

St Peter's CE Infant School

Mobile phone and Camera Policy

1. Introduction

1.1 At St Peter's it is recognised that mobile phone and camera technology has become more sophisticated over recent years and will continue to evolve. Wireless connections extend the capabilities of mobile phones further and allow access to new content and services, such as the internet, social networking sites and instant messaging. Most mobile phones offer camera, video and audio recording as standard.

1.2 Mobile phones/cameras alongside other technologies aim to change the way we communicate. The speed of communication often provides security and reassurance; however, as with any other form of technology, there are associated risks. Children are encouraged to understand such risks to enable them to develop the appropriate strategies which will keep them safe.

1.3 As with online safety issues generally, risks to children are broadly categorised under the headings of:

- Content
- Contact
- Conduct
- Commerce

These issues are managed by reducing availability, restricting access and increasing resilience.

1.4 At St Peter's, this philosophy is applied to the use of mobile phones/cameras through this policy. Acceptable use and management of mobile phones/cameras is agreed by all staff. There is a clear expectation that the personal use of mobile phones is to be limited to specific times and uses and agreed with the Headteacher. Staff and visitors to the school are able to store personal belongings in the main school office as necessary.

1.5 Under no circumstances are images, video or audio recordings to be made on personal mobile phones/cameras without prior explicit consent by the Headteacher, which will be recorded.

2. Aim

2.1 The aim of the Mobile Phone/Camera Policy is to protect children from harm, by ensuring the appropriate management and use of mobile phones/cameras by all individuals who come into contact with the School.

2.2 Children are also empowered with the skills to manage the changes in technology in a safe and appropriate way; and to be alert to the potential risks of such use.

2.3 This is achieved through balancing protection and potential misuse. It is recognised that alongside the potential risks, mobile phones/cameras continue to be effective communication tools. This in turn contributes to safeguarding practice and protection.

3. Scope

3.1 The Mobile Phone/Camera Policy applies to all individuals who have access to and/or users of personal and/or work-related mobile phones within the broadest context of the school eg within the school building/

grounds as well as when accompanying children on trips and visits. This includes children, parents and carers, all staff, volunteers, students, visitors, and contractors.

4. Policy Statement

4.1 It is recognised that it is the enhanced functions of many mobile phones that give the most cause for concern; and which are considered the most susceptible to potential misuse. Examples of misuse include the taking and distribution of indecent images, exploitation and bullying.

4.2 It is understood that should mobile phones be misused, there will be a negative impact on an individual's safety, dignity, privacy and right to confidentiality. Such concerns are not considered exclusive to children, so the needs or vulnerabilities of all must be respected and protected.

4.3 It is recognised that mobile phones and cameras can also cause an unnecessary distraction during the working day and are often considered intrusive when used in the company of others.

4.4 It is recognised that it is often difficult to detect when mobile phones/cameras are present or being used. The use of all mobile phones/cameras is effectively managed to ensure the potential for misuse is minimised.

4.5 All toilets are designated 'mobile/camera free' areas.

5. Code of conduct

5.1 A code of conduct is promoted with the aim of creating an informed workforce who work together to safeguard and promote positive outcomes for all children.

5.2 It is ensured that all staff:

- Are aware of the need to protect children from harm.
- Have a clear understanding of what constitutes misuse.
- Know how to minimise risk.
- Are vigilant and alert to potential warning signs of misuse.
- Avoid putting themselves into compromising situations which could be misinterpreted and lead to potential allegations.
- Understand the need for professional boundaries and clear guidance regarding acceptable use.
- Are responsible for the self-moderation of their own behaviours.
- Are aware of the importance of reporting concerns immediately.

5.3 It is recognised that studies consistently indicate that imposing rigid regulations and/or 'bans' on the actions of others are counterproductive and should be avoided. Such imposition leads to a culture of suspicion, uncertainty and secrecy. An agreement of trust is therefore promoted regarding the carrying and use of mobile phones in the school. This is agreed by all staff and other adults who come into contact with children in our school.

6. Procedures

6.1 Clearly defined policies and procedures aim to ensure effective safeguarding practices are in place to protect children from harm and exposure to behaviours associated with misuse. The need to ensure that mobile phones do not cause unnecessary and/or unsafe disruptions and distractions in the workplace, are also considered. Acceptable use and management of mobile phones is agreed by all staff. There is a clear expectation, for

example, that all personal use of mobile phones is to be limited to lunch and breaks, unless it is to be otherwise agreed by the Headteacher. Staff are able to store personal belongings in the main school office as necessary.

6.3 The recording, taking and sharing of images, video and audio on any mobile phone is avoided; except where it is explicitly agreed by the Headteacher. All mobile phone/camera use is to be open to scrutiny and the Headteacher is able to withdraw or restrict authorisation for use at any time if necessary.

6.4 Staff are directed not to use their own personal mobile phones for contacting children, parents and carers. If it is necessary, it must be with the explicit consent of the Headteacher and the parent or carer; unless it is considered an emergency. Care is to be taken to ensure that work mobiles are not exploited in a similar way.

6.5 All staff, parents and carers, volunteers, students, visitors, and contractors are respectfully advised that their mobile phones/cameras are not to be used in designated mobile phone/camera use free areas. Should it be considered necessary for mobile phone calls and/or texts to be taken or made, efforts are made to avoid any unnecessary disturbance or disruption to children. No images, video or audio recordings are made without prior explicit written consent by the Headteacher.

6.6 All individuals who bring personal devices into the school must ensure that they hold no inappropriate or illegal content.

7. School Mobile/Camera

7.1 The School has a designated school mobile phone and cameras. Use of this equipment is considered to be the safest choice but also is;

- An effective communication tool enabling text, email messages and calls to be made and received.
- An essential part of the emergency toolkit which is to be taken on trips and outings.
- A back-up facility should landline facilities be unavailable – or where contact needs to be made outside of operational hours.

7.2 Effective security procedures are in place to safeguard against any potential misuse. Only authorised individuals have access to the school mobile, which is password protected and stored securely in the main school office when not in use. Material held on the school mobile or cameras is only ever downloaded onto a school computer, never on a personal device.

7.3 Personal calls are not made on the school mobile phone other than in agreed circumstances. Personal contact is permitted to be made via the school mobile in the event of an emergency.

7.4 The school mobile phone/camera is clearly labelled as such.

8. Driving

8.1 All staff who are required to drive on behalf of the school must ensure any work/and or personal mobile phones are to be switched off whilst driving.

8.2 Under no circumstances, when driving on behalf of the school, should staff make or take a phone call, text or use the enhanced functions of a mobile phone. This also applies to the use of hands-free and wireless connections, which should be considered a distraction rather than a safer alternative.

9. Safe Storage

9.1 Personal belongings can be stored in the main school office during the working day however belongings in the main school office are left at the owners own risk. It is recommended that should mobile phones/cameras be stored, they are to be securely marked, password protected and insured. No liability for loss and/or damage can be accepted.

10. Emergency Contact

10.1 It is recognised that mobile phones provide direct contact to others, and will often provide necessary reassurances due to their ease of access, particularly at difficult times. Agreed acceptable use of mobile phones is therefore promoted. This is to afford all staff peace of mind, by reducing stress and worry and is therefore to allow them to concentrate more fully on their work. Such use must be subject to management, monitoring and review.

10.2 It is ensured that the landline telephone remains connected and operational at all times except in circumstances beyond reasonable control. This means that the landline is to be available for emergency/urgent contact at all times.