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learning
A desire for
God



St Mary's Catholic Primary Voluntary Academy Mobile Phone/Personal Communication Device Policy

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| Date agreed by governors: | April 27 th 2020 |
| To be reviewed: | 3 years |
| Policy Holder | Head teacher |

Introduction and Aims

At St Mary's Catholic Primary Voluntary Academy the welfare and well-being of our pupils is paramount. The aim of the Mobile Phone/Personal Communication Device 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/personal communication devices are effective communication tools. It is recognised that it is the enhanced functions of many mobile phones/personal communication 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. 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/ personal communication devices on site. This includes staff, volunteers, governors, children, young people, parents, carers, visitors and contractors. This list is not exhaustive.

This policy endeavours to ensure that all persons:

- 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/personal communication devices within the setting, which is agreed to by all users:

Early Years

Mobile phones are not permitted in the Early Years unit.

Staff members, visitors, volunteers and other adults working in Early Years can leave their phones in a 'safe' drawer in the office.

Parents picking children up or dropping children off will not be required to leave phones in the office but are asked to keep phones out of sight. If a parent brings a 'visible' mobile phone into the setting they will be asked to put it out of sight. Signs are placed on all entrances to the Early Years reminding visitors about this.

Personal Mobiles - Staff

Staff are not permitted to make/receive calls/texts or use social media during lesson or assembly times or in the presence of children. At times when they do need to make use of their mobile device, it should be done so in an appropriate place (e.g. in office areas, staff room and empty classrooms). Staff should have their phones on silent or switched off and out of sight (e.g. in a drawer, handbag or pocket) during these times. Emergency contact should be made via the school office.

It is advised that staff security protect access to functions of their phone.

Should there be exceptional circumstances (e.g. acutely sick relative), then staff should make the Head teacher aware of this and arrangements may be reviewed in individual cases. Calls should still be taken where no pupils are present.

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 ipads. Staff should report any usage of mobile devices that causes them concern to the Head teacher.

Mobile Phones for work related purposes

The school recognises that mobile phones/personal communication devices provide a useful means of communication on off-site activities. However staff should ensure that:

The school mobile is the primary source of communication if, for any reason, this is not possible, personal mobile phones may be used. That any use of mobile devices used on these occasions is appropriate and professional (and will never include taking photographs of children).

Personal mobile phones/personal communication devices should not be used to make contact with parents during school trips – all relevant communications should be made via the school mobile or school office in the first instance. Where parents are accompanying a trip they will be informed not to make contact with other parents (via calls, text, email or social networking) during the trip or use their phone to take photographs of children. They will also be asked to keep their mobiles out of sight.

Pupils

We recognise that mobile phones/personal communication devices 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 rare event of a parent wishing for his/her child to bring a mobile phone to school:

1. The parent must write to the school outlining the reasons for their request.
2. The head teacher may agree to the request
3. If the request is agreed to, 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/personal communication devices brought to school without permission will be confiscated and returned at the end of the day and parents will be contacted.

Where mobile phones/personal communication devices are used in or out of school to bully or intimidate others, then the head teacher 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.

Volunteers, Visitors, Governors and Contractors

All Volunteers, Visitors, Governors and Contractors are expected to follow our mobile phone/personal communication device policy as it relates to staff whilst on the premises. On arrival, such visitors will be informed of our expectations around the use of mobile phones.

Parents

While we would prefer parents not to use their mobile phones/personal communication devices when picking up and **dropping off children on school premises**, we recognise that this would be impossible to regulate and that 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.

Parents should not use mobile phones whilst attending school events during the school day unless otherwise instructed. We do allow parents to photograph or video some school events such as shows or sports day using their mobile phones – **but insist that parents do not publish images (e.g. on social networking sites) that include any children other than their own.**