



| Minute number | Date adopted                   | changes                                   |
|---------------|--------------------------------|---|
| 2200          | 28 <sup>th</sup> November 2016 | Add in about volunteers an students       |
|               | May 2025                       | Added in about Smart Watches and Air tags |

## **St Oswald's C of E Primary School**

### **Mobile Phone Policy**

#### **Introduction and Aims**

At St Oswald's C of E Primary School, the welfare and well-being of our pupils is paramount. The aim of the Mobile Phone 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 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. However as it is difficult to detect specific usage, this policy refers to ALL mobile communication devices.

## **Scope**

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

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

- Safeguarding children policy
- Anti-bullying policy
- Guidance on the use of photographic images and videos of children in schools.
- Internet Safety Policy

## **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. The code of conduct is reviewed with all staff annually and as part of the school induction process.

Our aim therefore 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 within the school, which is agreed by all users.

### **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 or cupboard) during class time.
- Mobile phones should not be used in a space where children are present (e.g. classroom or playground).
- Use of phones (inc. receiving/sending texts and e mails) should be limited to non-contact time when no children are present e.g. in office areas, staffroom, empty classrooms).
- It is also advised that staff should ensure that their phones are protected with PIN/access codes in case of loss or theft.
- Should there be exceptional circumstances (eg a sick relative) then staff should make the Head teacher aware of this and can have their phone in case of having to receive an emergency call.
- 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. Legitimate recordings and photographs should be captured using school equipment such as cameras and I pads.
- Staff should report any usage of mobile devices that cause them concern to the Head teacher.
- Staff should never contact pupils from their mobile phone, or give their mobile phone number to pupils.

### **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 (and will never include take photographs of children).

- Mobile phones should not be used to make contact with parents during school trips - all relevant communication should be made via the school office.
- Where parents are accompanying trips they are informed not to make contact with other parents (via calls, texts, e mails or social networking) during the trip or use their phone to take photographs of children.

### **Personal Mobiles - Pupils**

We recognise that mobile phones can be a 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 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 rare event of a parent wishing for his/her child to bring a mobile phone to school to contact a parent after school:-
  - The parent must discuss the issue first with the child's teacher and sign a slip to say they are allowed to bring a phone to school.
  - The phone must be handed in and switched off, to the teacher first thing in the morning and then it will be taken to the office to be locked in the safe. It should then be collected from there at home time (the phones is left at the owners own risk).
- Mobile phones bought to school without permission will be confiscated and returned at the end of the day. Parents will be notified if this happens.

Where mobile phones are used in or out of school to bully or intimate others, then the Head teacher or designated DSL 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'- refer to anti bullying policy and internet safety policy.

### **Information regarding Air Tags and Smart Watches**

With the growth of technology and subsequent 'surveillance parenting', there has been a growth in popularity of air tags. Air Tags are location devices primarily used for finding keys and luggage, which are now being used to track children, many without their knowledge.

These are banned from trips and visits following the triggering of anti-stalking software on iPhones on trips, the lack of consent to track and the safeguarding issues that arise in revealing the exact locations of children who may have court orders, are looked after (fostered/in care) and those children that need to be protected from this tracking. The details are too many to go into so put simply, they must be removed from bags and rucksacks before any trips or visits outside of school, so please remove them from your child's bag on the trip days.

Any air tags or trackers found on children on a trip day will have it confiscated and the parent can collect it from the office directly (if the classes have not departed). If they are found on a trip they will be confiscated and the parent can collect from the main office on the return of the group.

If there is a serious incident on a trip or visit, the staff act in loco parentis and will contact parents immediately.

## **SMART Watches**

Smart watches have become popular with adults in order to help track fitness, sleep, calorie intake. This is now filtering to children. IN order to ensure that we are keeping everyone safe. A Smart watch is a communication device and as per mobile phones includes smart technology within them

Fitness and activity trackers are permissible for children providing they have no mobile or internet connectivity . A fitness tracker than can make calls, message, take or display pictures or record people is a safeguarding breach within the school situation. Any fitness or activity tracker which uses Smart technology (SMART watch, Garmin, Samsung, etc...) will be confiscated from the child and returned at the end of the day.

As per the mobile phone policy all mobile phones are required to be handed to the class teacher and switched off in the morning. Any one wearing a 'smart watch' will also be required to switch off and hand into the class teacher. These are kept securely until the end of the day.

This ban on trackers and Air tags has been written into our mobile phone policy and includes a ban on smartwatches (that can take photographs and record) and other tracking devices (e.g. 'Tile').

Thank you for your understanding with these issues. If there is a serious incident on a trip or visit, the staff act in loco parentis and will contact parents immediately.

All our policies have been written with guidance from Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024 and the policy from the Key which has been approved by Forbes solicitors. This policy is also in line with QEG's policy and guidance on the wearing of SMART watches.

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

All of the above are expected to follow our mobile phone policy as it relates to staff whilst on the premises. On arrival such visitors will be informed of the use of mobile phones. All Volunteers and Students will be asked to leave their mobile phones in the school office.

### **Parents visiting the school**

If a parent visits the school for family lunch and proceeds out onto the playground to play with the children then phones should be kept in bags in the hall and not taken onto the playground.

## **Parents**

While we prefer that parents do not use their mobile phones at school, we recognise that this would be impossible to regulate and many parents see their phones as 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. We do not allow parents to take photographs or videos of children within school or at events such as shows or sports day using their mobile phones. It is strictly prohibited that parents do not publish any images of children within school on social media sites i.e. Facebook, twitter or Instagram etc. This includes their own children as well as those of others.

## **Dissemination**

The mobile phone policy will be shared with staff, governors, students, volunteers and helpers as part of their induction. It will also be available to parents in the school office and on the school website.

Date: 26/03/2025

Review: March 2026