

St Margaret Mary's Catholic Infant School



MOBILE PHONE POLICY

1 Introduction

- 1.1 Mobile phone technology has become more sophisticated over recent years and will continue to evolve. Wireless connections in particular extend the capabilities of mobile phones further; which allows access to new content and services, such as the internet, social networking sites and instant messaging. Many mobile phones offer camera, video and audio recording as standard.
- 1.2 Mobile phones, alongside other technologies aim to change the way we communicate. As with any other form of technology there are associated risks. Children must be encouraged to understand such risks to enable them to develop the appropriate strategies which will keep them safe.
- 1.3 This philosophy is to be applied to the use of mobile phones through the Mobile Phone Policy. Acceptable use and management of mobile phones is therefore to be agreed by all individuals [staff, pupils, parents & carers and any adults coming into our school]. There is a clear expectation that the personal use of mobile phones is to be limited to use at specific times and only in agreed areas or circumstances, as agreed with the Designated Person for Safeguarding. Any authorised use of mobile phones will be monitored.
- 1.4 **Under no circumstances are images, video or audio recordings to be made without prior explicit written consent by the Designated Person for Safeguarding.**

2 Aim

- 2.1 The aim of the Mobile Phone Policy is to protect children from harm, by ensuring the appropriate management and use of mobile phones by all individuals who are to come into contact with the children.
- 2.2 Children are also to be empowered with the skills to manage the changes in technology in a safe and appropriate way; and to be alert to the potential risks of such use.
- 2.3 This is to be achieved through balancing protection and potential misuse. It is therefore recognised that alongside the potential risks, mobile phones continue to be effective communication tools. This in turn is to contribute to safeguarding practice and protection.

3 Scope

- 3.1 The Mobile Phone Policy will apply to all individuals who are to have access to and/ or are users of personal and/ or work-related mobile phones within the broadest context of the school environment. This will include children, parents and carers, teaching staff, support staff, volunteers, students, members of the governing body, visitors, contractors and community users. This list is not to be considered exhaustive.

4 Policy statement

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

- 4.2 It must be understood that should mobile phones 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, so the needs and vulnerabilities of all must be respected and protected.
- 4.3 Mobile phones will also cause an unnecessary distraction during the working day and are often to be considered intrusive when used in the company of others.
- 4.4 It will often be very difficult to detect when mobile phones are present or being used. The use of all mobile phones needs to be effectively managed to ensure the potential for misuse is to be minimised.
- 4.5 Designated areas of the school are to 'mobile free areas'. The areas which should be considered most vulnerable include:
- small intervention rooms
 - toilets

5 Code of conduct

- 5.1 A code of conduct is to be promoted with the aim of creating an informed workforce, who will work together to safeguard and promote positive outcomes for the children in their care.
- 5.2 It is to be ensured that all staff will:
- be aware of the need to protect children from harm.
 - have a clear understanding of what constitutes misuse.
 - know how to minimise risk.
 - be vigilant and alert to potential warning signs of misuse.
 - avoid putting themselves into compromising situations which could be misinterpreted and lead to potential allegations.
 - understand the need for professional boundaries and clear guidance regarding acceptable use.
 - be responsible for the self-moderation of their own behaviours.
 - be aware of the importance of reporting concerns
- 5.3 It is to be recognised that studies consistently indicate that imposing rigid regulations and/or 'bans' on the actions of others are counterproductive. Such imposition will lead to a culture of suspicion, uncertainty and secrecy. An agreement of trust is therefore to be promoted regarding the carrying and use of mobile phones in school. Staff are advised that their mobile phones should be turned off and kept secure at all times when they are in areas of the school that they are likely to come into contact with children
- Classrooms
 - Corridors
 - Intervention rooms
 - Playground
 - Hall and canteen
- 5.4 No children may bring a mobile to school or have a mobile phone with them on any trip or visit.

6 Procedures

- 6.1 We aim to ensure effective procedures are in place that will lead to robust safeguarding practices in order to protect children from harm and exposure to behaviours associated with misuse. The need to ensure mobile phones will not cause unnecessary and/or unsafe disruptions and distractions in the workplace are also to be considered.
- 6.2 Acceptable use and management of mobile phones is to be agreed by everyone. There is a clear expectation that all personal use of mobile phones is to be limited to allocated lunch and/or tea breaks, and to only be used in the staffroom or office areas, unless it is otherwise agreed by the Designated Person for Safeguarding. Such authorised use will be monitored and only allowed in exceptional circumstances.
- 6.3 The recording, taking and sharing of images, video and audio on any mobile phone is to be avoided; except where it is to be explicitly agreed otherwise by the Designated Person for Safeguarding. Such authorised use will be monitored and only allowed in exceptional circumstances [e.g. a school trip]. Where permission is granted all images should be downloaded via the correct media and deleted from the phone immediately. All mobile phone use is to be open to scrutiny and the Designated Person for Safeguarding is to be able to withdraw or restrict authorisation for use at any time if it is to be deemed necessary.
- 6.4 Staff must not to use their own personal mobile phones for contacting children, parents and carers unless it is to be considered an emergency. Care is to be taken to ensure that work mobiles are not to be exploited in a similar way.
- 6.5 Everyone, including parents, carers, visitors and contractors should be respectfully advised that their mobile phones are not to be used in designated mobile use free areas. Should it be considered necessary for mobile phone calls and/ or texts to be taken or made, efforts should be made to avoid any unnecessary disturbance or disruption to children. No images, video or audio recordings are to be made without prior explicit written consent by the Designated Person for Safeguarding.
- 6.7 All individuals who bring personal devices into the school setting must ensure that they hold no inappropriate or illegal content.

7 Work mobile

- 7.1 The use of a designated work mobile is considered to be:
- an effective communication tool, enabling text, email messages and calls to be made and received.
 - an essential part of the emergency toolkit.
 - a back-up facility should landline facilities be unavailable – or where contact needs to be made outside of operational hours.
- 7.2 Effective security procedures are to be put in place to safeguard against any potential misuse. Only authorised individuals are to have access to the work mobile, which is to be password protected, and to be stored securely when not in use. All use is to be recorded and monitored by the Designated Person for Safeguarding.

- 7.3 Personal calls are not to be made on the work mobile phone. Personal contact will be permitted to be made via the work mobile only in the event of an emergency. All such communications are to be logged.
- 7.4 The work mobile phone is to be clearly labelled as such.

8 Emergency contact

- 8.1 It is to be ensured that the landline telephone remains connected and operational at all times, except in circumstances beyond reasonable control. This means that the landline is available for emergency/urgent contact at all times.
- 8.2 The reliance on an answer phone is to be avoided unless the school is closed or where children are taken off the premises for a trip or outing. It must always be ensured that the answer phone is to be checked promptly on opening or return.
- 8.3 It is recognised that mobile phones provide direct contact to others, and will often provide necessary communication in the case of an emergency when a landline telephone is not available, for example when out on a school trip.