

Bedlington West End Primary School: Mobile Phone, Devices With Cameras and Smartwatch Responsible Use Policy

RATIONALE

Our school motto, 'Yes I Can' underpins everything we do at West End.

The occasional inappropriate use of mobile devices (such as mobile phones, iPads, iPods and Smartwatches) undermines this.

The widespread ownership of mobile devices among young people nationally requires that all schools, teachers, pupils, parents and carers take steps to ensure that mobile devices are used responsibly at school.

This Responsible Use Policy is designed to ensure that potential issues involving mobile devices can be clearly identified and addressed. This will ensure the benefits that such devices provide (such as increased safety) can continue to be enjoyed by our pupils whilst at the same time ensuring they do not interfere with learning.

Just like many schools nationally, Bedlington West End Primary School has established the following Responsible Use Policy for mobile devices to provide teachers, pupils, parents and carers with guidelines for the appropriate use of them during school hours and when on the school site.

Pupils, their parents or carers must read and understand the Responsible Use Policy as a condition upon which permission is given to bring mobile devices to school.

The Responsible Use Policy for mobile devices also applies to pupils and parents during school trips and extra-curricular

activities, both on the school site and off-site, unless alternative arrangements have been made.

CONTEXT

In order for this policy to be effective it is inextricably linked with other school policies. It should be read in conjunction with the Behaviour policy, the Online Safety policy, the Data Protection policy and the Acceptable Use Policy

At Bedlington West End Primary School, we recognise that personal communication through mobile technologies is an accepted part of everyday life but that such technologies need to be used safely.

We understand that mobile devices are owned by a significant number of pupils and recognise the need for parents to give their children mobile devices to protect them from everyday risks involving personal security and safety. There is also increasing concern about children travelling alone to or from school. It is acknowledged that providing a child with a mobile device can give parents reassurance that they can contact their child if they need to speak to them urgently.

We do not consider it realistic or desirable to prohibit such devices being brought to school. However, if devices are brought to school pupils must abide by the guidelines outlined in this document. The decision to provide a mobile device to their children should be made by parents or carers.

It is incumbent upon parents to understand the capabilities of these devices and the potential misuse of them.

Parents/carers should be aware that if their child takes a mobile device to school it is assumed household insurance will provide the required cover in the event of loss or damage. It is our policy to

allow pupils to have a mobile device with them in school under the conditions outlined in this policy. As a school, we are aware of the following and we ask that parents and carers also consider these risks before allowing their child to bring a mobile device to school:

- The high monetary value of many devices. They are a valuable piece of equipment prone to loss and theft.
- The integration of cameras into these devices could lead to potential child protection and data protection issues with regard to pupils taking pictures of events/each other and using or distributing images inappropriately.
- The potential for mobile technology to be used in a cyber-bullying incident.
- As a result of the increasing sophistication of mobile technology most pupils carry a device which enables them to access the internet and bypass the school's safety network.

RESPONSIBLE USE

Pupils are required to use mobile devices responsibly at all times.

1. Any mobile phone must be switched off and handed in to the class teacher at the start of the school day. It will be locked away and then given back out at the end of the school day.
2. The Bluetooth mode on any mobile device must be switched off.

3. Smart watches are allowed to be worn in school but they **MUST NOT** be connected to a mobile device or set up to receive messages whilst pupils are at school. Any pupils receiving or sending messages on their watch will have their watch confiscated until the end of the day. The device will then be given directly to an adult at home-time.

4. Pupils must ensure that files stored on their devices do not contain violent, degrading or offensive images. The transmission of some images/information can be a criminal offence and will be dealt with as such by the school. A fixed penalty notice can be issued by the Police for misuse of technology.

5. If a pupil breaches any of these rules, the mobile device will be confiscated (see Sanctions below).

6. The school accepts no responsibility for replacing lost, stolen or damaged mobile devices.

7. The school accepts no responsibility for students who lose or have their mobile device stolen whilst travelling to and from school.

8. It is strongly advised that students use passwords/pin numbers to ensure that unauthorised phone/Smartwatch calls cannot be made by other pupils (e.g. if stolen). Pupils must keep their password/pin numbers confidential.

INAPPROPRIATE CONDUCT

1. Cyber-bullying is completely unacceptable, and will be followed up by the school as serious misbehaviour in line with our Anti-Bullying policy. Using mobile devices to bully and threaten other students is totally unacceptable and will not be tolerated. In some cases it can constitute criminal behaviour. If the use of technology humiliates, embarrasses or causes offence it is unacceptable regardless of whether 'consent' was given.

2. It is forbidden for students to victimise another pupil and use their mobile device to take videos and pictures of acts to denigrate and humiliate that pupil and then send the pictures to other pupils or upload it to a website or social media for public viewing. This also includes using mobile devices to photograph or film any pupil or member of staff without their consent. In the event that this happens the pupil will be asked and expected to delete those images immediately and given a suitable punishment. It is a criminal offence to use a mobile device to menace, harass or offend another person and almost all calls, text messages and emails can be traced by the Police.

3. Any pupil who uses vulgar, derogatory, or obscene language whilst using a mobile device will be given an appropriate sanction.

4. Pupils must ensure that files stored on their mobile device do not contain violent, degrading, racist or pornographic images. The transmission of such images is a criminal offence. Similarly, 'sexting' - which is the sending of personal sexual imagery - is also a criminal offence. School will hand all such evidence to the Police.

SANCTIONS

Pupils who infringe the rules set out in this document will face having their mobile device confiscated by teachers. If the device is being used inappropriately the pupil must give it to a teacher when requested.

Failure to do so will incur a punishment.

Infringements of this policy will result in the mobile device being confiscated and stored safely. The pupil will be able to collect the device at the end of the school day. In some instances, parents/carers will be asked to collect the device.

Any further infringements of the mobile device code of conduct may result in a ban on bringing the device to school.

At Bedlington West End Primary School, we are fully aware that some types of harassing or threatening behaviour or communications could be a criminal offence, for example under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997, the Malicious Communications Act 1988, the Communications Act 2003 and the Public Order Act 1986. Under the Malicious Communication Act 1988, it is an offence for a person to send an electronic communication to another person with intent to cause distress or anxiety or to send an electronic communication which conveys a message which is indecent or grossly offensive, a threat, or information which is false and know or believed to be false by the sender. If school feel an offence may have been committed by a pupils in this way the Head teacher will seek guidance from the Police as to the next course of action.

As set out in the previous section, failure to heed the rules set out in this document may result in an alleged incident - of a serious nature - being referred to the Police for investigation. In such cases, the parent or carer would be notified immediately.

RESPONSIBILTY FOR MOBILE DEVICES

Bedlington West End Primary School accepts no responsibility whatsoever for theft, loss, damage or health effects (potential or actual) relating to mobile devices. It is the responsibility of parents/carers and pupils to ensure mobile devices are properly insured.

Further information regarding use of mobile devices, mobile phones and cameras in school by school staff can be found in the Acceptable Use Policy.

This policy will be reviewed every two years.

Date of review: May 2021

Date of next review: May 2023