

Mobile Phone Policy

Leasingham St. Andrew's Church of
England Primary School

'Everything you do, do in love'



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1). Introduction and aims

Mobile phones, alongside other forms of technology, are changing the way and speed in which we communicate and are an important part of everyday life for our children, parents/carers and staff, as well as the wider school community. They can provide security and reassurance; however, there are also associated risks. Children and young people need to understand these risks to help them develop appropriate strategies for keeping themselves safe.

Our policy aims to:

- Promote, and set an example for, safe and responsible phone use on site and during off-site visits
- Set clear and robust acceptable use guidelines for the use of mobile phones for children, staff, parents/carers, governors and volunteers
- Support the school's other policies, especially those related to child protection and behaviour

This policy also aims to address some of the challenges posed by mobile phones in school, such as:

- Risks to child protection
- Data protection issues
- Potential for lesson disruption
- Risk of theft, loss, or damage
- Appropriate use of technology in the classroom

2). Camera/smart mobile phones, smart watches, tablets and other communication devices

It is recognised that it is the enhanced functions of many mobile phones, smart watches, tablets and other communication devices that cause the most concern, and which are most susceptible to misuse. Misuse includes the taking and distribution of images of children/staff to other mobile phone users, email addresses or social media, which could result in bullying or harassment.

It is also recognised that mobile phones can cause an unnecessary distraction during the working day and can be intrusive when used in the company of others. When mobile phones are misused, it can impact on an individual's dignity, privacy and right to confidentiality. Such concerns are not exclusive to children and young people; hence there is a duty to protect the needs and vulnerabilities of all.

It is appreciated that it can be very difficult to detect when such devices are present or being used, particularly in relation to enhanced functions, such as cameras. The use of all mobile phones is therefore limited, regardless of their capabilities. The aim is to avoid distraction and disruption of the working day, and to minimise the opportunities for any individual to make any covert images or misuse functions in any other way.

For the purposes of this policy please read 'phone' as any mobile phone, camera/smart phone, smart watches, tablets and other communication devices.

3). Roles and responsibilities

3.1 Staff

All staff (including teachers, support staff and supply staff) are responsible for enforcing this policy. Volunteers, or anyone else otherwise engaged by the school, must alert a member of staff if they witness, or are aware of, a breach of this policy.

3.2 Governors

The Headteacher is responsible for monitoring the policy every three years, reviewing it, and holding staff and pupils accountable for its implementation.

3.3 Children

All pupils at our school are expected to adhere to the expectations of this policy.

3.4 Parents/Carers

We expect parents to support this policy. We encourage all parents to reinforce and discuss the content of this policy with their children at home.

4). Use of mobile phones by staff

4.1 Personal Devices

Staff (including volunteers, contractors and anyone else otherwise engaged by the school) are not permitted to make or receive calls, or send texts, while children are present. Use of personal mobile phones must be restricted to non-contact time, and to areas of the school where children are not present (such as the staffroom).

There may be circumstances in which it's appropriate for a member of staff to have use of their phone during contact time. For instance:

- For emergency contact by their child, or their child's school
- In the case of acutely ill dependents or family members

The Headteacher will decide on a case-by-basis whether to allow for special arrangements. If special arrangements are not deemed necessary, school staff can use the school office telephone number [01529 302388] as a point of emergency contact.

4.2 Data protection

Staff must not use their personal mobile phones to process personal data, or any other confidential school information, including entering such data into generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools such as chatbots (e.g. ChatGPT, Google Bard, Microsoft Co-Pilot).

More detailed guidance on data protection can be found in our data protection policy.

4.3 Safeguarding

Staff must refrain from giving their personal contact details to parents/carers or children, including connecting through social media and messaging apps, unless a previous personal connection existed prior to the professional relationship.

Staff must avoid publicising their contact details on any social media platform or website, to avoid unwanted contact by parents/carers or children.

Staff must not use their mobile phones to take photographs or recordings of children, their work, or anything else which could identify a child. If it is necessary to take photos or recordings as part of a lesson/school trip/activity, this must be done using school equipment.

4.4 Using personal mobiles for work purposes

In some circumstances, it may be appropriate for staff to use personal mobile phones for work. Such circumstances may include, but aren't limited to:

- Emergency evacuations
- Supervising off-site trips
- Supervising residential visits
- Using multi-factor authentication for school-based online programmes

In these circumstances, staff will:

- Use their mobile phones in an appropriate and professional manner, in line with our staff code of conduct
- Not use their phones to take photographs or recordings of children, their work, or anything else which could identify a child
- Refrain from using their phones to contact parents/carers. If necessary, contact must be made via the school office

4.6 Sanctions

Staff that fail to adhere to this policy may face disciplinary action.

Please see the school's staff disciplinary policy for more information.

5). Use of mobile phones by children

5.1 Personal Devices

While we fully acknowledge a parent's right to allow their child to bring a phone to school if they walk to and from school without adult supervision, Leasingham St Andrew's Church of England Primary School does not permit children bringing phones in year groups below Year 5 & 6, as we would not expect these children to be walking to and from school unaccompanied.

When a child needs to bring a phone into school, the phone must be switched off at the school gate and placed in their bag. Upon entering the classroom, it should be handed to the child's class teacher, who will store it securely. Phones should be clearly marked so that each child and staff member can identify the phone. Parents are advised that Leasingham St Andrew's Church of England

Primary School accepts no liability for the loss or damage to phones which are brought into school or on to the school grounds.

Children are not entitled to log on to the school network using their phones or other personal electronic devices.

Should parents need to relay a message to their child during the school day, this should be done via the usual school procedure of contacting the school office via phone or email.

Children are not permitted to take mobile phones on school educational visits. This includes residential educational visits.

Smart Watches are not allowed in school. This is due to them having the ability to link to the internet and some having cameras, which can cause privacy issues and/or concerns around cyberbullying.

Air Tags must not be placed on children's bags whilst on school trips. This is due to the potential risk this can cause to individual and group safety.

5.2 Sanctions

Where a child is found by a member of staff during the school day to be using a phone, the phone will be confiscated from the child (schools are permitted to confiscate phones from children under sections 91 and 94 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006) and handed to a member of the Senior Leadership Team. The parents may collect the phone from the school office at the end of the school day. Parents will be informed of inappropriate use and the child's right to bring a phone to school will be withdrawn.

If a child is found to have taken photographs or video footage with a phone of either other children or staff, this will be regarded as a serious offence, and the child will receive a consequence in line with the school's behaviour policy. If images of other children or staff have been taken, the phone will not be returned to the child until the images have been removed by the child in the presence of a senior teacher, and the right to bring a phone into school will be withdrawn.

Please note that the Senior Leadership Team have the power to search children's phones, as set out in the DfE's guidance on searching, screening and confiscation. The DfE guidance allows us to search a child's phone if we have reason to believe the phone is being or has been used to commit an offence or cause personal injury.

Certain types of conduct, bullying or harassment can be classified as criminal conduct. The school takes such conduct extremely seriously and will involve the police or other agencies as appropriate. Such conduct includes, but is not limited to:

- Sexting (consensual and non-consensual sharing nude or semi-nude images or videos)
- Upskirting
- Threats of violence or assault
- Abusive calls, emails, social media posts or texts directed at someone on the basis of someone's ethnicity, religious beliefs or sexual orientation

6). Use of mobile phones by parents/carers, volunteers and visitors

Parents/carers, visitors and volunteers (including governors and contractors) must adhere to this policy as it relates to staff if they are on the school site during the school day.

This means:

- Not taking pictures or recordings of children, unless it's a public event (such as a school fair or Sports Day), or of their own child
- Using any photographs or recordings for personal use only, and not posting on social media without consent
- Not using phones in lessons, or when working with children
- Parents/carers, visitors and volunteers will be informed of the rules for mobile phone use when they sign in at reception or attend a public event at school

Parents/carers or volunteers supervising school trips or residential visits must not:

- Use their phone to make contact with other parents/carers
- Take photos or recordings of children, their work, or anything else which could identify a child

Parents/carers or volunteers supervising trips are also responsible for enforcing the school's policy for children using their phones, as set out in section 4 above.

Parents/carers must use the school office as the first point of contact if they need to get in touch with their child during the school day. They must not try to contact their child on his/her personal mobile during the school day.

7). Loss, theft or damage

Year 5 and 6 children bringing phones to school must ensure that phones are appropriately labelled and handed to their class teacher. Children must secure their phones as much as possible, including using passwords or pin codes to protect access to the phone's functions. Staff must also secure their personal phones. Failure by staff to do so could result in data breaches. The school accepts no responsibility for mobile phones that are lost, damaged or stolen on school premises or transport, during school visits or trips, or while children are travelling to and from school.

Confiscated phones will be stored in the school office in a locked cabinet.

Lost phones should be returned to the school office, who will then attempt to contact the owner.

8). Monitoring and review

This policy will be reviewed by the Headteacher, Leadership Team and any other staff member deemed appropriate; they will make any necessary changes and communicate these to all members of staff and relevant stakeholders.

