

Bishopton Primary School



Mobile Phone Policy

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BISHOPTON PRIMARY SCHOOL

Mobile Phone Policy

(Also refer to: Safeguarding Policy, Behaviour Policy)

In today's educational landscape, integrating technology into learning is common. However, we intend to establish guidelines to prevent technology from detracting from education. Our school has adopted a mobile phone policy that promotes a mobile phone-free environment by default, enhancing the educational experience for all pupils and staff while focusing on academic achievement and personal development.

The rationale for a mobile phone-free policy is clear. Mobile phones can cause significant distractions, undermining the learning process. Notifications, messages, and calls can divert attention from lessons, hindering educational progress. Additionally, mobile phones can facilitate inappropriate behaviour, such as cyberbullying and sharing harmful content. By prohibiting mobile phone use during the school day, we aim to create a respectful and secure environment prioritising student welfare.

A calm and safe environment is essential for effective teaching and learning. By restricting mobile phone use during lessons, breaks, and lunchtimes, we proactively reduce disruptions and foster a culture of respect and engagement.

Exceptions to this policy will be considered individually, recognising circumstances where mobile phone use may be warranted. Such exceptions will be evaluated to ensure they align with our commitment to maintaining a focused educational environment. Any permitted use must not compromise the integrity of the learning experience or the safety of our pupils.

Our mobile phone policy is vital to our commitment to providing a high-quality educational experience. By establishing a mobile phone-free environment by default, we reinforce our dedication to creating a supportive and distraction-free atmosphere for our school community. We appreciate the cooperation of parents, students, and staff in adhering to this policy as we strive to uphold the values of respect, responsibility, and academic excellence.

Rationale:

The policy defines and describes the acceptable use of ICT (Information and Communications Technology) and mobile phones for all members of the school community.

The phrase 'mobile phone' in this policy should be taken as referring to mobiles phones and all electronic devices.

- The school **does not** take responsibility for loss or damage to mobile phones.

School Responsibilities:

- The Governing Body is responsible for ensuring that its employees act in a lawful manner; making appropriate use of school technologies for approved purposes only.
- The Governing Body is responsible for adopting relevant policies and the Headteacher for ensuring that staff are aware of their contents.
- If the Headteacher has reason to believe that any ICT equipment has been misused, they will consult the Local Safeguarding Officer for advice without delay. Local Authority HR Officers will agree with the Headteacher and Local Safeguarding Board for an appropriate strategy for the investigation of the allegations. Incidents will be investigated in a timely manner in accordance with agreed procedures.
- The Headteacher will make it clear that internal school staff should not carry out any investigations unless they are both qualified and authorised to do so.

User Responsibilities:

Staff found to be in breach of this policy may be disciplined in accordance with Local Authority disciplinary procedures. In certain circumstances, breach of this policy may be considered gross misconduct resulting in termination of employment. Users must report all suspected breaches of this policy to the Headteacher.

Safeguarding:

- Photographs are a valuable tool for recording and assessing children's activities and achievements at Bishopton Primary School.
- The admission process requires parents/carers to sign an 'Agreement Permission Letter' which gives consent for photographs to be taken of their child whilst a pupil at Bishopton Primary School.
- Mobile phones should not be used by any staff in a space where children are present (e.g. classroom, playground).
- Staff are not at any time permitted to use recording equipment on their personal mobile phones, iPads or other such electronic devices, for example: to take photographs or videos of children.
- Photographs will only be taken with school owned digital cameras or iPads, never with camera phones / mobile phones. Any deviation from this, for example to take a whole school photograph requiring a more advanced camera than is usually funded by school must be cleared with the Headteacher prior to its use.
- Photographs may be printed and included in a child's Learning Journal folder/floor books, or displayed within the school or school displays or when advertising the school. Parents / carers may see their child's Evidence Me Learning Journal at any time. All computers will be password protected and any photographs not required will be deleted.

Children and Mobiles

The following rules apply for the use of personal mobile phones:

- Pupils will only bring a mobile phone to school if the school agreement form and letter are both signed by a parent.
- ➤ If a child brings a mobile phone into school, it must be switched off and given to the office staff to store for safe keeping, and to be returned at the end of the school day.
- The class teacher will keep copies of the letters and agreement forms and ensure pupils hand in their mobile phones to the school office at the start of the school day. They may not collect their mobile phone until the end of the school day and it must stay in their school bag until they are off the school premises.
- The use of mobile phones is prohibited throughout the school day, including during lessons, the time between lessons, breaktimes and lunchtime. This ensures that any potential distractions from mobile phones are removed during the school day.
- There may be exceptional circumstances where it may be necessary for a pupil to bring a mobile phone into school. For instance, this may be relevant for those pupils who walk to school unaccompanied or who are being collected by a different carer. While we maintain that the use of mobile phones during the school day will not be permitted, we are open to considering parental requests for pupils to have access to their mobile phones in these specific contexts, particularly during designated times before or after the school day.
- Schools have a duty under the Equality Act 2010 to take such steps as is reasonable to avoid substantial disadvantage to a disabled pupil caused by the school's policies or practices. Allowing a disabled pupil access to their mobile phone during the school day, where it is necessary due to the nature of their disability, may be considered a reasonable adjustment

- Parents and carers in this care are to read through the attached Mobile Phone Agreement and sign the request, explicitly stating the specific reason for the necessity of having a mobile phone in school.
- Parents will be contacted if any child is found with a mobile phone during school time.

PUPIL MOBILE PHONE RULES

1. **Rationale for Use**
Pupils must have a valid reason for bringing a mobile phone to school, such as contacting parents about transport. This agreement must be signed and returned to the school.
2. **Online Safety Responsibility**
While we promote online safety education, the primary responsibility lies with parents. We encourage you to discuss safe mobile technology use with your child.
3. **Compliance**
Pupils who do not adhere to the rules will be prohibited from bringing phones to school. Phones brought without permission will be confiscated and returned only to a parent or carer.
4. **Respecting Privacy**
Students must not take photos or videos of others without consent and should not do so while entering or leaving school premises. This respects the privacy of all pupils.
5. **Device Management**
Mobile phones must be turned off and handed in to the school office each morning to minimise distractions and maintain focus on learning.
6. **Responsibility for Loss or Damage**
The school is not responsible for any loss or damage to phones brought to school. We advise parents to label devices clearly and ensure they are kept secure.

To aid clarity, we wish to outline our Pupil Mobile Phone Rules:

1. **Exceptional Circumstances:** All pupils who bring a phone into school must present a valid reason for doing so, and have submitted the signed agreement prior to bringing the device.
2. **Online Safety Education:** The school is committed to educating children about staying safe online. However, it is essential to note that the primary responsibility for safeguarding against online risks lies with parents and carers at home. We wish to foster collaboration with families to promote understanding and encourage children to engage in the responsible use of mobile technology.
3. **Consequences of Non-Compliance:** Pupils who do not adhere to these rules will forfeit the privilege of bringing a phone into school. Furthermore, any phone that is brought into the premises without the necessary authorisation will be confiscated and returned solely to a parent or carer.
4. **Photography Protocols:** Pupils must be reminded that they should not take photographs or videos of individuals without prior consent. Additionally, they must refrain from capturing images whilst entering or exiting the school premises, as some children may have specific restrictions regarding whether their image may be taken.
5. **Liability for Loss or Damage:** It must be emphasised that the school cannot accept responsibility for any damage or loss of a mobile phone brought onto school grounds. We advise that any personal electronic devices be properly secured at all times.
6. **Restrictions on Smart Watches:** We would also like to address the use of Smart Watches, which is deemed inappropriate in our school setting due to the risks associated with loss, damage, and the potential for internet safety concerns. Parents and carers are encouraged to refer to [Internet Matters](#), which provides guidance on implementing parental controls and offers vital advice on maintaining the safety of children online.

Expectations for Pupils

Pupils should be taught the risks that are associated with the use of mobile phones, both in school and more broadly. These risks can include a loss of focus in lessons, classroom disruption and an increase in bullying.

Pupils should also be taught the benefits of having a mobile phone-free environment and be encouraged to see such an environment as desirable and valuable.

Staff and Mobiles

- The school accepts that employees will bring their phones to work.
- Staff mobiles must be kept switched off or on silent at all times and not handled or answered during lessons or meetings, except with the permission of the Headteacher. Staff should not leave the classroom during lessons to use their mobile phones. Mobile phones may only be used during non-contact time in a private room (staff room) in which no children are present. Any member of staff found using a mobile phone without permission may be subject to disciplinary action by the Governing Body.
- In the event that an employee has a particular reason for a specified period of time, they may request, via the Headteacher that they leave their phone on during working hours.
- Staff mobiles should be kept in a locked cupboard and on silent mode.
- Photographs will only be taken of children, that have permission by parents/carers, using school ipads during normal school activities. Cameras will never be taken into the toilets / changing areas. A child will never be photographed when they are changing clothes for an activity e.g. PE in school time.
- Only members of Bishopton Primary School staff who have an Enhanced DBS disclosure are permitted to take photographs within the school. Parents, volunteers and other visitors are not permitted to take photographs during sessions. If parents / carers do not wish their child to be included in 'press' photographs for example, it is their responsibility to inform the Headteacher.
- Staff are not to give their home telephone number or their mobile phone number to pupils.
- Photographs and videos of pupils should not be taken with mobile phones.
- Staff should never make use of pupils' mobile phone numbers either to make or receive phone calls or to send to or receive from pupils' text messages.
- Staff should only communicate electronically with parents/carers from school accounts on approved school business accounts/class email accounts/ school website emails , e.g. homework.
 - Staff must never enter into instant messaging communications with pupils

Parents/Carers Role:

- Parents have an important role in supporting the school's policy on prohibiting the use of mobile phones.
- The policy is on our school website which is available to parents and carers.
- Parents should be encouraged to reinforce and discuss the policy at home as appropriate, including the risks associated with mobile phone use and the benefits of a mobile phone-free environment.
- Where parents need to contact their child during the school day, they should be directed to the school office, where staff should be aware of the school's policy on relaying messages and facilitating contact.
- Where parents have questions or concerns, staff should address these in a timely manner and clearly communicate the reasons for prohibiting the use of mobile phones.

Use of Sanctions

Schools should feel confident to use their power to confiscate mobile phones or similar devices as a disciplinary penalty where their policy is clearly breached, for instance where a mobile phone is used by a pupil or is heard ringing in a pupil's bag.

- The law protects staff from liability in any proceedings brought against them for any loss or damage to items they have confiscated as a sanction, providing they have acted lawfully. Staff should consider whether the confiscation is proportionate and consider any special circumstances relevant to the case.
- Headteachers are backed by DfE to confiscate mobile phones and similar devices, if they consider it proportionate, for whatever length of time they deem proportionate.
- Schools should consider whether the misbehaviour gives cause to suspect that a pupil is suffering, or may be at risk of, harm. Where this may be the case, as set out in part 1 of keeping children safe in education, school staff should follow the school's child protection policy and speak to the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy). They will consider if pastoral support, an early intervention or a referral to children's social care is appropriate.

Residential/ School Trips

Pupils' educational experience on a school trip must not be disrupted by the presence of mobile phones and their use will be prohibited.

- Any pupil with a signed agreement form and letter will leave their mobile phone in the school office as per a normal school day and collect as normal at the end of the day.
- Where a pupil is taking part on a residential trip, any mobile phones will be prohibited in use and pupils will be instructed to leave them at home.
- Any necessary communication during the school trip will be communicated via the school office to the designated person in charge.