

Winnington Park Primary School and Nursery

Mobile Phone Policy



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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 conjunction with Acceptable Use of Communications Policy, Online Safety Policy, Safeguarding Children Policy, Anti-Bullying Policy and Guidance on the Use of Photographic Images and Videos of Children in Schools.

Communication:

The policy will be communicated to staff/pupils/community in the following ways:

- Policy to be posted on the school website
- Policy to be part of school induction pack for new staff
- Acceptable use agreements discussed with pupils at the start of each academic year
- Acceptable use agreements to be issued to all employees and permanently contracted staff, usually on entry to the school and then annually
- Acceptable use agreements to be held in personnel files

Code of conduct

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/online-messages 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 or bag) during class time.
- Mobile phones should not be used in a space where children are present (e.g. classroom, playground). The only areas where mobile phones can be used are the school office or the staffroom.
- Use of phones (including receiving/sending texts, online messages and emails) should be limited to non-contact time when no children are present and only in the agreed areas.
- 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 I-pads.

- 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 provide a useful means of communication on offsite activities. However staff should ensure that:

- Personal mobile phone usage on these occasions is appropriate and professional (and will never include taking photographs of children) and follows the guidance exactly as though the group were onsite (above).
- Personal mobile phones should not be used to make contact with parents during school trips – all relevant communications should be made via the school office or using the school mobile phone.
- 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. Parents must be informed by trip leaders that they are expected to use their mobile phone following guidance for being onsite.

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 or technology devices (such as SOS watches / Fitbits) 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 and put this in writing.

- The phone should be handed in to the class teacher on arrival and switched off, (the phone is left at the owner's risk). The class teacher will store the phone out of site and away from children.
- Mobile phones brought to school without permission will be confiscated and returned at the end of the day to the parent. It can be collected from the school office.

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 the Anti-Bullying Policy and the Safeguarding 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

While we would prefer parents not to use their mobile phones while on the school playground, 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 also allow parents to photograph or video school events such as shows or sports day using their mobile phones – **but insist that parents do not publish images or video (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.

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.