

# Earlsmead Primary School

## e-safety Mobile Phone Policy

<b>Policy summary</b>	Guidelines for mobile phone use in the school.
<b>Affects</b>	Staff, Volunteers, Pupils, Parents & Carers
<b>Drafted by</b>	Sheree Oliver
<b>Status</b>	Non-Statutory
<b>Approved by</b>	Children's Committee
<b>Last approved revision date</b>	March 2022
<b>Next review date</b>	March 2023
<b>Related policies, procedures and forms</b>	Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, Anti-Bullying Policy, e-safety Policy, e-safety What do we do if Guidance

# Introduction and Aims

At Earlsmead 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. As it is difficult to detect specific usage, 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, 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 and Child Protection Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- E-safety Policy
- E-safety What do we do if Guidance

## Students

### **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 Year 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 (see Appendix 1), 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 class teacher at the beginning of the day and collected at the end of the day. The phones will be locked in a locker in the classroom.
- 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 pupil may collect the phone at the end of the school day. 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 teacher 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 a senior teacher. (Please see more guidance on sexting in our child protection 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. As a school we talk to the children about the appropriate use of messages, as they can often be used to bully pupils, and we ask that parents do this too. Should parents need to contact pupils or vice versa during the school day, this should be done via the usual school procedure of contacting the school office via phone or email.

The school accepts no liability for the loss or damage to mobile phones which are brought into school or school grounds. 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 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, who may be 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. Pages 12-13 of the DfE advice explain that a staff member who finds an electronic device on a pupil after a search may examine and/or erase any data or files on the device, as long as they think there is a 'good reason' to do so.

When deciding whether there is a good reason to examine or erase data or files, the staff member must reasonably suspect that the data or file on the device in question has been, or could be, used to cause harm, disrupt teaching, or break the school rules.

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, they should use the school telephone in the office.

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.

## Parents and Carers

While we would prefer parents and carers not to use their mobile phones while at school, 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 (e.g. on social networking sites) that include any children other than their own.

## Appendix I

# 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 a locked locker in their classroom.
- 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 \_\_\_\_\_