

Leyland St. James Church of England School



Use of Mobile Phone Policy

Reviewed and Revised – September 2025

Signed – Mr A Hammersley (Chair of Governors)

Mobile Phone Policy

Introduction and Aims

At Leyland St. James CoE Primary School the welfare and well-being of our pupils is paramount. The aim of the Mobile Phone 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 are effective communication tools. It is recognised that it is the enhanced functions of many mobile phones 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.

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, visitors and contractors. This list is not exhaustive.

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

- Safeguarding Children Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy

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.

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.

Personal Mobiles - Staff

- Staff are not permitted to make/receive calls/texts during contact time with children.
- Emergency contact should be made via the school office.
- Staff should have their phones on silent or switched off and out of sight during class time.
- Mobile phones should not be used in a space where children are present.
- Use of phones (inc. receiving/sending texts and emails) should be limited to non-contact time when no children are present e.g. in office areas, staff room, empty classrooms.
- Staff may use their mobile phones during non-contact time to control the use of the See-saw communication tool.
- It is also advised that staff security protect access to functions of their phone.
- Should there be exceptional circumstances (e.g. acutely sick relative), then staff should seek permission from the Head teacher so that they may receive emergency calls.
- 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.
- Legitimate recordings and photographs should be captured using school equipment such as cameras and ipads.
- Staff should report any usage of mobile devices that causes them concern to the Headteacher.

Mobile Phones for work related purposes

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

- Mobile use on these occasions is appropriate and professional (and will never include taking photographs of children).
- Mobile phones should not be used to make contact with parents during school trips – all relevant communications should be made via the school office.
- 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 to take photographs of children.

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. However we also recognise that they can prove a distraction in school and can provide a means of bullying or intimidating others. Therefore:

- Children (age-appropriate) are permitted to have mobile phones at school
- If children are carrying mobile phones during the school day they must adhere to the following;
 - the phone must be handed in, switched off, to the teacher first thing in the morning and collected from them by the child at home time (the phone is left at the owner's own risk).

The Misuse of Mobile Phones

Mobile phones are one potential source of cyber bullying and sexting. The issues of cyber bullying and sexting are discussed with the children as part of the online safety/PSHE/SRE curriculum. The school reserves the right to confiscate a phone or device if there is good reason to believe that it is being used to contravene the school's behaviour policy. In the event of such action being required the head teacher or a member of the SLT would be informed and involved in the process and parents would be informed of the reasons for the action.

Staff are asked to be vigilant in monitoring visitors for any covert use of mobile phones or cameras and to report any concerns to the head teacher.

Sexting – Steps to take in the event of an incident

Step 1 – Disclosure Sexting disclosures should follow the normal safeguarding practices and protocols (see Safeguarding Policy). The person is likely to be very distressed especially if the image has been circulated widely and if they don't know who has shared it, seen it or where it has ended up. They will need nurture support during the disclosure and after the event. They may even need immediate protection or a referral to police or social services; parents should be informed as soon as possible (police advice permitting).

Step 2- Searching a device – what are the rules? The policy allows for a device to be confiscated and securely stored if there is reason to believe it contains indecent images or extreme pornography. Leave the search for LADO and/or police not staff members.

Step 3 – If the image has been shared across a personal mobile device;

Confiscate and secure device. Close down or switch off device as soon as possible.

Never view the image unless there is a clear reason for doing so or view it with another adult present. The viewing of the image should only take place to determine an incident has occurred.

Never send, share or save the image anywhere.

If the image has been sent across the school network; immediately block to network and isolate the image.

Step 4 – Who should deal with the incident? Often, the first port of call for a student is a class teacher. Regardless of who the initial disclosure is made to she/he must act in accordance with the school safeguarding and/or child protection policy, ensuring that the DSL and a senior member of staff are involved in dealing with the incident. The Designated Safeguarding Lead should always record the incident. There may be instances where the image needs to be viewed and this should be done in accordance with protocols.

Step 5 – There may be many reasons why a student/staff has engaged in sexting – it may be a sexual exploration scenario or it may be due to coercion. It is important to remember that it won't always be appropriate to inform the police; this will depend on the nature of the incident (see Appendix 1 for definitions). However, as a school it is important that incidents are consistently recorded. It may also be necessary to assist the young person/ staff in removing the image from a website or elsewhere. The DSL will contact the police (if

appropriate). Referrals may be made to Social Care or the Multi-Agency Team (MAT) but where a crime may be thought to have taken place the police are the first port of call. Young persons who have engaged in 'experimental sexting' which is contained between two persons will be referred to MAT for support and guidance. Those who are felt to be victims of 'sexting' will also be referred to MAT at a point where the police feel that this will not impede an investigation.

- The young person's will be given support from NWB manager who will put the necessary safeguards in place for the student, e.g. they may need counselling support or immediate protection.
- Inform parents and/or carers about the incident and how it is being dealt with.
- If staff are involved, management counselling will take place and placed on record- disciplinary may follow.

Step 6 - Containment and Prevention The persons involved in 'sexting' may be left feeling sensitive and vulnerable for some time. They will require monitoring by and support from schools nurture programme. Where cases of 'sexting' become widespread or there is thought to be the possibility of contagion then the school will reinforce the need for safer 'online' behaviour using a variety of resources (see Appendix 3). Other staff may need to be informed of incidents and should be prepared to act if the issue is continued or referred to by other students. The school, its students and parents should be on high alert, challenging behaviour and ensuring that the victim is well cared for and protected. The students' parents should usually be told what has happened so that they can keep a watchful eye over the young person especially when they are online at home. Creating a supportive environment for students in relation to the incident is very important. If the situation has arisen through adults code of conduct and standards will be addressed through appraisals and or disciplinary.

Step 7 - Review outcomes and procedures with the aim of preventing future incidents. The frequency or severity of such incidents may be such that the school will need to review its approach. Where this is the case Leyland St. James' Primary School will adopt the 'PIES' model where:

P = Policies and Practices - ensuring that key policies e.g. Safeguarding, AntiBullying, Online safety Policies are still relevant and can meet emerging issues.

I = Infrastructure - ensuring that the school's infrastructure and technologies are robust enough to meet new challenges.

E = Education - ensuring that both adults and young persons are alerted to the issues such as safety mechanisms, support mechanisms and the legal implications of such behaviour.

S = Standards - the Ofsted framework for Behaviour and Safety provides a good benchmark to test the strength of the school's approach.

Legal Position It is important to be aware that people involved in sharing sexual videos and pictures may be committing a criminal offence. Specifically, crimes involving indecent photographs (including pseudo images) of a person under 18 years of age fall under Section 1 of the Protection of Children Act 1978 and Section 160 Criminal Justice Act 1988. Under this legislation it is a crime to:

- Take indecent or allow indecent pictures to be taken if the child is under 18 years old.
- Make an indecent image (including downloading and opening of) a child under the age of 18 years old.
- Distribute or show such a picture of an adult or a child without their consent.

- Possess with the intention of distributing such images.
- Advertise and possess such images.

Other mobile devices

The rules for mobile phone use in school apply to all other mobile devices:

- When permission to use such devices is granted, it is expected that the relevant security settings, such as passwords and anti-viral protection, are in place and up to date.
- The owners of the devices are responsible for ensuring that all the content held on them is legal and should understand that the school cannot be held liable e.g. for any damage or theft of personal devices.
- Such devices can only be used on the school's network, e.g. to transfer data by Blue-Tooth or to access the Internet using Wi-Fi, after obtaining the express permission of the head teacher and should be checked first to ensure that they contain no viruses or mal-ware that may cause damage to the school's systems.
- As with mobile phones, inappropriate use of such devices may lead to their confiscation.

Where mobile phones or other mobile devices are used in or out of school to bully or intimidate others, then the Head Teacher does have the power to intervene 'to such an extent as it is reasonable to regulate the behaviour of pupils when they are off the school site' - refer to Anti-Bullying Policy.

Volunteers, Visitors, Governors and Contractors

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

On arrival, such visitors will be informed of our expectations around the use of mobile phones.

Parents

While we would prefer parents not to use their mobile phones while at school, we recognise that this would be impossible to regulate and that many parents see their phones as essential means of communication at all times.

We therefore ask that parents' usage of mobile phones, whilst on the school site is *courteous* and *appropriate* to the school environment.

We also allow parents to photograph their **own child** during school events such as shows or sports day using their mobile phones – **but insist that parents do not publish images (e.g. on social networking sites).**

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.