

# RIVERSDALE PRIMARY SCHOOL

# Mobile Phone Policy

Date:

Review Date:

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ (Governor)

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ (Headteacher)

INTRODUCTION



At Riversdale Primary School the welfare and well-being of our pupils is paramount. The aim of the Mobile Phone Policy is to allow stakeholders to benefit from the use of modern 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 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. This policy refers to ALL mobile communication devices.

This policy applies to all individuals who have access to personal mobile phones on site. This includes, but is not limited to: staff, volunteers, governors, children, young people, parents, carers, visitors and contractors.

## **AIMS**

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 including:
  - *Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy*
  - *Online Safety Policy*
  - *Acceptable Use Policy*
  - *Photographic and Video Images Policy*
  - *Data Protection Policy.*

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

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

## **ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

All staff (including teachers, support staff, and supply staff) are responsible for enforcing this policy.

Volunteers, or anyone else otherwise engaged by the school, must alert a member of staff if they witness, or are aware of, a breach of this policy.

The Headteacher is responsible for monitoring the policy every 2 years, reviewing it, and holding staff and pupils accountable for its implementation.

## USE OF MOBILE PHONES BY PERMANENT STAFF

### Personal Mobile Phones:

Staff (including volunteers, contractors and anyone else otherwise engaged by the school) are not permitted to make or receive calls, or send texts (including through instant messaging services such as WhatsApp), while in the presence of pupils. Use of personal mobile phones must be restricted to non-contact time, and to areas of the school where pupils are not present (such as the staff room).

There may be circumstances in which it's appropriate for a member of staff to have use of their phone during contact time. For instance:

- For emergency contact by their child, or their child's school
- In the case of acutely ill dependents or family members

If this is the case, staff should ask permission in advance from the Headteacher to have their phone out. The Headteacher will decide on a case-by-case basis whether to allow for special arrangements. If special arrangements are not deemed necessary, school staff can use the school office number as a point of emergency contact.

Where transferring of photographs or videos to the school system is done via email, staff must delete the email as soon as the files have been retrieved.

### Safeguarding:

Staff must refrain from giving their personal contact details, including work issues email addresses, to parents or pupils, including connecting through social media and messaging apps. In addition, staff must avoid publicising their contact details, both personal and work issued on any social media platform or website, to avoid unwanted contact by parents or pupils. Details regarding this can also be found in the **Acceptable Use Policy**.

The school will take photographs and video recordings of children for a range of purposes. These include for the capture of learning as evidence, particularly in the Early Years and Foundation Stage, use on the school website, school social media platforms and publicity materials, such as a school prospectus. In these instances, staff **should** use school issued devices, such as iPads. However, at Riversdale Primary School, we recognise that this is not always possible. In these cases, staff may take photographs or video recordings of pupils using personal devices, but **ALL** images must be transferred onto the secure school system and be permanently deleted from mobile phones by the end of the school day. Where an activity takes place during unsociable hours, such as trips to the theatre or on residential trips, images must be transferred within 24 hours. All staff have access to a school wide Google Drive should this be required.

These regulations are essential to ensure that staff:

- 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.

### Using personal mobiles for work purposes:

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:

- Taking the register in emergency evacuations
- Supervising off-site trips
- Supervising residential visits

In these circumstances, staff will:

- Use their mobile phones in an appropriate and professional manner, in line with our staff code of conduct;
- Keep their mobile phone with them at all times (so as to be contactable)

- Keep their mobile phone fully charged (where they are aware they will be responsible for children during a school trip);
- Refrain from using their phones to contact parents. If necessary, contact must be made via the school office.

### **Work Phones:**

Some members of staff are provided with a mobile phone by the school for residential trips. Only authorised staff are permitted to use these 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 where necessary;
- ensure that communication or conduct linked to the device is appropriate and professional at all times, in line with our staff code of conduct.

### **Sanctions:**

Staff that fail to adhere to this policy may face disciplinary action. See the school's staff disciplinary policy for more information.

### **Data Protection:**

Staff must not use their personal mobile phones to process personal data, or any other confidential school information. Please see **Data Protection** and **Acceptable Use Policies** for further detail.

As previously stated, the school will take photographs and video recordings of children for a range of purposes. These fall under the lawful basis of **legitimate interest**, as the school believes that utilising photographs or videos of children participating in school activities will most accurately depict school life at Riversdale Primary School. We also believe that as no other identifiable data will be provided alongside the images, the safety and personal interests of those photographed/videoed will not be impacted. Where the lawful basis of **legitimate interest** is not applicable, the lawful basis of **consent** will be sought.

All parents and carers will be asked to sign a **consent** form allowing their child to be photographed or videoed while taking part in school activities, and for the image to be used either within the school or for the purposes of school publicity, such as on social media platforms. This form will be given to the parents or guardians of all children as they join the school. This 'rolling' consent will allow the school to take pictures of pupils engaged in educational activities throughout their school career. Where parents or carers do not give their consent, then the children concerned will not have pictures taken of them. Where it is unavoidable, such as in the instance of a whole class photo where segregation may cause upset for the child, their face will be masked using digital technology.

All pictures taken will be appropriate, and will show children properly clothed for the activity they are engaged in. The school will do all it can to ensure that due sensitivity is shown in the choice and composition of these images.

As previously discussed and as per the details within the school's **Acceptable Use Policy** and **Photographic and Video Image Policy**, staff should aim to use school issued devices for the capture of these images/videos, however, where this may not be possible, staff may use mobile phones. However, these **must** be uploaded to the secure school systems **and** be permanently deleted from the staff members device by the end of the school day, or within 24 hours, dependent upon the activity taking place.

## **USE OF MOBILE PHONES BY 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 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/school office/member of the Senior Leadership Team or Headteacher
- the phone must be handed in, switched off, to the office first thing in the morning and collected from them 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.

### **Sanctions:**

Students and parents are notified that appropriate action will be taken against those who are in breach of the acceptable use guidelines following the school's behaviour policy. In addition:

- students and their parents should be very clear that Riversdale is within its rights to confiscate<sup>1</sup> the phone where the guidelines have been breached;
- if a phone is confiscated, Riversdale will make it clear for how long this will be and the procedure to be followed for its return. Riversdale is within its rights to not return a mobile phone to the child until a parent/carer has visited the school;
- students should be aware that the police will be informed if there is a serious misuse of the mobile phone where criminal activity is suspected;
- if a student commits an act which causes serious harassment, alarm or distress to another student or member of staff the ultimate sanction may be permanent exclusion. Riversdale will consider the impact on the victim of the act in deciding the sanction and parents will be informed.

### **Confiscation Procedure:**

If a mobile phone is confiscated then the student will be informed that the phone can be collected at the end of school day from the Headteacher. Riversdale will ensure that confiscated equipment is stored in such a way that it is returned to the correct person.

In the case of repeated misuse the phone will only be returned to a parent/carer who will be required to visit the school by appointment to collect the phone.

Following a clear warning, the Headteacher may impose an outright ban from bringing a mobile phone to school. This may be a fixed period or permanent ban.

Where the phone has been used for an unacceptable purpose the Head Teacher or a designated staff member will have the right to view files stored in confiscated equipment and will delete any files which are in clear breach of these guidelines unless these are being preserved as evidence.

If evidence of the offence is required, this evidence will be preserved by confiscation of the device and keeping it secure or by taking photographs of the screen.

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<sup>1</sup> under sections 91 and 94 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006

## **USE OF MOBILE PHONES BY PARENTS, VOLUNTEERS AND VISITORS**

Parents, visitors and volunteers (including governors and contractors) must adhere to this policy as it relates to staff if they are on the school site during the school day. However, they must not take pictures or recordings of pupils under any circumstances.

Parents/carers may take photographs or video recordings in a public event (such as a school fair) but in this instance the recording or photograph must focus on **their own** child. This is further outlined in the **Photographic and Video Image Policy** and **Online Safety Policy**.

Using any photographs or recordings other than for personal use, such as posting on social media without consent will be deemed a violation of the school's policies.

Parents, visitors and volunteers will be informed of the rules for mobile phone use when they sign in at reception or attend a public event at school.

In the instance where parents or volunteers may be supervising school trips or residential visits they must continue to adhere to this policy in their roles as parents/carers/volunteers and will not be considered members of staff. In addition they must not use their phone to make contact with other parents. Parents must use the school office as the first point of contact if they need to get in touch with their child during the school day. They must not try to contact their child on his/her personal mobile during the school day.

## **LOSS, THEFT OR DAMAGE**

All stakeholders bringing phones to school must ensure that phones are appropriately stored. Staff may carry their phone in their pockets. However, phones not in pockets, should be secure. Pupil mobile phones must be labelled and stored securely in the school office during the school day.

All stakeholders must secure their phones as much as possible, including using passwords or pin codes to protect access to the phone's functions. Staff must also secure their personal phones, as well as any work phone provided to them. Failure by staff to do so could result in data breaches.

The school accepts no responsibility for mobile phones that are lost, damaged or stolen on school premises or transport, during school visits or trips, or while pupils are travelling to and from school.

Confiscated phones will be stored in the school office in a locked safe.

Lost phones should be returned to a member of the school office team. The school will then attempt to contact the owner.

## **MONITORING AND REVIEW**

The school is committed to ensuring that this policy has a positive impact on pupils' education, behaviour and welfare. When reviewing the policy, the school will take into account:

- Feedback from parents and pupils,
- Feedback from teachers,
- Records of behaviour and safeguarding incidents,
- Relevant advice from the Department for Education, the local authority or other relevant organisations.

This policy will be reviewed every two years.