

Our vision is for our children to be happy and responsible young people who achieve their best



Honiton Primary School

Mobile Phone and Personal Devices Policy

Approved by the Resources committee on
7.10.24

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Summary of substantive updates and changes	Date:
<p>Section 2.8:</p> <p>Limitation on financial responsibility of the school in the circumstance of lost, theft or damage of a mobile device.</p> <p>If a pupil is to bring a mobile phone with them to school, the school is not financially responsible for mobile phones (or other such personal devices) that are lost, stolen or damaged. This is not limited by pupils using the expected classroom device storage which classroom teachers will provide and take best endeavours to ensure is safe and secure.</p>	29.9.24
<p>3.1 Tracking devices</p> <p>Section included on tracking devices reflecting advances in technology for the school to keep on track with</p> <p>The question of allowing or providing tracking devices in school and on educational visits raises valid concerns about invasion of privacy, misuse, and the erosion of trust between parents and teachers. In certain circumstances, tracking devices present risks to individuals and group safety.</p> <p>Therefore, pupils are not permitted to carry on their person tracking devices in school.</p> <p>Pupils are also not permitted to carry on their person tracking devices on school trips. Should, in exceptional circumstances, a parent feel this is warranted, a request should be made in writing to the Head Teacher in advance of the trip.</p>	29.9.24
<p>4.1 Music</p> <p>List broadened to reflect use</p> <p>Mobile phones can be used to play music during assembly, sports days, summer fayres and school productions only. The mobile phone must be stored out of reach of children,</p>	29.9.24

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

- Safeguarding Children Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Online Safety Policy
- GDPR Policy

Reference to Mobile Phone and personal devices encompass any privately-owned mobile devices which include but are not limited to, ipads and smart watches.

1.1 Introduction

Mobile phone technology has advanced significantly over the last few years - and it continues to evolve. Wireless connections in particular have extended the capabilities of mobile phones, enabling access to a wide range of new content and services globally. Phones 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 online safety issues generally, risks to children and young people can be broadly categorised under the headings of content, contact, conduct and commerce and managed by reducing availability, restricting access and providing education, expectation and guidance on their safe and acceptable use.

1.2 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.

1.3 Scope

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

1.4 Policy statement

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.

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It is also recognised that mobile phones can cause an unnecessary distraction during the working day and can be intrusive when used in the company of others.

When mobile phones are misused it can impact 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 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.

The school is now largely designated 'mobile use free' with highlighted areas situated within the school of particular caution.

A zero-tolerance policy is in place with regards to the use of personal or work-related mobiles by any individual in these areas. This now extends to large sections of the playground with signs showing this. A green zone for parental telephone calls is located at the top gate with appropriate signage.

The staffroom and professional offices are deemed to be 'green zones' where staff can use their phones in the absence of children for personal use. Classrooms and cloakrooms are not appropriate unless with special permission from the headteacher (a section relating to welfare comes later).

1.5 Code of conduct

A code of conduct is promoted with the aim of creating a cooperative 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.

It is therefore ensured that all staff:

- 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 could 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 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.

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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 school environment, which is agreed to by all staff, visitors and volunteers.

1.6. Roles and responsibilities

It is the responsibility of Assistant Head Ross Hasler to oversee the implementation of this policy with the oversight of the Head Teacher Christopher Tribble.

It is the responsibility of the Governing Body to review this policy annually and monitor its implementation.

All staff will be requested to read (and sign to acknowledge reading of the policy) annually after approval by the Governing board.

The policy will be made available to parents on the website and the key points relating to children's use of mobile phones and smart watches in school will be communicated in a letter with updates in the newsletter when necessary.

2. Procedures

2.1 Personal mobiles

Effective guidance is in place to avoid the use of mobile phones 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, including children, parents and visitors, as detailed below:

2.2. Staff, Volunteers and Student Teachers are permitted to have their mobile phones about their person; however, there is a clear expectation that all personal use is limited to allocated lunch and/or tea breaks and in the designated 'green' zones.

Other than in agreed exceptional circumstances, phones must be on silent or switched off and calls and texts must not be taken or made during lesson time.

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

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The only exception to this is that the Headteacher and Caretaker may use their phones to take images and make calls for practical, maintenance or insurance purposes (building damage, flooding, repairs etc.).

In these circumstances they will ensure that such images do not include identifiable images of children.

2.4 Staff, Volunteers and Student Teachers are not permitted to use their own personal phones for contacting children, young people and their families within or outside of the setting unless authorised by the headteacher. All relevant communications should be made via the school office, unless in an emergency situation. If it is necessary to ring a parent from a staff mobile phone, and permission from the headteacher has been given, then the phone number should be blocked.

2.5 Parents/carers, visitors and contractors are respectfully requested not to use their mobile phones 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 no circumstances is any individual permitted to take images or make recordings on a mobile phone, except for school productions and on sports day, where permission will be stated by a member of the SLT. On these occasions we allow parents to photograph or video their child at school 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.**

Parents attending school trips are in the capacity of a volunteer and as such are not permitted to take photos or videos. Mobile phone use should be for emergencies only and away from the children.

Contractors may need to take images for practical or hardware reasons (building damage, part/serial numbers, readings etc.) These will be with permission of the Headteacher, Business Manager or Caretaker before commencing and it will be made clear that such images should not include identifiable children.

Any individual bringing a personal device into the school must ensure that it contains no inappropriate or illegal content.

2.6. Smart Watches - Staff, Volunteers, student teachers, visitors and contractors

Smart watches can be worn during school days but any calling features, camera, messaging and call services must be disabled.

Making calls or receiving/sending texts and emails on smart watches should be limited to non-contact time when no children are present and only in a designated green area.

2.7 Passwords and security:

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It is also expected that staff protect access to functions of their phone/smart watch with a passcode fingerprint scan feature.

2.8 Personal Mobiles - Pupils

We recognise that mobile phones are part of everyday life for many children and that they can play an important role in helping pupils to feel safe and secure travelling to and from school. However, we also recognise that they can prove a distraction in school and can provide a means of bullying or intimidating others. Therefore:

- Once pupils enter the school playground, mobile phones should be switched off and should remain off until pupils leave the school playground.
- Pupils are required to have mobile phones turned off, therefore, within the school building and playground.
- Pupils are required to hand in their switched off mobile phones to teachers who will store them safely out of reach and will only return at the end of the day.
- Pupils are not permitted to have mobile phones on their person at school or on trips.
- If in the rare event of a parent wishing for his/her child to use a mobile phone to call or message a parent in the school day, then:
 - The parent must put their request in writing to the headteacher
 - The phone must be handed in to the school office first thing in the morning and collected from them at the end of the day and be clearly labelled .
 - Mobile phones used in school without permission will be confiscated and returned at the end of the school day and will result in the implementation of standard school behaviour sanctions.
- If a pupil is to bring a mobile phone with them to school, the school is not financially responsible for mobile phones (or other such personal devices) that are lost, stolen or damaged. This is not limited by pupils using the expected classroom device storage which classroom teachers will provide and take best endeavours to ensure is safe and secure.

2.9. Smart Watches - pupils

Smart watches that are able to make calls, send/receive messages, take photos or record videos are not allowed to be worn in school as they pose a heightened risk for breaches of privacy, inappropriate and distracting communication and ultimately therefore a safeguarding risk.

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Where a pupil is found to be wearing a smartwatch, it will be collected in by the teacher, stored safely, only returned to the pupil at the end of the day and the parent called to discuss the school expectations on the non-wearing of smart watches.

3.1 Tracking devices

The question of allowing or providing tracking devices in school and on educational visits raises valid concerns about invasion of privacy, misuse, and the erosion of trust between parents and teachers. In certain circumstances, tracking devices present risks to individuals and group safety.

Therefore, pupils are not permitted to carry on their person tracking devices in school.

Pupils are also not permitted to carry on their person tracking devices on school trips. Should, in exceptional circumstances, a parent feel this is warranted, a request should be made in writing to the Head Teacher in advance of the trip.

4.1 Music

Mobile phones can be used to play music during assembly, sports days, summer fayres and school productions only. The mobile phone must be stored out of reach of children, operated by an adult and have a security lock. Mobile phones can only be used by adults, for the playing of music, in the presence of other adults.

4.2 Driving

If any member of staff is required to drive in a working capacity, their mobile phone must be switched off whilst driving. Under no circumstances should staff 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.

4.3. Safe storage

A limited number of designated safe and secure lockers for staff to store their personal belongings during the working day are available. Keys for lockers are available from the main office. Staff have the option to store their mobile phones in this area, should they choose. This however is not a mandatory requirement (except for nursery staff – see below).

Nursery staff have a designated lockable cupboard in the nursery unit where they must store their mobile phones and devices whilst children are in the nursery.

Staff leave their belongings in safe storage at their own risk. It is therefore recommended that phones are security marked, password protected and insured. No liability for loss and damages is accepted.

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As well as safeguarding children and avoiding any unnecessary disruptions during the day, this procedure also aims to protect staff against any unfounded allegations.

4.4. Emergency contact

It is recognised that mobile phones provide direct contact to others, and at times provide a necessary reassurance due to their ease of access, particularly at stressful times. Staff, therefore, in agreed exceptional circumstances [permission must be sought and approved by the Head Teacher] are permitted to keep the volume of their phone switched on. 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. Staff are nonetheless still required to take or make any calls in a green zone or professional office.

Such use will be for an agreed limited period only, until any concerns or issues leading to the exceptional circumstance request have been resolved.

It is ensured at all times that the landline telephone remains connected and operational, except in circumstances beyond control. This means that it is available for emergency/urgent contact at all times.

4.5. Emergency Situations

It is recognised that mobile phones are an effective communication tool in an emergency or when working remotely from the school. In certain circumstances staff may use their phones when other means of communication are not possible. They should only take images on their phones where directed to do so by the emergency services or a member of SLT. These situations include:

- Emergency evacuation of the premises
- Lockdown procedures (phones on silent)
- School trips – for emergencies, communication and contact with the school only
- Lessons in the woods/field – for emergency contact with the school only

5.1. School Mobile Phones

School mobile phones are provided for staff who are working outside of normal school hours or in remote parts of the school:

- **BASC** – A school mobile is provided for BASC for communication with parents regarding late collection etc. The camera on this phone is obscured and should not be used except in emergency situations as described above.
- **Holiday Club** - A school mobile is provided for Holiday Club for communication with parents regarding late bookings, collection etc. The camera on this phone is obscured and should not be used except in emergency situations as described above.

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- Nursery – A school mobile with no camera facility is provided for the nursery unit in case they need to contact the school office during the school day.
- The Headteacher has a working phone for email and communications when on and offsite at meetings and in situations where immediate need is required: flooding, damage, fire etc.

6.1 Concerns

Staff should report any usage of mobile devices that causes them concern to the Headteacher.

7.1. Dissemination

The mobile phone policy will be shared with staff and volunteers as part of their induction. It will also be available to parents via the school office and website. Contractors and visitors will be notified by signage and when they sign in at the office.

Reviewed by Head Teacher for Governor's approval	Approved by the Governing Body
Name: Christopher Tribble	Name: Resources
Date: 7.10.24	Date: 7.10.24

Next Review: October 2025

First adopted : 26.11.18