



## Rainford Brook Lodge Primary School

Mobile Technology Policy

Responsible Committee

Site and Premises

Last review date		Spring	2023
Next review date		Spring	2025
Signed		Name	
Position		Date	
Governor ratification			
Signed		Name	
Position		Date	

## **Mobile Technology Policy**

### **1 INTRODUCTION**

Mobile phone technology has advanced significantly over the last few years - and it continues to evolve. Wireless connections have extended the capabilities of mobile phones, enabling access to a wide range of new content and services globally. Most phones (and some smart watches) 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.

### **2 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.

### **3 SCOPE**

This policy applies to all individuals who have access to personal or work-related mobile phones on site. This includes practitioners, volunteers, governors, children, young people, parents, carers, visitors and community users. This list is not exhaustive.

### **4 POLICY STATEMENT**

It is recognised that it is the enhanced functions of many mobile phones (and smart watches) 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 (and smart watches) can cause an unnecessary distraction during the working day and can be intrusive when used in the company of others.

When mobiles phones (and 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 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 (and 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.

Designated 'mobile free' areas are situated within the school, and signs to this effect are displayed throughout.

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

## **5 CODE OF CONDUCT**

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.

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-regulation 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.

## **6 PROCEDURES**

### **6.1 Personal mobiles (and smart watches)**

Effective guidance is in place to avoid the use of mobile phones (and smart watches) 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 (and in some cases a smart watch), including children, parents and visitors, as detailed below:

**Practitioners** are permitted to have their mobile phones and smart watches) about their person; however, there is a clear expectation that all personal use is limited to allocated lunch and/or breaks. Messages can be checked and calls made in staff only spaces and not beyond the double doors at the front of school.

Other than in agreed exceptional circumstances, phones (and notifications that are noisy or a distraction) must be switched off and calls and texts must not be taken or made during work time.

Practitioners are not permitted, in any circumstance to use their personal phones for taking, recording or sharing images and 'mobile free' areas must be observed at all times.

Practitioners are not permitted to use their own personal phones (or smart watches) for contacting children, young people and their families within or outside of the setting – a school mobile is available for this purpose where necessary.

**Pupils** are not permitted to have their phone (or smart watch) about their person. However, we fully acknowledge a parent's right to allow their child to bring a mobile phone to school **if they walk to and from school without adult supervision (YEAR 5 AND YEAR 6 ONLY)**. Mobile phones being brought into school for any other purpose is prohibited. When a child needs to bring a phone into school, a permission form must be signed by their parent or carer (See Appendix 1). At the beginning of the school day, the phone must be handed into the class teacher for safe keeping. The phone should remain in their book bag (after they have emptied all other necessary equipment). This ensures that the phone is not touched by the teacher, is not on show and is not in contact with any other phones (with due regard to hygiene and Covid-19 precautions). Smart watches are not permitted in school unless they are in place of a mobile phone, in which case, the same rules apply as if it were a mobile.

Pupils leave their belongings in safe storage at their own risk. It is therefore recommended that phones (or smart watches) are security marked, password protected and insured. No liability for loss and damages is accepted for phones brought into school or onto school grounds. Teachers will keep an up to date list of pupils that have gained permission to bring their phones into school, a copy of which will be kept in the Online safety folder in the office (See Appendix 2). Pupils will not be permitted to take mobile phones or smart watches with them on residential or school trips.

Should a pupil be found to be using their phone or smart watch inappropriately, the school reserves the right to withdraw this privilege and they will no longer be able to bring a phone into school. Inappropriate use may include but is not limited to: taking photographs or video footage of other pupils or staff; using text messages or e-mails to bully pupils; disturbing a lesson by not turning the mobile phone off.

**Parents, visitors and contractors** are respectfully requested not to use their mobile phones or smart watch in any of the designated mobile free areas. 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.

Under normal circumstances **no** individual is permitted to take images or make recordings on a mobile phone. Exceptions to this are during school performances, such as Christmas plays, class assemblies and sports day, when verbal permission will be given to parents or carers in the audience, to record their child's performance, with the sole purpose of being 'for personal use only'. Parents will be reminded not to upload these clips onto any social networks. Any individual bringing a personal device into the school must ensure that it contains no inappropriate or illegal content.

## **6.2 School mobile**

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

- an essential part of the emergency toolkit which is taken on off-site trips.
- an effective communication aid, enabling text, email messages (*if phone is enabled*) 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 school mobile, which is password protected, and 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.

The school mobile is clearly labelled. If images or video clips are taken these are to be downloaded onto the school Media server and deleted from the phone upon completion of use.

### **6.3 Driving**

If any practitioner is required to drive in a working capacity, and has responsibility for the school mobile, the phone must be switched off whilst driving. It is expected that practitioners follow the same procedures regarding their own personal mobile phones.

Under no circumstances should practitioners drive whilst taking a phone call. This also applies to hands-free and wireless connections, which are considered a distraction rather than a safer alternative.

### **6.4 Safe storage**

Staff leave their belongings in safe storage at their own risk and phones should only be kept in staff only areas or on the member of staff's person not in sight of the children. 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.

### **6.5 Emergency contact**

It is recognised that mobile phones (and some smart watches) provide direct contact to others, and at times provide a necessary reassurance due to their ease of access, particularly at stressful times. Practitioners, therefore, in agreed exceptional circumstances are permitted to keep their phone *on 'vibrate' or 'silence'*. This is to enhance their own well-being and peace of mind, to reduce stress and worry and to enable them to concentrate more effectively on their work.

Such use will be for an agreed limited period only, until any concerns or issues leading to the exceptional circumstance request have been resolved. *Agreement must be sought from the Head teacher.*

## Appendix 1 – Parental Consent for Mobile Phone

Date

Dear Parent or Carer,

### **Re. Parental Consent for Mobile Phone/Smart Watch**

In accordance with our mobile technology policy, we understand that as your child walks to and from school without adult supervision, they will be bringing a mobile phone or smart watch into school on a regular basis. Whilst this acts to safeguard your child as they develop their independence, mobile phones or some smart phones can also be used to cause distress to others and/or distract lessons.

Please sign the form below giving permission for your child to do this and please be reminded that:

- Your child needs to hand in their phone to the class teacher first thing in the morning for safekeeping in a school book-bag and it will be returned at the end of the day.
- The school bears no responsibility for any loss or damage to the mobile phone/smart watch.
- Your child's phone/watch should be appropriately marked so that they can recognise it.
- Should your child be found to be using their phone or smart watch inappropriately, the school reserves the right to withdraw this privilege and they will no longer be able to bring a phone or smart watch into school.
- Mobile phones and smart watches will not be permitted on school or residential trips.

Thank you for helping us to keep all our children safe.

Yours sincerely,

Mr Phil Reece

Headteacher



