

The Vineyard

Mobile Phone Policy



Enabling all children to learn and grow

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Introduction and Aims

At The Vineyard the safety 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, committee members, children, young people, parents, families, visitors and contractors. This list is not exhaustive. This policy should also be read in relation to the school Safeguarding Policy, Online Safety Policy and Staff Code of Conduct.

Guidance on the Use of Photographic Images and Videos of Children in Schools

It's important that we celebrate achievements and have photographs and films of special moments. We also acknowledge that family and friends also want to be able to share the successes of their children when they have been part of a special event or activity. However, it's also important to be aware of child protection and safeguarding issues when people are taking photos or filming at events. The potential for misuse of images can be reduced if organisations are aware of the potential risks and dangers and put appropriate measures in place.

Risk Factors

Some of the potential risks of photography and filming at events include:

- Children may be identifiable when a photograph is shared with personal information
- Direct and indirect risks to children and young people when photographs are shared on websites and in publications with personal information
- Inappropriate photographs or recorded images of children
- Inappropriate use, adaptation or copying of images

Therefore, we adopt the following policy when photographing or recording images of children at The Vineyard or when off-site on trips and visits:

- Families complete the photo consent form when joining our school to specify if they give consent for photos to be taken
- When staff members post photos onto the website/school instagram they must ensure that the children photographed have consent
- Families should not post photographs of children other than your own on social media without the permission of that child's family.

- Only use images of children in suitable clothing to reduce the risk of inappropriate use. Swimming and drama present a much greater risk for potential misuse.
- Maintain alert to the risks of how images of children on an organisation's website can be misused. Images accompanied by personal information such as the name of a child and their hobby could be used to learn more about a child prior to grooming them for abuse.
- Do not allow photographers unsupervised access to children. Do not approve photography sessions outside an event or at the child's home.

Data Storage and Protection

Images or video recordings of children must be kept securely on the school server. Hard copies of images should be kept in a locked drawer and electronic images should be in a protected folder with restricted access. Images should not be stored on unencrypted portable equipment such as laptops, memory sticks and mobile phones.

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.

It is fully recognised that imposing rigid regulations on the actions of others can be counterproductive. An agreement of trust is therefore promoted regarding the carrying and use of mobile phones within the setting, which is agreed to by all users:

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 (e.g. in a drawer or handbag) during class time, this includes office staff and senior leaders. The only exception to this rule is when a mobile phone is used for a medical purpose.
- Mobile phones should not be used in a space where children are present (e.g. classroom, playground, school offices).
- Use of phones (inc. receiving/sending texts and emails) should be limited to non-contact time when no children are present e.g. staff room, either before 8.40am, at break time, at lunchtime or after school has finished.

- It is also advised for security that staff protect access to functions of their phone. Should there be exceptional circumstances (e.g. acutely sick relative), then staff should make the Headteacher aware of this and can have their phone in case of having to receive an emergency call.
- 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 unless this is for the school newsletter and Instagram. If this is the case, once the photos have been passed on, they must be deleted. Personal cameras can be used with permission from the Headteacher using a school SD card.
- All staff may use their mobile phones to access authorisation codes for CPOMs. Staff should report any usage of mobile devices that causes them concern to the Headteacher.
- Staff may use their phones in the event of a lockdown.

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
- Where staff members personal phone is needed to be used to contact a family, they must ensure their number is withheld
- 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.

Therefore:

- Pupils from Reception to Year 4 are not permitted to have mobile phones at school
- Pupils in Year 5 & 6 are permitted to bring their mobile phones (non-smart phones only) to school, but only if they are travelling to and/or from school on their own.
- Once in school the mobile phone must be switched off and handed in to the class teacher. It will be locked away and returned at the end of the day. Mobile phones brought to school without permission will be confiscated and returned at the end of the day to the parent.
- If a child uses their phone on the school site, it will be confiscated and handed into the school office. Families will be called to collect the phone. The child will then be asked to hand their phone into the office every day for a week afterwards.

Where mobile phones are used to bully or intimidate others, if appropriate then the Headteacher does have the power to intervene to such an extent as it is reasonable to regulate the behaviour of pupils. Cyberbullying and sexting by pupils will be treated as a safeguarding issue. Staff (and children) are expected to report any incidents of sexual harassment between children via mobile phone or smart technology to the DSL or DDSL, who will make the decision to refer to SPA. Any incidence of cyberbullying will be dealt with inline with our behaviour 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 – this is reinforced by signage and, if necessary, reminders from staff.

Families

While we would prefer families not to use their mobile phones while at school, we recognise that this would be impossible to regulate and that many families see their phones as essential means of communication at all times. We therefore ask that families' usage of mobile phones, whilst on the school site is courteous and appropriate to the school environment. We also allow parents to photograph or video school events such as class assemblies or sports day using their mobile phones – but insist that families do not publish images (e.g. on social networking sites) that include any children other than their own.

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.



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