

St Joseph's Primary School Slate Street



Mobile Phone Policy

Introduction:

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.

Aims and Purposes

The aim of the Mobile Phone policy is to promote safe and appropriate practice through establishing clear and robust and 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.

Parents should discourage pupils from bringing mobile phones to school on the grounds that they are valuable and may be lost or stolen.

However, we do recognise that in Key Stage 2 (years 5, 6 and 7) 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. Our expectation is that in all other year groups pupils will be collected by an adult or responsible person. If a pupil needs to contact his/her parents/guardians urgently they should go to the school office where Mrs Green will assist them in making the call. If parents need to contact children urgently they should phone the school office and a message will be relayed promptly.

Scope

This policy applies to all individuals who have access to personal mobile phones on site. This includes staff, volunteers, 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 causes the most concern, and which are most susceptible to misuse. Misuse includes the taking and distribution of images, exploitation and bullying.

It is appreciated that it can be very difficult to detect when 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 covert images or misuse functions in any other way.

Code of Conduct

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

It is therefore important 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.

Personal Mobiles - Staff and Governors

Staff should have phones off or on silent when in the vicinity of pupils. Members of staff (Teachers and Classroom Assistants) are not permitted to use mobile phones during teaching time, assemblies, on playground duty or while supervising children - with the exception of trips and visits where their use is permitted to facilitate the health and safety of the members of the party. If photographs of pupils are required for display or curriculum evidence these may only be taken on a school camera, or school iPad, this would also apply to those attending sports events etc.

Staff wishing to use their mobile phones or check for messages during the school day should do so during a break period and take into consideration the location of where they are making the call - for example if a class is outside at break time and the classroom is empty, this would be acceptable. In cases of emergency, or in the event of a close family member being ill or in hospital, staff should seek permission from the Principal or a member of the Senior Management Team.

The above applies to all aspects of the school including out of hours provision (e.g. After School Club and clubs run by staff and outside providers).

Pupil Use

We recognise that mobile phones are part of everyday life for many children and that they also play an important role in helping pupils to feel safe and secure. We are happy therefore to allow pupils to bring their mobile phones to school provided that they follow a few simple guidelines. This includes school trips and extra-curricular activities.

- Mobile phones are switched off and handed into the school office at the start of the day and collected at the end of the day

- Children are not allowed to use their mobile phones on site at the start or the end of the school day unless they are permitted to do so by a member of staff
- If a pupil is caught using their own or a "borrowed" mobile phone during the school day, outside the guidelines, the phone (including the sim card) will be confiscated and taken to the school office from where it can be collected at the end of the school day; parents will be notified
- The second time a pupil is caught: the phone will be confiscated during the school day for the rest of that week (or the following week if the phone is confiscated on a Friday)
- The third time a pupil is caught the phone will be confiscated and taken to the school office. Parents will be contacted and asked to come to school to meet with a senior member of staff.

The school reserves the right to refuse to allow persistent offenders to bring a mobile phone to school.

("using" should be interpreted as talking, texting, taking photos or listening to music. If a phone has not been switched off and rings in a lesson the phone should be removed from the pupil and taken to the school office. A note should be made by the class teacher).

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 or other members of staff, this will be regarded as an offence and a member of the Senior Management Team should be involved from the outset. If images of other pupils or members of staff 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 SMT. If this is not possible, then a letter will be sent notifying them of the seriousness of this action.

In the rare circumstances 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 given to the teacher in charge of Discipline (Vice - Principal Mr McCann) and recorded appropriately.

Volunteers, Visitors, Governors, Parents and Contractors

Parents and visitors will be asked to turn phones off when volunteering in classrooms and attending assemblies so that there is no disruption to the school's programmes. We accept that there may be some parents/ guardians who wish to use their mobile phone camera facility to take photographs of their child while performing in special assemblies or events. This will be kept under review.