Thomas Harding Junior School

Mobile Phone and Personal Device Procedure

Introduction

The welfare and well-being of our pupils is paramount. The aim of the Mobile Phone and Personal Device Procedure is to allow users to benefit from modern communication technologies, whilst promoting safe and appropriate practice through establishing clear and robust acceptable mobile user guidelines. This is achieved through balancing protection against potential misuse with the recognition that mobile phones are effective communication tools. It is recognised that it is the enhanced functions of many mobile phones that cause the most concern, offering distractions and disruption to the working day, and which are most susceptible to misuse - including the taking and distribution of indecent images, exploitation and bullying. However as it is difficult to detect specific usage, this policy refers **to ALL mobile communication, internet enabled personal devices and cameras**

Scope

This procedure applies to all individuals who have access to personal mobile phones and other personal devices with internet connectivity on site. This includes staff, volunteers, committee members, children, young people, parents, carers, visitors and contractors. This list is not exhaustive. This procedure should also be read in relation to the following documentation:

- Children Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Guidance on the Use of Photographic Images and Videos of Children in Schools Code of conduct
- Behaviour Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Conduct and Discipline policy

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. Our aim is therefore 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.

It is fully recognised that imposing rigid regulations on the actions of others can be counterproductive. An agreement of trust is therefore promoted regarding the carrying and use of mobile phones within the setting, which is agreed to by all users:

Personal Mobiles/Devices – Staff

- It is advised that staff security protect access to functions of their phone.
- Staff are not at any time permitted to use recording equipment on their mobile phones, for example: to take photographs or recordings of children, or sharing images. This could lead to disciplinary procedures. Legitimate recordings and photographs should be captured using school equipment such as cameras and iPad.
- Staff should report any usage of mobile devices that causes them concern to the Headteacher/DSL

Where to use mobile phones

- Mobile phones should not be used in the classrooms during the school day whilst any pupils are present in the classroom – 8.50am – 3.30pm
- Mobile phones should not be visible in the classrooms or corridors during the school day whilst any pupils are present in the classroom– 8.50am – 3.30pm
- Mobile phones should not be heard ringing or vibrating in classrooms and corridors during the school day whilst any pupils are present in the classroom– 8.50am – 3.30pm
- Mobile phones can be used in designated 'Safe Areas' (with the door shut) which are:

The Staff Room
The PPA Room
School Office
Headteachers' Office

(The only exception to this is school office contact with the Caretaker, *if the 2-way radios are not working*, during the school day who will take the call and will immediately walk away from classroom/corridors, should that be where they are, to speak further)

- Important and family calls can be taken in the school office and passed onto you.
- If you are expecting an urgent call then you can leave your phone in the school office for them to answer. They will collect you when possible.
- Should there be exceptional circumstances (e.g. acutely sick relative), then staff should make the Headteacher aware of this and a decision will be made as to whether it is appropriate for the member of staff to have their phone in case of having to receive an emergency call.
- Excessive use of mobile phones by any member of staff is discouraged as this can interfere with their normal working practices.

Mobile Phones/ Personal Devices for work related purposes

We recognise that mobile phones provide a useful means of communication on offsite activities. However, staff should ensure that:

- Mobile use on these occasions is appropriate and professional (and will never include taking photographs of children).

- Mobile phones should not be used to make contact with parents during school trips – all relevant communications should be made via the school office. The only exception is if the trip is out of school hours, in which case the call should be made with '141' to allow the number to be withheld.
- Staff are allowed to use mobile phones on school trips, whilst pupils are present in order that they may make or receive any emergency phone calls and or have contact with the school office.
- Mobile phones MUST NOT be used in any way, whilst driving or in control of a vehicle whilst on school business. 'In control' covers a vehicle being parked but with the engine still running. Staff should not use Bluetooth to have mobile phone discussions whilst driving on school business.
- Where parents are accompanying trips, they are informed not to make contact with other parents (via calls, text, email or social networking) during the trip or use their phone to take photographs of children.
- Staff should never contact pupils or parents from their mobile phone or give their mobile phone number to pupils or parents. If a member of staff needs to make telephone contact with a parent, a school telephone should be used.
- Staff should never store parents or pupils' telephone numbers on their mobile phone, as this allows the possibility of inappropriate contact.
- Staff should never send to, or accept from pupils, texts or images and should report this to the head teacher/DSL immediately should it happen.
- Staff should never send to or accept from colleagues texts or images that could be viewed as inappropriate and should report this to the head teacher/DSL immediately should it happen.

Personal Mobiles/Devices (Including Smart watches) – Pupils

We recognise that mobile phones are part of everyday life for many children and that they can play an important role in helping pupils to feel safe and secure. However, we also recognise that they can prove a distraction in school and can provide a means of bullying or intimidating others. Therefore, our pupils are pro-actively discouraged from bringing phones to school. However, as some children in Year 5 and 6 walk home alone, we understand that for some parents this represents a safety measure. Therefore:

- Pupils are not permitted to have mobile phones on their possession or in their belongings during the school day – 8.50am to 3.30pm or on school trips.
- If in the rare event of a parent wishing for his/her child to bring a mobile phone to school the phone must be handed in, switched off, to the school office first thing in the morning and collected from them by the child at home time (the phone is left at the owner's own risk and the school office accepts no responsibility or liability for the loss or damage of any phone whilst in their possession).
- Mobile phones brought to school and not handed to the school office will be confiscated and returned at the end of the day, this could lead to a behaviour sanction (please refer to the school's Behaviour Policy)
- If images of other pupils or teachers have been taken, the phone will not be returned to the pupil until the images have been removed by the pupil in the presence of a member of the senior management team.
- Parents are asked to talk to their children about the appropriate use of text messages and images, and that they can be used to bully pupils (please refer to Behaviour and Anti- bullying policy)

Smartwatches are permitted but only as step counting device; any other functions need to be switched off.

Visitors

All Volunteers, Visitors, Governors and Contractors are expected to follow our mobile phone and personal device policy whilst on the premises. On arrival, such visitors should read our expectations around the use of mobile phones which is located near the sign in area by the school office.

Parents

While we would prefer parents not to use their mobile phones while at school, we recognise that this would be impossible to regulate and that many parents see their phones as essential means of communication at all times. We therefore ask that parents' usage of mobile phones, whilst on the school site is courteous and appropriate to the school environment. We do not allow parents to photograph or record children during assemblies or any part of the normal school day. However, we do allow parents to photograph or video special school events such as shows or sports day using their mobile phones – but insist that parents do not publish images (e.g. on social networking sites) that include any children other than their own, without seeking permission from the parents of all the other children who may be captured in the photo or recording.

Monitoring the use of Mobile Phones

It is the responsibility of all members of staff to be vigilant and report any concerns to the Headteacher. Concerns will be taken seriously, logged and investigated appropriately. Any member of the SLT in the absence of the Headteacher reserve the right to check the image content of a member of staff's mobile phone, should there be any cause for concern over the appropriate use of it. Should inappropriate material be found, then the Headteacher should be contacted immediately. We will follow the guidance from the Local Authority/Trust as to the appropriate measures for the staff member's potential dismissal. If you have any concerns regarding the Headteacher's conduct in this matter, please contact the Chair of Governors in the first instance – please refer to our Whistleblowing Policy.

Dissemination

The mobile phone policy will be shared with staff and volunteers as part of their induction. It will also be available to parents via the school's website or school office.

Policy Date: September 2025

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