff should never accept a 'friend request' or respond to any posts that may deliberately or inadvertently include them but inform their line manager or Senior Leader of the contact.

- 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.

- If photos or videos are being taken as part of the school curriculum or for promotional purposes, then school equipment must be used. 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 emergency's (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.

3.0   Pupils responsibilities:

We recognise that the majority of pupils will bring mobile phones to school, and many may well wear a smart watch. Expectations around phone and smart watch 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 to the class teacher at the start of the day. This is then returned to them at the end of the day.

4.0   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 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.

- 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" 2022. Any individual bringing a personal device into the school must ensure that it contains no inappropriate or illegal content.

5.0   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 process will be followed (please refer to the school's 'Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy').

Schools may also wish to add the following points:

- For both staff (including supply staff), pupils, visitors and contractors the school retains no liability for any device that is brought into school which is either lost, stolen or damaged.

- For both staff (including supply staff), pupils, visitors and contractors, the school retains no liability for any device that is used in a manner that is against the owner's consent.

Related Policies and guidance:

Model Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy (September 2023)4

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

Keeping Children Safe in Education (September 2023)

Guidance for schools and other establishments on the use of images (September 2023)

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

.

Annex 1 - Airdrop and Nearby Share

Airdrop.

- AirDrop is a feature available on iPhones and Mac computers (iOS 7, iPadOS 13, OS X 10.10, or later required).
- It lets physically close Mac and iOS devices share files, photos, websites etc.
- There are no size limits on files.
- It uses Bluetooth and Wi-Fi to transmit the files.
- AirDrop automatically detects nearby supported devices within a maximum distance of 30 feet.
- When a receiver of content is selected, they will be notified and offered the option to accept or decline the incoming file.

Nearby Share.

- Nearby Share is available on Android 6.0+ phones.
- Like AirDrop, it allows users to instantly share files, links and pictures with people around them.
- It also works through Bluetooth or WiFi.
- When Nearby Share is turned on, a list of devices available within sharing proximity is visible.
- When a receiver of content is selected, they will be notified and offered the option to accept or decline the incoming file.

Safeguarding risks posed by both Airdrop and Nearby Share.

- Being exposed to age-inappropriate sexualised and/or violent content.
- Photo sharing as a form of cyberbullying, with the person featured in the image being the target.
- The sharing of self-generated sexual imagery, with or without the permission of the original image/video creator.
- Images of teachers or other staff members shared as part of teacher targeted bullying, including 'upskirting' images (the practice of taking an illegal photo of someone's genitals or genital area, without consent).

If a member of staff or a pupil report receiving inappropriate content then the school must follow their Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and procedures.