



The Partnership of Birchwood and Holbrook Primary Schools

Mobile Phone and Smartwatch Policy

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Introduction and aims

Across The Partnership of Birchwood and Holbrook Primary Schools, we are committed to ensuring the safety of children in our care. We recognise that Mobile Phones/ Smart Watches in both schools have a role to play for the purpose of communication, but we are aware that casual or inappropriate use of Mobile Phones/ Smart Watches could pose a risk to children and adults. The enhanced functions of many Mobile Phones/ Smart Watches are of most concern and are most susceptible to misuse. Misuse includes the taking and distribution of indecent images, exploitation and bullying. Mobile Phones/ Smart Watches can cause an unnecessary distraction during the working day and can be intrusive when used in the company of others. When Mobile Phones/ Smart Watches 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 everyone. It can be 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/ Smart Watches 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. This policy applies to all staff, pupils parents, volunteers and visitors. **Please note that for the purposes of this policy, the term 'mobile phone/ smart watch' also covers any electronic device with the capacity to be used as a form of communication, either through the device itself or any applications stored on the device.**

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/ Smart Watches and smart watches are effective communication tools. This policy applies to all individuals who have access to personal Mobile Phones/ Smart Watches on site. This includes staff, volunteers, School Governors, children, young people, parents, carers, visitors and contractors. This list is not exhaustive.

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

- Safeguarding Policy
- Online Safety Policy
- Behaviour and Anti-Bullying Policy
- Code of Conduct Policy

Our aim is therefore 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/ Smart Watches within the setting, which is agreed to by all users.

Staff Personal Mobile Phones/ Smart Watches

- Staff must keep personal Mobile Phones/ Smart Watches out of sight while working particularly when with pupils. This protects staff from being distracted from their work and from allegations of inappropriate use. The exception to this is when staff need to access their phone when using Two Factor Authentication (2FA) to sign into their school email accounts.
- If staff have a break time during their working hours, they may use their Mobile Phones/ Smart Watches during these times in the staff room or an office where children are not present.
- Use of mobile and smartwatches may be dependent on role, for example, Office staff may need their phones for work related use, but this must only be done when no pupils are present.
- In an emergency, staff needing to make a personal call during a lesson or whilst on duty should first obtain agreement from their line manager, ensure that adequate cover has been put in place and make the call in an area not used by children.
- Staff must give the school telephone number to their next of kin in case it is necessary for the staff member to be contacted, in an emergency, during working hours.
- A personal mobile phone may be taken on school trips in accordance with guidance – see ‘The Use of Mobile Phones/ Smart Watches on Trips’ section below.
- Camera or video functions on personal Mobile Phones/ Smart Watches may be used by staff to take images/film of children for educational purposes under the condition that all content is deleted as soon as it has been added to the school Google Drive, website or Twitter Feed. School digital cameras and tablets can be made available to any staff who do not want to use their own devices.
- Smart watches can be worn during school day and the staff members working hours but the camera must be turned off unless being used for educational purposes (see above). Messaging and call services must be on silent when staff are in contact with the children and at work.
- Staff are not required to make work calls on their own phones, either mobile or landline, however, in exceptional circumstances, if this should be necessary then they are advised to use the prefix 141 before dialling the recipient’s number to ensure their own number is protected.
- Staff must never store parents’, carers’ or children’s telephone numbers on their Mobile Phones/ Smart Watches and staff must never give their private mobile number to parents, carers or children.
- Failure by staff to comply with the mobile phone policy guidelines could result in disciplinary action.

Children

- Children who walk to and from school without an accompanying adult may carry a mobile phone for safety. In these cases, children may bring a mobile phone on to the school site but must deposit it with the school office at the start of the day and collect it from the office at the end of the day. The mobile phone MUST be switched off before it is handed in to the school office.

- Parents and carers need to be aware that whilst there are obvious benefits to pupils having a mobile phone in terms of personal safety there are also some associated risks such as potential for theft, bullying and inappropriate contact, including grooming by unsuitable persons.
- We would also like to alert parents and carers to the risks that using a mobile phone has while walking to and from school. Children who are concentrating on using their phone can have reduced general safety awareness, which may result in road accidents and/or injury if a child is not paying attention to their surroundings.
- Mobile Phones deposited in the office by children will be kept safely. Whilst the school will take every reasonable care, it accepts no responsibility whatsoever for theft, loss, damage or health effects (potential or actual) relating to Mobile Phones/ Smart Watches. It is the responsibility of parents and carers to ensure Mobile Phones/ Smart Watches are properly insured. It is recommended that pupil's phones/ smart watches are security marked and password protected.
- Children are not allowed to bring Mobile Phones into any other areas of the school.
- Any Mobile Phones discovered to have been brought into the school and not handed in to the office will be confiscated immediately. Parents or carers will be asked to collect the mobile phone from the school office.
- Children are not allowed to carry Mobile Phones on any school trips including residential trips.
- If a member of the staff has any suspicion that a mobile phone brought into school by a pupil has unsuitable material stored on it, the pupil will be required to hand over the phone immediately to a member of staff and parents or carers will be asked to collect it from a member of the senior leadership team. Any incident of this type will also need to be reported to member of the Schools' Safeguarding Team. Staff at Holbrook Primary School have a statutory right to confiscate. Generally, the aim pursued in confiscating property is to maintain an atmosphere conducive to learning, one which safeguards the rights of other pupils to be educated. This banned property includes gadgets and mobile phones. The latest government guidance regarding the areas of these Acts relevant to searching and confiscation can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/searching-screening-and-confiscation>

Smart Watches

- We recognise that smart watches are becoming 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:
- Smart watches can be worn during school day but the camera, messaging and call services must be disabled. They must only be used as normal watches and for no other function beyond telling the time.
- Under no circumstances must a Smart Watch be used by children to record still or video images, to record audio or to access the internet whilst on the school premises.
- Any child found to be inappropriately using a Smart Watch will have their device confiscated and kept by the school until appropriate arrangements can be made for the collection of device by a parent/carer.
- Parents/Carers who need to contact their child in the case of an emergency should always do so by phoning the school office.

Visitors, Parents and Carers

- We ask all parents not to use Mobile Phones/ Smart Watches during school hours; for example, during parent workshops or family learning together sessions. This includes all uses including, texting, photographing and filming. The exception to this is if family members want to take photos of their own children at the end of school performances, concerts or after celebration assemblies.
- The school recognise that children may inadvertently be included in photographs by another parent and the school, therefore, are obliged to warn parents and carers of the legal and safeguarding risks of publishing such photographs on any platform. The placing of any photographs of children on social media is dangerous and parents may be in breach of the Data Protection Act if they upload photos of other children without the explicit consent of that child's parents.
- Visitors and supply staff are not allowed to use Mobile Phones/ Smart Watches on the school site and phones must be kept in their bags or pockets. Mobile Phones/ Smart Watches can be used in the staff room.
- If a visitor, parent or carer is seen using their mobile phone, they will be asked politely to turn it off/desist from using it/remove it from children's view.

The Use of Mobile Phones/ Smart Watches on School Trips

Carrying Mobile Phones/ Smart Watches on trips can help to ensure safety for all members of the school or centre party. However, it is important that the following guidance is adhered to in order to keep children safe and protect staff and volunteers from accusations of inappropriate use: The party leader should carry the office mobile phone for use in contacting other staff members or volunteers on the trip.

- If the office mobile phone is unavailable (e.g. if another trip is on the same day) then the party leader should follow the advice below for staff use of personal Mobile Phones/ Smart Watches.
- Members of staff and volunteers may carry their own, personal Mobile Phones/ Smart Watches within the following guidelines:
 - Personal Phones/ Smart Watches should only be used to contact staff members or volunteers on the trip, the campus or emergency services. If possible, these calls should be made away from children.
 - Personal Phones/ Smart Watches should not be used for any purpose other than school business for the duration of a trip. This means that personal calls or texts should not be made or accepted. On residential trips this will apply while the member of staff or volunteer is on duty. Staff and volunteers should ensure that next of kin are provided with the campus number so that in an emergency the campus is contacted and will make contact with the relevant person through the party leader.
 - If it becomes necessary for a member of staff or volunteer to make a personal call or text, then the party leader or another member of staff should be informed and take responsibility for the pupils in the group while the call or text is made away from sight and sound of any pupils.
 - Volunteers are acting as role models for the duration of the trip and therefore must not take photos or videos of any pupils, including their own child, using a mobile phone or any other mobile device, e.g. camera or tablet, without the express permission of the party leader. Volunteers may be asked to take photographs of their

group using a school or centre device – this must be passed back to the party leader at the end of the trip.

- -The party leader may ask volunteers to provide them with their mobile phone number for the duration of the trip so that they can be contacted in case of emergency. The party leader undertakes to ensure that these numbers are not held on any mobile device or in any written form after the end of the trip.
 - It is advised that if the party leader is using his or her own mobile phone, then if they need to contact anyone during the trip they do so by pre-dialling 141 (some mobile providers use a different prefix – staff are advised to check this with their provider) before the number so that their own number remains protected.