

Mobile Phone Policy

Introduction and Aims

At St Thomas' C.E. (V.A.) 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 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.

Staff can leave mobile phones in their staffroom pigeonholes but must adhere to this policy if they wish to keep their phone with them. Staff in the EYFS must ensure that their phones are either in the staffroom or in the walk-in storage cupboard off the main classroom area. This policy should also be read in relation to the following documentation:

- Safeguarding Children Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- E-Safety Policy

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 during contact time with children.
- Staff should have their phones on silent or switched off and out of sight (e.g. in a drawer, handbag or exceptionally an internal pocket if no access to the previous two) during class time. EYFS staff must not have phones on their person or in the main classroom area but they must be stored in the walk-in cupboard.
- Mobile phones should not be used in spaces where children are present (e.g. classroom, playground).
- Use of phones (inc. receiving/sending texts and emails) should be limited to non-contact time when no children are present e.g. in office areas, staff room, empty classrooms.
- It is also advised that staff security-protect access to functions of their phone.
- Should there be very 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 (EYFS staff- this must still be within the walk-in cupboard area).
- Staff are not at any time permitted to use recording equipment on their mobile phones, for example: to take recordings/pictures/videos of children, or sharing for images.
- Legitimate recordings and photographs should be captured using school equipment such as cameras and ipads.
- 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:

- Mobile use on these occasions is appropriate and professional (and will never include taking photographs of children).
- Mobile phones should not be used to make contact with parents during school trips – all relevant communications should be made via the school office.
- 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.
- In exceptional circumstances, if it is necessary to give out a phone number to a parent (out of hours trip) then the school mobile phone number should be given and should be taken on the trip. If exceptionally, staff need to liaise with parents re collection times and the office staff are not available e.g. A weekend trip, then staff's personal phones may be used but the number disguised by being prefaced with 141 to protect staff security.

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 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.
- the phone must be handed in at the School office and switched off, first thing in the morning and collected from there by the child at home time (the phone is left at the owner's own risk).
- Mobile phones brought to school without permission will be confiscated and returned at the end of the day.

- 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'.

Parents

While we would prefer parents 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.**

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.

Adopted September 2016

Review September 2018