

## Mobile Phone Policy - COVID 19 update October 2020

Reviewed October 2020. Review April 2021

At Billesley 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 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. This policy refers to all mobile communication devices in school.

### Scope

This policy applies to all individuals who have access to personal mobile phones on site. This includes staff, volunteers, Governors, children, young people, carers, visitors and contractors. This list is not exhaustive. This policy should also be read in relation to the following documentation:

- Safeguarding Policy
- Tackling and Preventing Bullying Policy
- E-safety Policy

### Children

#### Nursery to Year 3

Nursery to Year 3 pupils are not allowed to bring a mobile phone to school. If a child in these year groups brings a phone to school, it will be handed over to the office for safe keeping during the day. A parent or carer must collect it from the office.

#### Year 4 to Year 6

Pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6 are permitted to bring a mobile phone to school if they walk to and from school without adult supervision. If parents want their child to bring a phone for this reason, written permission must first be handed to the school and it is on the understanding that they agree with the following limitations on use, namely:

- Mobile phones must be switched off at all times during the school day, including break and lunchtimes, and remain off whilst pupils are on the school premises.
- It is not permitted to film or photograph anyone on school grounds.
- All mobile phones should be named and handed to the office at the beginning of the day and collected at the end of the day.
- Content on the phone (e.g. messages, emails, pictures, videos, sound files) will be shown to senior members of staff when requested.

Where a pupil is found by a member of staff to be using a mobile phone on school premises, the phone will be confiscated from the pupil, handed to a member of the office team who will record the name of the pupil and attach it to the phone. The mobile phone will be securely stored by the school office. The phone must be collected by a parent or carer. If a pupil is found taking photographs or video footage with a mobile phone of either other pupils or teachers, this will be regarded as a serious offence and disciplinary action will be taken according to our Behaviour Policy.

If images of other pupils or teachers have been taken, the phone will not be returned to the pupil until the images have been removed by the pupil in the presence of the safeguarding team, in line with the guidance below. (Please see more guidance on sexting in our safeguarding policy). Should a pupil be found to be using their phone inappropriately, the school reserves the right to withdraw this privilege and they will no longer be able to bring a phone into school.

The school accepts no liability for the loss or damage to mobile phones which are brought into school or school ground. For their personal safety, students are reminded to keep their mobile phones away and hidden when walking home from school.

### **Mobile Phone Misuse**

Parents are notified that appropriate action will be taken against those who are in breach of the acceptable use guidelines following the school's behaviour policy. In the case of repeated misuse the phone will only be returned to a parent/carer who will be required to visit the school by appointment to collect the phone.

Serious misuse may lead to the confiscation of the mobile phone, communication with parents and the imposition of other sanctions, up to and including exclusion from school. In some instances an offence may have to be reported to social services or the police.

If a pupil commits an act which causes serious harassment, alarm or distress to another pupil or member of staff the ultimate sanction may be permanent exclusion. The school will consider the impact on the victim of the act in deciding the sanction and parents will be involved.

Examples of mobile phone misuse:

- Online bullying by text, image and email messaging
- Taking and sharing inappropriate pictures
- Access to inappropriate websites bypassing the school filtering system
- General disruption to learning caused by pupils accessing phones in lessons
- Making disrespectful comments, misrepresenting events or making defamatory remarks about teachers or other pupils
- Pupils phoning parents immediately following an incident so that the ability of staff to deal with an incident is compromised
- Pupils posting material on social network sites with no thought to the risks to their personal reputation, safety and sometimes with the deliberate intention of causing harm to others
- The deliberate engineering of situations where people's reactions are filmed or photographed in order to humiliate, embarrass and intimidate by publishing to a wider audience such as on Facebook or YouTube
- Publishing photographs of vulnerable pupils, including those on a child protection plan, where this may put them at additional risk
- The use of a mobile phone for 'sexting' (the deliberate taking and sending of provocative images or text messages)

### **Examining content on phones**

The Education Act 2011 gives school staff the right to seize and look through electronic devices if it is deemed that there is a good reason to do so. If content is found, this must be brought immediately to a DSL and content will only be deleted by a member of this team as part of a joint safeguarding team decision.

If inappropriate material is found on the device the staff member should inform the safeguarding lead as soon as possible whilst retaining the evidence on the phone.

### **Staff**

The school recognises that staff will bring their mobile phones to work and that they will be used within the parameters of this policy.

Mobile phones should be turned to silent and left in a safe place during lesson times. The school cannot take responsibility for items that are lost or stolen. Staff should never contact pupils or parents from their personal mobile phone number or give their mobile phone number to pupils or parents. If a member of staff needs to make telephone contact with a pupil or parent, they should use the school telephone in the office. Mobile phones must NEVER be used during a lesson or in corridors, unless authorised by the Principal or Vice Principal.

Staff should never send to, or accept from, colleagues or pupils, texts or images that could be viewed as inappropriate. With regard to camera phones, a member of staff should never use their phone to photograph a pupil(s) or allow themselves to be photographed by pupils.

SLT and staff in the Resource Bases are authorised to use their phones for urgent messages that affect the efficient running of the school or safety of pupils and staff.

### Support Staff

All support staff must ensure phones are locked away when in the front office and around the building. This also includes kitchen staff, cleaners and admin (one school mobile phone may be kept at the front desk to contact SLT). Lunchtime supervisors must ensure phones are turned to silent and locked in the black filing cabinet or Office at any time whilst in school. The BSS team and the SBM are permitted to keep their phones available during the school day to ensure the efficient running of the site and the safety of staff and pupils but must be vigilant that they do not put themselves or pupils in a vulnerable position.

### Trips and Visits

Teachers may use their phones as a means of communication to ensure the safety of pupils. However, they must be mindful of this policy and use their phones within the guidelines above. If a member of staff feels that they have put themselves in a vulnerable position they must contact a DSL urgently. At no time should a member of staff or volunteer photograph themselves or pupils on a trip and publish this on social media.

### Parents and Carers

While we would prefer parents and carers not to use their mobile phones while on the school site, 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. Mobile phones should never be used in the school building.

However, mobile phones should never be used in the school building to take photographs or videos of children including their own. For special events, such as Sports Day, assemblies and productions parents are asked to take photos of their child only **after** the performance.

The school takes photos and videos of special events which are shared on our Facebook and Twitter feeds, (unless parents have told us this is not allowed). At no time are mobile phones allowed in Reception or Nursery or Playcare.

### Contractors

Contractors must not use their phones in the school building or grounds, and they should be turned to silent. If they need to make a call, then they should do so from their van / vehicle. If photographs are needed then can take these with their phone, but must only do this when no children are present and in the company of a member of staff.

### Covid 19 update 29.10.2020

During this period, staff are permitted to keep their mobile phones on and within sight during the school day. These may be used to contact SLT should the need arise. Contact between other teachers/classes should be made during lunch or break times unless deemed urgent.

Under no circumstances should staff use mobile phones to make personal calls/texts/emails during contact time with children. Staff mobile phones should not be used to take photos as per school policy.

## Appendix

### Mobile Phone Permission Letter

Child's name: \_\_\_\_\_

Child's class: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent's name: \_\_\_\_\_

I authorise my child to bring their mobile phone to school. This is because they walk to or from school on their own. I agree with the following limitations on use, namely:

- Mobile phones must be switched off at all times during the school day and stored in the front office
- Mobile phones must remain off whilst pupils are on the school premises
- It is not permitted to film or photograph anyone on school grounds
- Content on the phone (e.g. messages, emails, pictures, videos, sound files) will be shown to senior members of staff when requested

I accept that the school accepts no liability for the loss or damage to mobile phones which are brought into school or school grounds.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_