



Thirsk Community Primary School Mobile Phone Policy

Introduction and Aims

At Thirsk C. P. Primary School the welfare and well-being of our pupils is paramount. 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.

Scope

This policy applies to all individuals who have access to personal mobile phones on site. This includes staff, volunteers, committee members, 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 Children Policy
- Online safety Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Guidance on the Use of Photographic Images and Videos of Children in Schools - **Acceptable use of IT Statement**

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 - Staff

Staff are not permitted to make/receive calls/texts during contact time with children. Emergency contact should be made via the school office.

- Staff should have their phones on silent or switched off and out of sight (e.g. in a drawer, handbag or pocket) during class time. Mobile phones should not be used in a space where children are present (eg. classroom, playground).

- Use of phones (inc. receiving/sending texts and emails) should be limited to non-contact time when no children are present e.g. in office areas, staff room, empty classrooms.
- It is also advised that staff security protect access to functions of their phone. Should there be exceptional circumstances (e.g. acutely sick relative), then staff should make the Headteacher aware of this and can have their phone in case of having to receive an emergency call.
- Staff are not at any time permitted to use recording equipment on their mobile phones, for example: to take recordings of children, or sharing images. Legitimate recordings and photographs should be captured using school equipment such as cameras and ipads.
- Staff should report any usage of mobile devices that causes them concern to the Headteacher.

Mobile Phones for work related purposes

We recognise that mobile phones have a place on outings or activities where there is no access to a landline. In these cases, they are often the only means of contact available and can be helpful in ensuring children are kept safe. By arrangement with the Senior Leadership Team, a member of staff's mobile phone may be designated as the means of communication for specific activities.

However staff should ensure that:

- Mobile use on these occasions is appropriate and professional (and will never include taking photographs of children).
- Ideally, mobile phones should not be used to make contact with parents during school trips
- Where possible all relevant communications should be made via the school office or staff use school registered mobile phones. But, if the office is not manned and staff are required to use a personal phone, they should input 141 to ensure their own number is hidden.
- 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.

When leaving the school building with children (e.g. for sport, or on school trips), the mobile phones of all members of staff must be switched on and turned to loud to ensure that staff can be contacted by the school. Contact numbers for all members of staff accompanying the children must be left at Reception and a list of contact telephone numbers for all children should be with the leader of the off-site activity (although these must be kept confidential).

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 we also recognise that they can prove a distraction in school and can provide a means of bullying or intimidating others. Therefore:

- Pupils are not permitted to have mobile phones at school or on trips
- If in the rare event of a parent wishing for his/her child to bring a mobile phone to school to contact the parent after school: the parent must discuss the issue first with their child's teacher; the phone must be handed in, switched off, to the teacher 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).

- Mobile phones brought to school without permission will be confiscated and returned at the end of the day.

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' - refer to Anti-Bullying Policy.

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

The growth of hand-held mobile technology and interconnectivity has implications for the safety of children, so in order to reflect the policy on safeguarding and child protection, it is essential parents do not use their mobile phones/cameras in the school building and playground area, apart from circumstances as outlined below:

We allow parents to photograph or video special school events such as shows or sports day using their mobile phones or cameras – **but insist that parents do not publish images (e.g. on social networking sites) that include any children other than their own.** Please refer to Guidance on the Use of Photographic Images and Videos of Children in Schools.

We recognize that parents may need phones for communication but ask that while in the presence of children or in public areas of the school such as during meetings and school events, mobile phones/cameras are not on display (switched off or in silent mode)

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 office and website.

This policy will be reviewed annually.