

# Use of Mobile Phone and Smart Watch Policy

## Introduction and Aims

At The Blake CE Primary School, the welfare and well-being of our pupils is paramount. The aim of this 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 devices 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.

## Scope

This policy applies to all individuals who have access to mobile phones or Smart Watches on site. This list is not inclusive but includes staff, volunteers, governors, children, young people, parents, carers, visitors and contractors.

This policy should also be read in relation to the following documentation: -

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Positive Behaviour and Anti-bullying Policies
- Guidance on the Use of Photographic Images and Videos of Children in Schools

Our aim is 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 and Smart Watches by adults within the setting.

## Personal Mobiles – Staff

- 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 a drawer, handbag) during class time. Smart Watches should also be on silent – any messages received on them should not be opened (read) whilst in contact with children.
- Mobile phones should not be used in a space where children are present (e.g. classroom, middle areas and playgrounds).
- Use of any device to receive/send texts, WhatsApp messages 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 their phone/Smart Watch.
- Should there be exceptional circumstances (e.g. an acutely sick relative), then staff should make a member of senior staff aware of this and can have their phone on in case of having to receive an emergency call.
- Staff are not at any time permitted to use recording equipment on their mobile devices, for example: to take recordings of children, or sharing 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 or one of the other DSLs.

### **Mobile Phones for work related purposes**

We recognise that mobile phones provide a useful means of communication on off-site activities. However, staff should ensure that:-

- Mobile use on these occasions is appropriate and professional.
- Ideally, school devices should be used to take photographs on school trips. Where using a personal device is necessary, photos should be downloaded as soon as possible and then deleted from the personal device.
- During school hours if staff need to make contact with parents whilst on 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.

In an emergency, e.g. on a residential trip, where a staff member needs to contact a parent using their mobile phone, they should ensure that their caller ID is blocked.

### **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:-

- For children in Year 5 or 6 only - if a parent wishes for his/her child to bring a mobile phone to school to contact them before school to confirm arrival, or after school:-
  - The phone must not be used on the school site
  - The phone must be handed into the class teacher, switched off first thing in the morning and collected by the child at home time (the phone is left at the owner's risk).
- Mobile phones not handed in will be confiscated and returned at the end of the day.
- Pupils are not permitted to have mobile phones on school trips.

Where mobile phones are used in or out of school to bully or intimidate others then the Headteacher 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'.

In certain circumstances, for instances for the monitoring of a medical condition, a pupil may require access to their mobile phone or other smart device while on the school site. This should form part of the pupil's Health Care Plan. In these circumstances the pupil should not access their mobile phone or smart device while on the school site unless it is directly related to their medical condition or other agreed circumstance.

### **Trackers and Smart Watches**

Pupils will not be allowed to have mobile phones, smart watches or other devices on school premises, or to take them on visits or other school-initiated activities. This includes any tracking devices including apple air tags or android tags.

Fitness and activity trackers are permissible for pupils providing they have no mobile or internet connectivity and/or capabilities such as those documented above. A fitness tracker that can make calls, message, take or display pictures, will be treated in the same way as a mobile phone and should not be used on the school site; it must be handed in at the start of the school day.

### **Volunteers, Visitors, Governors and Contractors**

All Volunteers, Visitors, Governors and Contractors are expected to follow this policy as it relates to staff whilst on the premises. Visitors and volunteers are made aware of expectations as part of shared safeguarding information or induction.

### **Parents**

While we would prefer parents not to use their mobile phones while on school premises, we recognise that this would be impossible to regulate and that many parents see their phones as an 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. Parents should not use mobile phones whilst within the school building, except in offices and away from children.

Parents/carers are allowed to photograph or video school events such as shows or sports day using their mobile phones – **but must not publish images (e.g. on social networking sites) that include any children other than their own.** Please refer to Guidance on the Use of Photographic Images and Videos of Children in Schools.

### **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.

### **Pupil Acceptable User Agreement**

1. Mobile phones/Smart Watches can only be brought onto the school site by children in Years 5 and 6, where your parents feel they are necessary to check in with you when you are on your way to, or your way home from school.
2. Mobile phones and Smart Watches must not be used anywhere on the school site (grounds or building).
3. Mobile phones and Smart Watches must be switched off and handed to your class teacher at the start of the school day, so they may be stored securely.
4. You must comply with a request by a member of staff to switch off, or hand in, a phone and/or other smart device.

You should be aware that the school's rules on bullying, intimidation and the use of vulgar or abusive language apply to how you use your mobile phone and other smart device even when you are not in school. Any concerns raised regarding your use of your mobile phone/Smart device will be dealt with under the school's behaviour policy.