

Mobile Phone policy

St Michael's CE Primary School



Creating a community where we learn together through respect, kindness, curiosity and faith.

Mobile Phone Policy

Rationale

This policy defines and describes the acceptable use of technology and mobile phones for all members of the school community. The phrase 'mobile phone' in this policy should be taken as referring to mobiles phones and electronic devices.

The school does not take responsibility for loss or damage to any personal 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 online 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 Board is responsible for ensuring that its employees act in a lawful manner; make appropriate use of school technologies for approved purposes only.

The Governing Board 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 computing equipment has been misused, the Headteacher will consult the technician and Local Authority for advice without delay. Local Authority HR Officers will agree with the Headteacher and Local Safeguarding Board for an appropriate strategy for the investigation of the allegations. 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 school technology systems, users agree to abide by the school's Acceptable Use policy and other policies that relate to the use of technology.

Children and Mobiles

The following rules apply for the use of personal phones:

- Parents and pupils must read and sign the Mobile phone Agreement before they are given permission to bring mobile phones to school. This is given to year 6 parents at the start of the academic year.
- Children who walk to and from school without an accompanying adult may carry a mobile phone for safety.
- If pupils bring a mobile phone to school, the phone must be switched off until they leave the school premises at the end of the day.
- Phones will be stored safely in the school office and returned to the children at the end of the day.
- Mobile phones are not permitted on school trips or residential trips.
- If parents need to contact pupils for any reason during the school day, this should be done via the school office and not via the child's mobile phone.
- Only pupils who have written permission from their parents are entitled to bring mobile phones to school. We advise parents to only request permission for pupils who walk to and from school without an adult. This request is only available to Y6 pupils.
- Pupils' mobile phones will be kept locked away until the end of the school day in the school office.
- Smart watches/devices that enable photographs or messages/communication are not permitted in class. These will be confiscated and returned to a parent/carer at the end of the day.
- A year 6 child that has signed the mobile phone agreement is permitted to bring a smart watch, but same rules apply as a mobile phone, device will need to be handed in and will be returned at the end of the day.
- Afterschool clubs and afterschool care, children must have their phones turned off and kept in their bags. Only to be turned on once they have left school
- Children are not permitted to take photographs, communicate or make recordings (video or sound) using personal devices whilst in school/on a trip unless given permission by a member of staff

Mobile phones seen on the school premises being used at an inappropriate time will be confiscated immediately by a member of staff until the end of the day. At this time, it will be the responsibility of the parents to collect the phone from school, not the pupil. If a pupil is found taking photographs or video with a mobile phone of anyone, this will be regarded as a serious offence and disciplinary action will be taken including a meeting with parents.

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 or staff meeting time. If there are extreme circumstances (e.g.; acutely sick relative) the member of staff will have made the Headteacher and other class staff 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).
- Calls/texts must be made/received in private during non-contact time
- A mobile will be carried on an educational visit for contacting parents in the event of an emergency by the class teacher
- 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

- 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 advised not to give their home telephone number or their mobile phone number to pupils or parents of the school. Mobile phone communication should be used sparingly and only when deemed necessary
- Staff are advised 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. homework on Microsoft Teams
- Staff should not enter into instant messaging communications on their personal mobile phones with pupils or parents.
- Photos will occasionally be taken of children for the purposes of school Facebook page or evidence for work in books
- Any photos of children taken for the above purposes must be deleted as soon as they have been uploaded or shared with the relevant staff member
- Staff are asked to keep mobile phones with them on playground duty in case of an emergency

Parents and other visitors

- We request that parents do not use mobile phones in the school buildings
- When attending events, parents are permitted to take photographs for personal use only and not to be shared on social media.

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

Approved by:	Sally Coneron	Date: 25/10/24
Last reviewed on:	Autumn 2024	
Next review due by:	Autumn 2025	