



Cowdenbeath PS

Safe Use of Mobile Devices Policy

(January 2024)



- This policy will be reviewed as required to ensure its effectiveness and relevance.
- Updates may be made to address emerging issues or changes in technology.



Safe Use of Mobile Devices at Cowdenbeath Primary School

Please note that for the purposes of this policy, the term 'mobile device' implies any electronic device with the capacity to be used as a form of communication, either through the device itself or any applications stored on the device. For example: phones, tablets, laptops, smart watches, etc.

Our Objectives:

1. To promote responsible and respectful mobile device usage among primary school students.
2. To minimise potential risks associated with mobile device use.
3. To establish clear guidelines for students, parents, and staff regarding mobile device usage.

Context and Rationale – Opportunities and Risks

At Cowdenbeath Primary School and Nursery, we are committed to ensuring the safety of children in our care, which is why we want to recognise and take proactive steps to minimise the potential risks associated with the use and misuse of mobile devices.

We recognise that mobile technology is an integral part of the lives of children and young people across Fife, with many bringing their personal mobile devices into school. Used responsibly, mobile devices can enhance learning and teaching, communication and social experiences. They can also bring a sense of security to families as their children enjoy more independent activities, such as walking to and from school unsupervised.

However, there are associated risks both in terms of low-level disruption in classes and more serious misuse such as bullying and harassment of children and staff. Such behaviour is unacceptable in any context. Unfortunately, stories relating to the misuse of mobile technologies are all too frequently reported in the media with many demonstrating the potentially devastating impact of such misuse on individuals and their families.

Summary of some potential issues:

- Privacy around the taking and distribution of unlawful images and video without consent
- Cyberbullying
- Distraction from learning and a trigger point for dysregulated pupil behaviour
- Road safety issues caused through distraction
- Theft, loss and damage of personal devices
- Exposure to unsolicited and/or inappropriate content
- Potential access point for grooming and exploitation

For children and young people, the internet is a *place*; not a thing. It's a social space where they can hang out and meet friends. Like any place that children might go, there are benefits and risks. Just as in other unsupervised contexts, we wouldn't expect children and young people to behave appropriately without guidance from adults. Children and young people need to understand that unacceptable behaviour remains unacceptable whether it occurs in an online environment, the playground, the classroom or anywhere else.

Minimising Risk

As a school, we are committed to equipping our pupils with appropriate skills for safe online behaviour. We work closely with services like Police Scotland as well as using national and Fife internet safety resources so that children have the knowledge, skills and understanding to keep themselves and others safe. There may even be opportunities when your child's class teacher gives permission (through written notification to families) for pupils to bring devices into school for the purposes of learning and developing their understanding of responsible mobile device use.

To ensure we are effectively enabling the benefits of safe mobile device use, whilst minimising the potential risks, we recognise that this can only be achieved through partnership with our families. It is good practice to regularly check your child's device for appropriate usage and to limit access to these devices prior to bedtime and during the night.

We have outlined the steps that all adults around the child can take, to promote responsible mobile device use in our guidance overleaf.



Safe Use of Mobile Devices – School Guidance

1. Safety Measures:

- No pupil should bring a personal mobile device to school or use one on the school premises, including the playground, before and after school, in the breakfast club or on school excursions.
- If a pupil's family believe their child has a specific reason to bring their mobile device, they must contact the school and make a request for permission.

2. Permission and Responsibility:

- If permission is granted by the school:
 - responsibility for the safe use of the device lies with the pupil and their family. The school is not responsible for any issues resulting from the use of the device. This includes and is not limited to:
 - loss, theft or damage
 - the accessing inappropriate content (including but not limited to violence, explicit material, age-restricted content and social media)
 - unlawful use that including invasions of privacy and respect through the covert filming of staff, pupils and visitors
 - cyber-bullying.
 - the device must be handed to the class teacher or school office so that it can be stored securely during the school day. Ideally, a family member will hand the device into the school office.
 - the devices should be turned off or locked and in silent mode.
 - the device cannot be used unless permission is given by a member of the school team.
 - the family and pupil must both sign an agreement to adhere to the school's mobile device policy.
- Please ensure that your child's phone is security marked and password protected.
- If a pupil with permission from the school to bring their mobile device to school, subsequently misuses it and presents a risk to themselves or others, their family will be called to collect the device and the child will not be allowed to bring the phone to school for any reason in the future.
- As with any other school behaviour or discipline concern, usual processes will be followed

3. Educational Use:

- On occasion, in preparation for S1 transition for example, P7 teachers may integrate mobile devices into the learning process for educational purposes, under their supervision. In such circumstances, Families would be notified directly about this by the class teacher. If you child says they have permission and you have not been contacted by their teacher, please assume that they do not have permission.
- Any misuse of devices under these circumstances, will result in the pupil's family being called to collect the device and the child will not be allowed to bring the phone to school for any reason in the future.
- As with any other school behaviour or discipline concern, usual processes will be followed

4. Enforcement and Consequences:

- Violations of the mobile device policy will result in appropriate consequences, in line with the school's usual behaviour and discipline procedures.
- Repeat offenses or instances where significant risk or abuse has been identified, may require a meeting with the family to discuss further action.

5. Parental Involvement:

- Parents are encouraged to monitor and guide their child's mobile device usage at home. Please can you support us and your children by:
 - speaking to your child about the responsible use of mobile devices and the internet
 - collecting devices (phones, tablets, laptops...) from your children 1 - 2 hours before bedtime
 - ensuring devices are not accessible after bedtime
 - regularly checking your child's devices to see who they are contacting (and who is contacting them); the content they are accessing, their social media activity; the photos and video content they are receiving and creating
- Parents should communicate with the school if they have any concerns or issues related to mobile device usage that may impact on the safe running of the school.



Appendix 1: Safe Use of Mobile Devices – Permission Agreement

The information below, is a summary of the key points identified in the school's "Safe Use of Mobile Devices Policy" that must be followed if permission is to be given for a pupil to bring a personal mobile device to school. The policy should be read in full prior to signing the Permission Agreement, however.

Permission and Responsibility:

- If permission is granted by the school:
 - responsibility for the safe use of the device lies with the pupil and their family. The school is not responsible for any issues resulting from the use of the device. This includes and is not limited to:
 - loss, theft or damage
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- If a pupil with permission from the school to bring their mobile device to school, subsequently misuses it and presents a risk to themselves or others, their family will be called to collect the device and the child will not be allowed to bring the phone to school for any reason in the future.
- As with any other school behaviour or discipline concern, usual processes will be followed.

Enforcement and Consequences:

- Violations of the mobile device policy will result in appropriate consequences, in line with the school's usual behaviour and discipline procedures.
- Repeat offenses or instances where significant risk or abuse has been identified, may require a meeting with the family to discuss further action.

Acknowledgment:

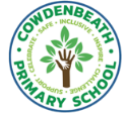
I have read and understood the school's "Safe Use of Mobile Devices Policy" and I agree to comply with the guidelines.

Pupil: _____ **Class:** _____

Pupil's Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____ **Date:** _____





Appendix 2: Safe Use of Mobile Devices – Advice for Families

In school we will support your child to become more digitally aware so that they can keep themselves and others safe when they go online or use digital technology to interact with others. We do this through the school curriculum; working with partners such as Police Scotland and the use of national and Fife resources. However, we need to work together with our families to ensure we are getting it right for our children.

Please can you support us and your children by:

- speaking to your child about the responsible use of mobile devices and the internet
- collecting devices (phones, tablets, laptops...) from your children 1 - 2 hours before bedtime
- ensuring devices are not accessible after bedtime
- Regularly checking your child's devices to see who they are contacting and who is contacting them; the content they are accessing, their social media activity; the photos and video content they are receiving and creating

I realise this last point may seem obtrusive to some families but please remember that the potential risks associated with the misuse of mobiles devices, can lead to catastrophic outcomes for children and families. We should never assume that a child is being safe and responsible online.

If your child knows that you are regularly checking their phone, they are far more likely to be responsible with it.

Conversely, if they know no one is supervising them, they are at a significantly greater risk of harm to themselves or to others through irresponsible usage.

Some Useful Websites:

Internet Safety:



<https://families.google/familylink>

<https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk>



<http://parentclub.scot/topics/online-safety>

<https://www.vodafone.co.uk/mobile/digital-parenting/>



Cyberbullying:



<https://www.cybersafescotland.org/get-support>

<https://respectme.org.uk/adults/online-bullying/>



<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/what-is-child-abuse/types-of-abuse/bullying-and-cyberbullying/>

