

## **Handheld Device Policy – including mobile phones**

This policy sets out what is 'acceptable' and 'unacceptable' use of mobile phone and handheld devices by the whole school community (students, staff and visitors) while they are at School or undertaking school activities away from school.

This applies to all individuals who have access to personal and/or work-related handheld devices within the broadest context of the setting. It includes children and young people, parents and carers, practitioners, managers, volunteers, students, governors, visitors, contractors and community users. This list is not exhaustive.

It is to be recognised that it is the enhanced functions of many handheld devices that will give the most cause for concern; and which should be considered the most susceptible to potential misuse. Examples of misuse include the taking and distribution of indecent images, exploitation and bullying.

It must be understood that should handheld devices be misused, there will be a negative impact on an individual's safety, dignity, privacy and right to confidentiality. Such concerns are not to be considered exclusive to children and young people, so the needs and vulnerabilities of all must be respected and protected.

Mobile phones and handheld devices can also cause an unnecessary distraction during the working day and are often to be considered intrusive when used in the company of others.

The purpose of this policy is to prevent unacceptable use of mobile phones, camera-phones and other hand held devices by the school community, and thereby to protect the School's staff and students from undesirable materials, filming, intimidation or harassment.

### **General issues**

- Mobile phones brought into school are entirely at the staff member, student's & parents' or visitors own risk. The School accepts no responsibility for the loss, theft or damage of any phone or hand held device brought into school.
- Student mobile phones which are brought into school must be handed in at the school office where they will be named and kept in the safe until the end of the day. Staff members may use their phones during school break times. All visitors are requested to keep their phones on silent.
- The recording, taking and sharing of images, video and audio on any mobile phone is to be avoided; except where it has been explicitly agreed otherwise by the headteacher. Such authorised use is to be monitored and recorded. All mobile phone use is to be open to scrutiny and the headteacher is to be able to withdraw or restrict authorisation for use at any time if it is to be deemed necessary.
- Staff mobiles or hand held devices may be searched at any time as part of routine monitoring.
- Mobile phones and personally-owned devices are not permitted to be used in certain areas within the school site, e.g. changing rooms and toilets and these areas are signed.

- Mobile phones and personally owned devices will not be used during lessons or formal school time unless as part of an approved and directed curriculum-based activity with consent from a member of the SMT.

#### Students' use of personal devices

- The School strongly advises that student mobile phones should not be brought into school.
- The School accepts that there may be particular circumstances in which a parent wishes their child to have a mobile phone for their own safety, in these circumstances phones should be handed in at the office.
- If a student breaches the school policy then the phone or device will be confiscated and will be held in a secure place in the school office. Mobile phones and devices will be released to parents or carers .
- If a student needs to contact his or her parents or carers, they will be allowed to use a school phone. Parents are advised not to contact their child via their mobile phone during the school day, but to contact the school office.
- Students should protect their phone numbers by only giving them to trusted friends and family members. Students will be instructed in safe and appropriate use of mobile phones and personally-owned devices and will be made aware of boundaries and consequences.

#### Staff use of personal devices

- Staff are not permitted to use their own mobile phones or devices for contacting children, young people or their families within or outside of the setting in a professional capacity.
- Staff should use the school phone where contact with students, parents or carers is required.
- Mobile Phones and personally-owned devices will be switched off or switched to 'silent' mode. Bluetooth communication should be 'hidden' or switched off and mobile phones or personally-owned devices will not be used during teaching periods unless permission has been granted by a member of the senior leadership team in emergency circumstances.
- Staff should not use personally-owned devices, such as mobile phones or cameras, to take photos or videos of students and will only use work-provided equipment for this purpose.
- If a member of staff breaches the school policy then disciplinary action may be taken.
- Where staff members are required to use a mobile phone for school duties, for instance in case of emergency during off-site activities, or for contacting students or parents, then a school mobile phone will be provided and used. In an emergency where a staff member doesn't have access to a school-owned device, they should use their own device and hide (by inputting 141) their own mobile number for confidentiality purposes.