MOBILE COMMUNICATION DEVICES POLICY

INCLUDING WALKIE TALKIES, MOBILE PHONES AND SMART WATCHES

Introduction and aims

At Bowlee Park we recognise that mobile phones, including smart phones and smart watches, are an important part of everyday life for our pupils, parents and staff, as well as the wider school community.

Our policy aims to:

- Promote and set an example for safe and responsible phone use
- Set clear guidelines for the use of mobile phones for pupils, staff, parents and volunteers
- Support the school's other policies, especially those related to child protection and behaviour

This policy also aims to address some of the challenges posed by mobile phones in school, such as:

- Risks to safeguarding
- Data protection issues
- Potential for lesson disruption
- Risk of theft, loss, or damage
- Appropriate use of technology in the classroom

Staff

All staff (including teachers, support staff, and supply staff) are responsible for following this policy.
Volunteers, or anyone else otherwise engaged by the school must alert a member of staff if they are aware of a breach of this policy.

Work phones

Some members of staff are provided with a mobile phone by the school for work purposes.
Only authorised staff are permitted to use school phones, and access to the phone must not be provided to anyone without authorisation.
Staff must:

- Only use phone functions for work purposes, including making/receiving calls, sending/receiving emails or other communications, or using the internet
- Ensure that communication or conduct linked to the device is appropriate and professional at all times, in line with our staff code of conduct.

Use of personal mobiles

In some circumstances, it may be appropriate for staff to use personal mobile phones for work. Such circumstances may include, but aren't limited to:

- Emergency evacuations
- Supervising off-site trips
- Supervising residential visits
- Accessing CPOMS
- Engaging with contractors/outside support companies
- Loss of school phones due to internet outage

In these circumstances, staff will:

- Use their mobile phones in an appropriate and professional manner, in line with our staff code of conduct
- Not use their phones to take photographs or recordings of pupils, their work, or anything else which could identify a pupil

Staff at Bowlee Park will:

- ensure that mobile phones are either switched to silent or off during lesson time.
- not make or take personal calls in the vicinity of children at any time.

- not use their phone in the vicinity of children – this includes sharing photos, checking the time, checking mail or messages.
- understand that personal mobile devices are used as a means of communication with school when out on school trips or taking groups of children to participate in off-site activities. In such circumstances staff will ensure safeguarding of pupils at all times and remain with the group the staff member is responsible for, rather than taking or making calls in private.
- not give their personal contact details to children or young people, including their mobile telephone number
- staff are advised to use school equipment e.g. school mobile phone, or landline to communicate with parents or agencies. However, staff are permitted to call parents from their own mobile phone should they chose to do so. Staff are advised to use the prefix 141 before dialling the recipient's number to ensure their own number is protected. Staff use their own phones at their personal risk. Personal phones can be used for communication during educational visits (in line with the educational visits policy) and used for circumstances that are reasonably justified e.g. in emergency situations etc.
- not take ANY images of school children on their mobile phone. In some circumstances an adult may justify why they do have an image on their phone, such as 'my child was a guest at their party'. However, staff should expect to be challenged if they do possess photographs of school children on their phone.
- ensure that in an emergency, if needing to make or receive a personal call during a lesson or whilst on duty, first obtain agreement from their line manager, ensure that adequate cover has been put in place and make the call in an area not used by children.

Smart Watches

- Smart watches must be used in accordance with e safety guidance to ensure that both children and adults are safe. They must be on silent/do not disturb for the duration of all contact time and meetings. Messages/notifications must not be checked during contact time with children.

Use of class computers for sending or reading mail

- Class computers must only be used to send/read emails outside of timetabled teaching time/contact time with children. Important messages during the day will be passed on.

Pupils

- Pupils who walk to and from school without an adult may carry a mobile phone for safety. In these cases, children may bring a mobile phone to school.
- Parents and carers must be aware that whilst there are obvious benefits to pupils having a mobile phone in terms of personal safety there are also some associated risks such as potential for theft, bullying and inappropriate contact, including grooming by unsuitable persons.
- We alert parents and carers to the risks of using a mobile phone while walking to and from school. Children who are concentrating on using their phone can have reduced general safety awareness which may result in road accidents or injury.
- When a child needs to bring a phone into school the phone must be given to the class teacher upon entering school. Phones will be secured in a locked cupboard throughout the day. The child will be given their phone when leaving the school building at the end of the day.
- Pupils are not allowed to bring mobile phones into any other area of the school.
- Any mobile phones discovered to have been brought into the school and not handed in to the class teacher will be confiscated immediately. Parents or carers will be asked to collect the mobile phone from the school office.
- Pupils are not allowed to take mobile phones on any school trips.
- Pupils who attend a club after school must not switch their phone on until they leave the school building. During clubs all phones must be out of sight
- If a member of the staff has any suspicion that a mobile phone brought into school by a pupil has unsuitable material stored on it, parents or carers will be asked to collect the phone from a member of the senior leadership team. In circumstances where there is a suspicion that the material on the mobile phone may provide evidence relating to a criminal offence the phone will be handed over to the school's safeguarding lead or to the head teacher for further investigation.
- Pupils are not allowed to wear smart watches

- All phones brought to school are done so at the owners risk and school is not liable for any loss or damage.

Sanctions for inappropriate use of mobile phone

- Pupils are not permitted to use their phones whilst on the school site and, 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 the pupil will receive a consequence in line with the school's 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 a senior teacher.
- 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 allowed to bring a phone into school.
- Pupils are not entitled to log on to the school network using their mobile phones or other personal electronic devices.
- 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.

Certain types of conduct, bullying or harassment can be classified as criminal conduct. The school takes such conduct extremely seriously, and will involve the police or other agencies as appropriate.
Such conduct includes, but is not limited to:

- Sexting (consensual and non-consensual sharing nude or semi-nude images or videos)
- Upskirting
- Threats of violence or assault
- Abusive calls, emails, social media posts or texts directed at someone on the basis of someone's ethnicity, religious beliefs or sexual orientation

Visitors, Parents and Carers

- Visitors and supply staff are not permitted to use mobile phones where children are present and during teaching time. Phones must be kept on silent and out of sight. Mobile phones may be used in the PPA room, staffroom or in an office where children are not present.
- If a visitor, parent or carer is seen using their mobile phone in the school building they will be asked to turn it off and remove it from children's view.
- During 'stay and learn' sessions no phones may be used by parents and they need to be on silent.
- Parents and carers may use their mobile phone as a camera/video device to record their child at special performances e.g. class assemblies, concerts, etc. On these occasions the use of a phone is permitted for photographing/videoing only; images should only be taken by parents and carers if they include their own child and the use of these images is for their own personal use and must not be uploaded for any internet use including Facebook or any other social networking sites or used in any form of publication unless they are solely of their own child.
- We recognise that children may inadvertently be included in photographs by another parent; we are, therefore, are obliged to warn parents and carers of the legal and safeguarding risks of publishing such photographs on any platform. The placing of any photographs of children on social media is dangerous and parents may be in breach of the Data Protection Act if they upload photos of other children without the explicit consent of that child's parents.

Walkie Talkie/Two Way Radio Communication

The use of Walkie Talkies/Two Way Radios within school is an essential part of daily school life. The school recognises the importance of using Walkie Talkies as a method of communication within school to ensure that children and staff are kept safe at all times.

The majority of time Walkie Talkies are used by staff within school is to request assistance. This could be a situation where the Site Manager is required for maintenance work to be carried out. However, there are occasions when assistance may be required for a pupil/member of staff in relation to an accident or medical emergency and it is important that the appropriate assistance is received as soon as possible.
Each member of staff is required to ensure the safety of their Walkie Talkie, that it is charged and switched on ready to receive messages. In the event of loss due to a theft or the item being lost the member of staff must inform the IT manager.

Data Protection

It is important to understand that when communicating information via a Walkie Talkie, you are communicating over a radio network. Others in the vicinity using the same network may be able to hear your conversations e.g. taxi drivers. Therefore, it is important that appropriate controls are in place. Personal information which could enable an individual to be identified must not be communicated. For example, only communicate year group or initials or use a code system when requesting assistance The communication language used on the Walkie Talkie must be professional at all times.

Reviewed - September 2024