Bishops Itchington Primary School

Use of Mobile Phones and other devices by Adults and Children in School Policy

Chair of Governor's Signature:

Head Teacher's Signature:

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Introduction and Aims

At Bishops Itchington Primary School the welfare and well-being of our pupils is paramount. The aim of the Use of Mobile Phones and Other Devices by Adults and Children in School 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 and other devices are effective communication tools. It is recognised that it is the enhanced functions of many mobile phones and other 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.

Where mobile phones are referenced, it is used to include other devices such as iPads/tablets or wearable technology such as smart watches.

There is a section in this policy entitled, "Pupil use of Mobile Phones and Devices" that explains our school's policy around children owning mobile phones.

Scope

This policy applies to all individuals who have access to personal mobile phones or personal devices on site. This includes staff, volunteers, committee members, parents, carers, visitors and contractors. This list is not exhaustive.

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

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Visitors' Policy

Camera Mobile Phones and Wearable Technology such as Smart Phones

Camera mobile phones are becoming increasingly popular, and a built-in digital camera enables users to take high resolution pictures. These can be sent instantly to other mobile phone users or email addresses. They can also be posted on the internet or in chat rooms. There is a potential for camera mobile phones and other devices with this capability to be misused in schools.

Staff Policy

Staff are allowed to bring their phones to school, but they are only permitted to use them in areas such as the staff room or where no children are present. Mobile phones and other personal devices should be switched off during the school day and placed away in personal bags, or a drawer in the classroom or in a locker. We understand that there are occasions when mobile phones or personal communication devices may need to be used (e.g. to make a doctor's appointment). In these cases, the phone must be used outside of lesson time and in a private and discreet manner and not in the presence of pupils.

- Mobile phones should be switched off and left in a safe place during lesson times and out of sight of children. The school cannot take responsibility for items that are lost or stolen.

- Staff should **never** contact pupils or parents from their personal mobile phone or other personal devices or give their mobile phone number to pupils or parents. If a member of staff needs to make telephone contact with a parent, they should use the school telephone in the office.

- Staff should never send to, or accept from, colleagues, parents or pupils, texts or images that could be viewed as inappropriate.

- With regard to camera phones or other personal devices that have this function, a member of staff should never use this to photograph pupils or allow themselves to be photographed by pupils.

- Staff are only allowed to wear smart watches within school if they are not connected to mobile phones and only the camera function is switched off.

Mobile Phones for Work-related Purposes

We recognise that mobile phones provide a useful means of communication during offsite activities. However, staff should ensure that:

- Mobile phones and other personal devices used on these occasions is appropriate and professional (and will never include taking photographs of children).

- Personal mobile phones or personal devices should not be used to make contact with parents during school trips – all relevant communications should be made via the school office or if on a residential visit and the communication needs to take place out of school hours, using the school mobile phone away from the children.

- Where parents are accompanying trips, they are informed not to make contact with other parents (via calls, text, email or social networking) during the trip or use their phone or other personal device to take photographs of children.

- The school has its own i-pads owned by the school that can be taken on trips where communication with school can be carried out and also notifications can be sent to parents using the school's My Child At School App. Photographs can be taken using these devices in line with GDPR regulations and parental permissions, but they need to be uploaded onto the school system immediately after returning from school. They should then be deleted from the device.

- There are two school mobile phones that can be taken on school trips. These are held in the school office and can be signed in and out as appropriate.

- Some staff have to use their personal mobile phones or devices to conduct school affairs: to read/respond to emails, etc. It is required that in these cases, that the mobile phone or device is kept locked with a secure passkey/fingerprint/face recognition to access the phone that has not been shared with any other party. Further security passwords/fingerprints should be set up to enter school emails, etc.

Parents, Visitors (including contractors) and Volunteers

Visitors and parents should not use their mobile phone or other personal devices within the confines of the school premises including on the playground or pathway leading up to the school or inside the building.

When parents, visitors or volunteers sign into school, they will be asked if they have any mobile devices (including SMART watches). They are then asked to either place them in a locker, keep them out of sight in a personal bag or secure them in their vehicles. This is to keep our children as safe as we can. A sign in Reception is present to further remind visitors of this safeguarding procedure.

It is important that adults understand that for some pupils, their image, the school they attend, and their identity must be kept confidential from others for safeguarding reasons. Therefore, their uniform badge, photograph, name and school name must not be made public by any means including on social media. Adults either in school or accompanying children on school trips or at school performances are therefore not permitted to use their mobile phones or other personal devices or to take pictures of pupils.

For more public events, such as the Christmas or Summer Fair, parents may take photographs of their own children only. Strictly, no pictures should be posted onto social media of other people including children without permission from parents/adult concerned.

Personal cameras and mobile phone cameras and such devices should not be used to take pictures of children or information about children. If parents who accompany children on a school trip are asked by the teacher to take photos as a record of the educational visit, they will be issued with a school camera or school device. Parents accompanying children on school trips should not use their mobile own cameras, tablets or wearable devices to take pictures of children.

Parents may receive photographs from school staff of their own children or groups of children using the MyChildAtSchool App from their child's class teacher or on the school weekly newsletter that is sent by email. There is an understanding between parents and the school that parents will not share any of these images on social media so personal information is not shared and GDPR rules are adhered to.

Staff and Visitors to Ladybirds Preschool

Mobile phones are not permitted in the setting or in the outdoor play area of Ladybirds. All mobile phones and other similar devices are to be left in the school office.

The recording of children's activities through photographs and their work is to be carried out using i-pads and devices that are owned and provided by Ladybirds Pre-school only.

Parents may receive photographs from Ladybirds staff of their children using MyChildAtSchool App. There is an understanding between parents and Ladybirds Preschool, that parents will not share any of these images on social media so personal information is not shared and GDPR rules are adhered to.

Smart Phones for children

The growing national concern for children's safety brought about by their use of smart phones is gives concern as this leads to incidents of bullying, excluding peers from groups, and the sharing of sexual and racist content between children.

School cannot control what devices children have access to at home, and it is recognised that there is considerable peer pressure among our children to have the latest gadget. It is also acknowledged that many parents do not want their children to be 'left out' or 'teased' for not being cool by not owning a smart phone.

We also wish to promote the independence of our Year 6 children by allowing them to walk to and from school unaccompanied, and school understands the safety role that carrying a mobile phone play on these occasions. [Phone are kept in our school office during the day].

Due to all these safety concerns, commencing 1st September 2025, Year 6 pupils who need a mobile phone when walking to/from school, may have a 'functional' phone and they will not be permitted to bring any form of smart-phone inside the school gates. A functional phone allows children to text or telephone family members when they need to, they are considerably cheaper to purchase and run, and they are considerably safer.