



LATCHMERE
ACADEMY TRUST

Mobile Phone Policy

Status	School Choice
Review Cycle	Annual
Date written/ last review	September 2019
Date of next review	September 2020

Mobile Phone Policy

Introduction

Mobile phone technology has advanced significantly over the last few years - 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. Most 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 e-safety issues generally, risks to children and young people can be broadly categorised under the headings of content, contact and conduct and managed by reducing availability, restricting access and increasing resilience.

Aim

The aim of the 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 staff, volunteers, 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.

A zero-tolerance policy is in place with regards to the use of personal or work-related mobiles by any individual in these areas.

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 mobiles

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:

- Staff, Volunteers and Student Teachers are permitted to have their mobile phones about their person; however there is a clear expectation that all personal use is limited to allocated lunch and/or tea breaks.

Other than in agreed exceptional circumstances, phones must be switched off and calls and texts must not be taken or made during lesson time.

- Staff, Volunteers and Student Teacher are generally not permitted, in any circumstance, to use their phones for taking, recording or sharing images and 'mobile free' areas must be observed at all times. However SLT do recognise that staff members may find the use of a mobile phone to be the best method of taking photographs at events such as sporting events and educational visits however this must be authorised by a member of SLT before the event. Staff members must transfer the images to the school intranet as soon as is practical after the event and delete the images from their personal mobile phone.
- Staff, Volunteers and Student Teachers are not permitted to use their own personal phones for contacting children, young people and their families within or outside of the setting unless authorised by a member of the SLT.
- Parents/carers, visitors and contractors are respectfully requested not to use their mobile phones in any of the designated mobile free areas or anywhere on the school site during the school day eg:- parent reading, walking through the school volunteering, waiting for a pupil in the corridor.

- Should phone calls and/or texts need to be taken or made, use is restricted to those areas not accessed by children in order to avoid any unnecessary disturbance or disruption to others.
- Any individual bringing a personal device into the setting must ensure that it contains no inappropriate or illegal content.

Work mobile

The use of a designated work mobile is promoted as it is:

- an essential part of a designated work team eg:- IT and Premises.
- an essential part of the emergency toolkit which is taken on off-site trips.
- an effective communication aid, enabling text, email messages and calls to be made and received.
- a back-up facility should problems be experienced with the landline – or where contact needs to be made outside of work hours.

Effective security measures are in place to safeguard against any potential misuse. Only authorised individuals have access to the work mobile, stored securely when not in use.

Personal calls are not permitted to be made on the work mobile, other than in agreed exceptional circumstances. Contact or calls can be made via the work mobile in the event of an emergency. All calls are logged.

Practitioners leave their phones on school premises at their own risk. It is therefore recommended that phones are security marked, password protected and insured. No liability for loss and damages is accepted.

As well as safeguarding children and avoiding any unnecessary disruptions during the day, this procedure also aims to protect staff against any unfounded allegations.

Emergency contact

It is recognised that mobile phones provide direct contact to others, and at times provide a necessary reassurance due to their ease of access, particularly at stressful times. Use of phones at exceptional times should always be discussed with the Headteacher.

Such use will be for an agreed limited period only, until any concerns or issues leading to the exceptional circumstance request have been resolved.

It is ensured at all times that the landline telephone remains connected and operational, except in circumstances beyond control. This means that it is available for emergency/urgent contact at all times.

The reliance on an answer phone is avoided and only used in exceptional circumstances and at the end of the working day and holidays. If used, the answer phone is always checked promptly on opening or return.

Pupils

In Y6 may bring phones to school. These devices must be turned off immediately upon arrival at the waiting area of the school and may be turned on again in this area only at the end of the day.

- Pupils must hand in the phones to a designated area in the class for safe keeping during the day

- The pupils may collect their phones at the end of the day from the designated area in class
- Pupils phones cannot be used during the school day by pupils

In some exceptional cases, when the Headteacher has been approached by letter or email Y5 children may bring phones to school and the same procedures will be followed.