Mobile Phone and Smart Wearables Policy

Mobile phone (and associated smart wearables) technology has advanced significantly over the last few years - and it continues to evolve. Wireless connections in particular have extended the capabilities of mobile phones, enabling access to a wide range of new content and services globally. Many phones and watches now offer Internet and email access, alongside the most often standard functions of messaging, camera, video and sound recording.

They can provide security and reassurance; however there are also associated risks. Children and young people need to understand these risks in order to help them develop appropriate strategies for keeping themselves safe. As with e-safety issues generally, risks to children and young people can be broadly categorised under the headings of content, contact and conduct and managed by reducing availability, restricting access and increasing resilience.

Aim

The aim of the Mobile Phone Policy is to promote safe and appropriate practice through establishing clear and robust acceptable use guidelines. This is achieved through balancing protection against potential misuse with the recognition that mobile phones are effective communication tools - which in turn can contribute to safeguarding practice and protection.

Policy statement

- It is recognised that it is the enhanced functions of many mobile phones that cause the most concern, and which are most susceptible to misuse. Misuse includes the taking and distribution of indecent images, exploitation and bullying.
- 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 mobiles 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 and Smart watches 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.

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.

It is therefore ensured that all practitioners:

- have a clear understanding of what constitutes misuse.
- are vigilant and alert to potential warning signs.
- 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.

Procedures

Personal mobiles

Effective guidance is in place to avoid the use of mobile phones causing unnecessary disruptions and distractions within the workplace, and to ensure effective safeguarding practice is promoted to protect against potential misuse.

In the interests of equality, and to further promote safety, the guidance applies to any individual who has a mobile phone on site.

During lesson/contact time, adults should not carry their mobile phones upon their person. Other than in agreed exceptional circumstances, phones must be either turned off or on silent and calls and texts must not be taken or made during lesson time.

Practitioners are not permitted, in any circumstance, to use their phones for taking, recording or sharing images and 'mobile free' areas must be observed at all times.

Practitioners are not permitted to use their own personal phones for contacting children, young people and their families within or outside of the setting.

If smart wearables have a camera, this should not be worn in the classroom or when in direct contact with pupils.

Under no circumstances is any individual permitted to take images or make recordings on a mobile phone or wearable device. Any individual bringing a personal device into the setting must ensure that it contains no inappropriate or illegal content.

Work mobile

The use of a designated work mobile is promoted as it is:

- an essential part of the emergency toolkit which is taken on off-site trips.
- an effective communication aid, enabling text, email messages and calls to be made and received.
- a back-up facility should problems be experienced with the landline – or where contact needs to be made outside of work hours.
- A critical part of the school's invacuation and lockdown procedure

Personal calls are not permitted to be made on the work mobile, other than in agreed exceptional circumstances.

The work mobile phones are clearly labelled as such, and do not have cameras or other additional features for recording or accessing the internet.

Safe storage

A designated safe and secure area for practitioners to store their personal belongings during the working day is available. For visitors, phones should be left in the school office where they will be stored securely.

Practitioners leave their belongings in safe storage at their own risk. It is therefore recommended that phones are password protected and insured. No liability for loss and damages is accepted.

Personal Mobile Phones should not be visible to pupils at any time.

As well as safeguarding children and avoiding any unnecessary disruptions during the day, this procedure also aims to protect staff against any unfounded allegations.

Emergency contact

It is recognised that mobile phones provide direct contact to others, and at times provide a necessary reassurance due to their ease of access, particularly at stressful times.

Practitioners, therefore, in agreed exceptional circumstances are permitted to keep their phone in the school office. This is to enhance their own well-being and peace of mind, to reduce stress and worry and to enable them to concentrate more effectively on their work.

Such use will be for an agreed limited period only, until any concerns or issues leading to the exceptional circumstance request have been resolved.

It is ensured at all times that the landline telephone remains connected and operational, except in circumstances beyond control. This means that it is available for emergency/urgent contact at all times. Staff are encouraged to provide family and any other appropriate party the school telephone number so that contact can be made in the case of an emergency.

This document should be considered alongside the following documents:

- Safeguarding Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Teacher Standards
- E-Safety Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy

This policy was agreed and adopted by the Governing Body on: 18.5.26
Signed: _____(Chair of Governors)

This policy is due for review on: 18.5.29