



Mobile Phone Policy

Kington St. Michael C.E. Primary School

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Introduction

Mobile phone technology has advanced significantly - 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 now offer Internet and email access, alongside the most often standard functions of messaging, camera, video and sound recording.

Mobile phones, alongside other forms of technology are changing the way and speed in which we communicate. 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 online safety issues generally, risks to children and young people can be broadly categorised under the headings; content, contact, conduct and commerce. These risks can be managed by reducing availability, restricting access and increasing resilience.

Aim

The aim of KSM 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.

Scope

This policy applies to all individuals who have access to personal or work-related mobile phones on site. This includes teachers and teaching assistants, volunteers, committee members, children, young people, parents, carers, visitors and community users. This list is not exhaustive.

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 mobile 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 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

It is fully recognised that studies consistently indicate that imposing rigid regulations and/or 'bans' on the actions of others can be counterproductive, leading to a culture of suspicion, uncertainty and secrecy. The imposition of rigorous, inflexible rules is therefore avoided, unless the potential risks of not enforcing them far out-weigh the benefits. An agreement of trust is therefore promoted regarding the carrying and use of mobile phones within the setting environment, which is agreed to by all practitioners.

Procedures

Personal Mobile Phones

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, including children, parents and visitors, as detailed below:

Personal Mobiles and Smart Watches – Staff, Including Visiting Teachers

- Staff are not permitted to make/receive calls/texts during contact time with children.
- Emergency contact should be made via the school office.
- Staff should have their phones on silent or switched off and out of sight (e.g. in the staff room or classroom cupboard) during class time.
- Mobile phones can be used during break and lunchtimes but should not be used in a space where children are present
- Use of personal phones (including the receiving and sending of texts and emails) should be limited to non-contact time when no children are present e.g. in office areas, staff room, empty classrooms or in designated spaces during trips and the PGL
- Smart Watches, must not be worn, when working with children



- It is also advised that staff security protect access to functions of their phone using a secure pin code
- Staff are not at any time permitted to use recording equipment on their mobile phones, for example; to take recordings of children, or sharing images.
- Recordings and photographs should be captured using school equipment such as cameras, I-pads and the school mobile phone.
- Staff should report any usage of mobile devices that causes them concern to the head teacher (this includes staff, volunteer, parents/carers and visitors to site)
- A staff professional KSM Whats app group has been created to share information regarding school snow closures, sickness, cancelled events, share resources etc. as a quick way to give information to all staff who may not have their school email account linked to their mobile phone.
- Staff who are no longer employed at KSM will be removed by the Whats app administrator.
- Only the school mobile phone should be used on school visits/trips (unless the nature of the trip requires groups to separate them personal phones can be used only to contact leaders of each group)

Mobile Phones for work related Purposes

We recognise that mobile phones provide a useful means of communication on offsite activities therefore KSM has a mobile phone which should be taken on all trips. However staff should ensure that:

- Mobile phone use on these occasions is appropriate and professional
- The school office should be contacted in an emergency
- Personal 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/volunteers are accompanying trips they should not use their mobile phone in the presence of children
- Parents/carers and volunteers are informed not to make contact with other parents (via calls, text, email or social networking) during the trip
- Parents/carers and volunteers should not use their phone to take photographs of children.

Personal Mobiles and Smart Watches - Pupils

- We also 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 allowed to bring mobile phones and smart watches into school, the phone/watch must be handed in to the office and must be switched off
- The phone/watch is left at the owner's own risk and school is not responsible for loss or damage
- Phones/watches should not be taken on school trips/visits
- Where mobile phones are used in or out of school to bully or intimidate others, then the head teacher or DSL has the power to intervene 'to such an extent as it is reasonable to regulate the behaviour of pupils, including when they are off the school site.



Volunteers, Visitors, Governors and Contractors

All Volunteers, Visitors, Governors and Contractors are expected to follow our mobile phone policy, as it relates to staff whilst on the premises.

Parents/carers

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/carers usage of mobile phones, whilst on the school site is courteous and appropriate to the school environment. Reminders are regularly shared on the school newsletter.

We also allow parents to photograph 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.

Staff will challenge other members of staff/governors/volunteers/visitors/parents/ contractors who use their mobile phone whilst children are present. This will then be reported to senior staff.

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 website.

Any individual bringing a personal device into the setting must ensure that it contains no inappropriate or illegal content.

Driving

If any practitioner is required to drive in a working capacity, their personal mobile phone must be switched off whilst driving. Under no circumstances should practitioners drive whilst taking a phone call. This also applies to hands-free and wireless connections, which are considered a distraction rather than a safer alternative.

Links with other KSM Policies

This policy links to the following policies and procedures:

- KSM Pupil Mobile Phone Policy
- KSM Behaviour Policy