



# St Weonards Primary School

## Mobile Phone Policy

January 2017

Next Review Due: January 2018

**The mobile phone policy will be shared with staff and volunteers as part of their induction.**

**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.**

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 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. However as it is difficult to detect specific usage, this policy refers to ALL mobile communication devices.

### **1. Scope**

This policy applies to all individuals who have access to personal mobile phones on site. This includes staff, volunteers, children, young people, parents, carers and visitors. This list is not exhaustive.

### **2. Policy statement**

2.1 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.

2.2 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.

### **3. Code of conduct**

3.1 A code of conduct is promoted with the aim of creating a co-operative 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.

3.2 It is therefore ensured 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.*

3.3 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.

3.4 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.

#### **4. Personal Mobiles**

Employees must not use their mobile phones in the vicinity of the children. Employees are not permitted to make/receive calls/texts during work time. (Excluding break and lunch times). Staff should ensure that mobile phones are turned off or on silent at all times while on school premises. They should be kept in a locker or bag and not be left on display. In the event that an employee has a particular reason, for a specified period of time they may request via the Senior Management Team that they leave their phone on during working hours. 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. Mobile phones should not be used in a space where children are present (e.g. playground).

#### **5. Mobile Phones and Cameras in Early Years and Foundation Stage**

Appropriate use of mobile phones is essential within Early Years and The Foundation Stage. The use of mobile phones does not detract from the quality of supervision and care of children. Practitioners are able to use their personal mobile phones during their break times. During working hours they must be kept out of the reach of children, in a secure area accessible only to staff. All staff are made aware of their duty to follow this procedure which is set out in the Code of Conduct. In order to safeguard children and adults and to maintain privacy, cameras are expressly forbidden from being taken into the toilets by adults or children. All adults whether teachers, practitioners or volunteers at all HMFA schools and settings understand the difference between appropriate and inappropriate sharing of images. All images are kept securely in compliance with the Data Protection Act

#### **6. Pupil Use**

6.1 We recognise that mobile phones are part of everyday life for many children and that they also play an important role in helping pupils to feel safe and secure. We are happy therefore to allow pupils to bring their mobile phones to school provided that they follow a few simple guidelines.

- *Mobile phones are handed into the school office at the start of the day.*
- *Pupil mobile phones will be put away during school hours and collected at the end of the day. Children are not allowed to use their mobile phones on site at the start or end of the school day.*

6.2 The school reserves the right to refuse pupils to bring a mobile phone to school.

## **7. Volunteers, Visitors, Governors and Contractors**

All Volunteers, Visitors, Governors and Contractors are expected to follow our mobile phone policy whilst on the premises.

## **8. Parents**

Parents can only use mobile phones for urgent communication when on the school premises and it is made clear to parents that we would prefer them not to use their phones at all while at school. However, we allow parents to use phones to photograph or video school events such as shows and sports day. We insist that parents do not publish any images on any social media (e.g. on Facebook) that include children other than their own. At school events such as carol concerts, parents are allowed to photograph/video their children but are asked to refrain from sharing on any photographs/video which may contain children other than their own.

## **9. Photographs**

We believe that photographs validate children's experiences and achievements and are a valuable way of recording milestones in a child's life. Parental permission for the different ways in which we use photographs is gained as part of the initial registration on admission. We take a mixture of photos that reflect the school environment; sometimes this will be when children are engrossed in an activity either on their own or with their peers. Children are encouraged to use the class cameras and iPad to take photos of their peers.

In order to safeguard children and adults and to maintain privacy, cameras are expressly forbidden from being taken into the toilets by adults or children. All adults whether teachers, practitioners or volunteers at all HMFA schools and settings understand the difference between appropriate and inappropriate sharing of images. All images are kept securely in compliance with the Data Protection Act

At school events such as carol concerts, parents are allowed to photograph and video their children but are asked to refrain from sharing on social media any photographs and videos which may contain children other than their own.

***All school staff are expected to be vigilant in challenging other staff, parents and visitors. We all must abide by the above requests.***