

Mobile phone policy

Oakthorpe Primary School



Approved by: Oakthorpe Governing Body **Date:** 12th September 2024

Next review due by: Autumn 2025

MOBILE PHONE POLICY

The aim of the Mobile Phone Policy 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 devices.

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.

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 contractors. This list is not exhaustive.

This policy should also be read in relation to the following documentation:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Code of Conduct
- On line Safety Policy
- Whistleblowing policy

Aims

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 creating strong staff morale and a sense of commitment. 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.

Staff

- Staff are not permitted to make or receive calls or texts during contact time with children.
Emergency contact should be made via the school office. The school number may be shared with dependents, childcare providers etc as an emergency contact number. This includes the use of smart watches.
- Staff should have their phones and smart watches on silent or switched off and out of sight (e.g., in a drawer or a bag not a pocket) during class time.
- Mobile phones should not be used in a space when children are present.
- Use of phones (including receiving/sending texts and emails) should be limited to times when no children are present e.g., in office areas, staff room, empty classrooms.
- Should there be exceptional circumstances (e.g., acutely sick relative – spouse/child) then staff should give the school telephone number to the persons involved and the office staff will bring the message to class. There may be circumstances where a member of staff has agreed with the Headteacher that a direct call may be made to the member of staff.
- In the case of a Medical Mobile Phone e.g., diabetes monitoring – this should be included in the staff member risk assessment. They must only be used to check medical applications.
- Whilst phones are located around school for emergency use, it is understood that staff teaching PE, especially on the field, may have their phone with them as a means of emergency contact with school. This also includes staff working in the pavilion located in the early years outdoor area.
- During periods of National Lockdown/School Closures/Classes being in bubbles, teachers may use phones to contact the office in appropriate situations.
- Where staff are in roles with less pupil contact than other member of staff e.g., admin roles, they should also adhere to the expectation that phone should be kept out of sight of pupil. Staff in such roles are also expected not to take personal calls and respond to personal emails and messages during work times.
- For ease of contact during the working day, site staff may use mobile phones whilst around the school building.

Staff should report any usage of mobile devices that causes them concern to the Head teacher.

Mobile Phones for work related purposes

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

- Mobile use on these occasions is appropriate and professional following all policies. For example, staff using mobile phones on school trips to communicate with each other or the school.
- Mobile phones should not be used to make contact with parents during school trips – all relevant communications should be made via the school office. If there is no phone available to be used other than a staff member's phone the call must be made from a withheld number.

Senior staff are able to send text messages using Scalar Pak

- Where staff are not able to use school phones for essential contact with parents, the phone calls to parents may be made from teacher's personal phones but all calls must be made from a withheld number e.g., for remote parent consultation meetings or contact during school closures.
- Staff should not share their personal phone numbers with parents. We recognise that some members of staff may have non-professional relationships with some parents e.g., staff who have children attending Oakthorpe primary school. Phone contact in these instances should be for practical, non-professional conversations only.
- Squirrels After school club has a school mobile phone which should be used for communication between club staff and parents.
- Staff should always aim to take photographs and videos using school equipment such as school cameras and iPads. However, in the rare instance that a personal device is used the photographs must be immediately emailed to school and then deleted as soon as possible from the phone and any back up service (e.g., cloud.).
- As phones are now multifunctional it is recognised that, for ease of access, staff may use them for the purpose of playing music, for example in an assembly or dance lesson. In these circumstances these should be used solely for that purpose and other functions should be disabled e.g., notifications turned off
- Where staff use personal devices to access to work related software and applications such as Scalar Pak or Safeguard there is a minimum requirement that the phone should be password protected and have two factor authentication to access data.

Where parents are accompanying trips, they are informed not to contact other parents (via calls, text, email or social networking) during the trip or use their phone to take photographs of children.

Personal Mobiles – 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, pupils are not permitted to bring mobile phones into school. The exceptions to this are for pupils who have a medical care plan which includes the use of a medical application.

In rare situations and following discussion and agreement between the parent and the school permission may be granted in extenuating circumstances. In these cases:

- Non smart phones only are permitted. There are no exceptions to this. Phones should only have the functions of sending text messages or making calls.
- The parents need to sign the permission form that is available in the office.
- The phone must be switched off before entering the school gates.
- The phone must be given to the teacher or the office first thing in the morning and collected at the end of the day.
- It must not be switched on until the child leaves the school gates at the end of the day.

- All phones are left at the owner's own risk and the school is not responsible for any damage or the loss of any phone.
- The phone must not be used anywhere on the school premises. This includes the school grounds.

Mobile phones brought to school without permission or are used on the school grounds will be confiscated and returned to the parents. Where mobile phones are used in or out of school to bully or intimidate others, then the Head teacher does have the power to intervene 'to such an extent as it is reasonable to regulate the behaviour of pupils when they are off the school site' – in such cases we would refer to our Ant-bullying Policy and/or online safety policy.

Other Devices– Pupils/Staff

We recognise that other devices play an important role in people's lives and we must use these in accordance with online safety guidance to ensure that both children and adults are safe. Staff who choose to wear wearable devices (Apple watches/smart watches/fit bits) do so at their own risk and will not use them during contact time with children. We also ask that they are on silent for the duration of any contact time.

Children are not permitted to wear any form of smart device (fit bit/apple watches/smart watches) during school hours. If a child wears such a device to school, the teacher will collect the device, keep it safely until the end of the day and return it to the child to take home. If a device is repeatedly worn, the child's parents will be asked to collect the device.

Volunteers, Visitors, Governors and Contractors

All volunteers, visitors, governors and contractors are expected to follow our mobile phone policy as it relates to staff whilst on the premises. On arrival, such visitors will be informed of our expectations around the use of mobile phones.

Parents

While we would prefer parents not to use their mobile phones while on school premises, we recognise that this would be impossible to regulate and that many parents see their phones as essential means of communication at all times, for example on the school playground at drop off and pick up. We therefore ask that parents' usage of mobile phones, whilst on the school site is courteous and appropriate to the school environment.

When working as a volunteer at school all parents are expected to follow the phone policy as it relates to staff. Where parent volunteers are accompanying trips or volunteering in school, they are informed not to use their phone (via calls, text, email or social networking) during the trip/visit or to use their phone to take photographs of children.

When attending school events as a spectator we allow parents to photograph or video events such as shows or sports days using their mobile phones – but will remind parents not to publish images (e.g., on social networking sites) that include any children other than their own.

Dissemination

The mobile phone policy will be shared with staff and volunteers as part of their induction. This includes agency staff who are contracted for a specific period of time. It will also be available to parents via the school office and website.

Where concerns are raised

Any member of staff may raise a concern. This can be made to a senior member of staff.

Pupil safeguarding concerns should be made using Safeguard and will be followed up by the Child Protection Team.

Where a concern is raised about an adult the following steps may be taken:

A verbal reminder of the policy and expectations for staff to the individual

concerned A written reminder of the policy and expectations for staff.

A further written reminder with reference to the staff code of conduct which states that a failure to adhere to school policies may be considered misconduct and may be dealt with using Local Authority disciplinary procedures.

Monitoring and Evaluation

This policy will be updated in line with any new developments in the school and/or any new government guidance.



Permission form allowing a pupil to bring their phone to school

PUPIL DETAILS	
Pupil name:	
Year group/class:	
Parent(s) name(s):	

The school has agreed to allow _____ to bring a **non-smart** mobile phone to school because:

(brief outline of approved reason)

Agreement:

- The phone must be switched off before entering the school gates.
- The phone is only used for the agreed reason/s and is a non-Smart Phone (no internet access or camera)
- The phone must be given to the teacher first thing in the morning and collected at the end of the day.
- It must not be switched on until the child leaves the school gates at the end of the day.
- All phones are left at the owner's own risk and the school is not responsible for any damage or the loss of any phone
- The phone must not be used anywhere on the school premises. This includes the school grounds.

The school reserves the right revoke permission if pupils don't abide by the policy and to hold the phone until a parent is able to collect the phone from school if a pupil is found to be not keeping to the agreement.

Parent signature: _____

Pupil signature (where appropriate): _____

FOR SCHOOL USE ONLY	
Authorised by:	
Date:	

