



Thorndown Pre-School

# Policy on the use of mobile phones and other smart devices in school

Our aspiration is that Thorndown Primary will be an outstanding school.

We value and respect everyone in our community and work as a team to:

- Provide learning experiences which support and inspire high achievement for all;
- Ensure a caring, safe and welcoming environment;
- Promote co-operative and responsible attitudes to make a positive contribution;
- Actively encourage independence and confidence to thrive in a changing world.

Approved at Learning and Development Committee on 9<sup>th</sup> March 2023

Review Period: Two Yearly

Date of Next Review: Spring 2025

## **1.0 Introduction and aims**

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 and increasingly 5G. 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 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. *(If school have more specific requirements such as that staff store phones in lockers or similar this could be included here).*

### **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. Please see Staff E-Safety Acceptable Use Policy.
- 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:**

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 into the school office or to the class teacher. (*Amend as appropriate*).

### **3.2 Secondary**

- When on the school site and during lesson times mobile phones should be switched off or on silent and stored out of sight.

- Between lessons mobile phone use is/is not permitted. (*Amend as appropriate*)
- It is advisable to password protect mobile phones when not in use.
- Smart watch capabilities are in line with smart phones (except for taking photos and video) and should therefore be regarded as such within the policy.
- It is advisable that schools follow the examination board's recommendations regarding smart watches with this information being shared with pupils and parents prior to any examinations.

#### **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.
- Should phone calls/and or texts need to be taken or made, visitors are asked to leave the premises to do so. (*Delete/amend as appropriate*).
- 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 and pupils, the school retains no liability for any device that is brought into school which is either lost, stolen or damaged
- For both staff and pupils, the school retains no liability for any device that is used in a manner that is against the owners consent.

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

Model Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy (September 2022)

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 2022)

Guidance for schools and other establishments on the use of images (September 2022)

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

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