

Balmalloch Primary School and Nursery Class



Mobile Phone Policy



responsi**B**ility

gr**A**ttitude

BELIEVE IN YOURSELF

hu**M**ility and forgiveness

persever**A**nce

Love

ACHIEVE YOUR GOALS

h**O**nesty and gener**O**sity

respe**C**t

friends**H**ip & family

A Place of Enthusiastic Learning and Achievement!

Introduction

Mobile phone technology has advanced significantly over the last few years and 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. Most phones now offer Internet and email access, alongside the standard functions of messaging, camera, video and sound recording. Mobile phones and 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.

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.

Scope

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

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. 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 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 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 campus and signs to this effect will be displayed throughout.

'Mobile free' areas are those which are considered to be the most vulnerable and sensitive and include:

- class bases and classrooms during teaching time
- changing areas
- toilets
- playground
- dinner hall
- cloakrooms

A zero-tolerance policy is in place with regards to the use of personal mobile phones by any individual in these areas.

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 and positive outcomes for our learners.

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 lead to possible allegations;
- understand the need for professional boundaries and clear guidance regarding acceptable use;
- are responsible for 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 staff can be counterproductive, leading to a culture of suspicion, uncertainty and secrecy. An agreement of trust is, therefore promoted regarding the carrying and use of mobile phones within the campus, which is agreed by all staff.

Procedures

6.1 Personal mobiles

Effective guidance is in place to avoid the use of mobile phones causing unnecessary disruptions and distractions on the school campus, 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 staff, children, parents and visitors, as detailed below:

- Staff 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.
- Other than in agreed exceptional circumstances, phones must be switched off and calls and texts must not be taken or made during work time. Staff 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. Staff are not permitted to use their own personal phones for contacting children, young people and their families within or outside of the setting.
- Children in P6 and P7 are permitted to bring their phone to school with them. The phone however must be kept in their school bag, switched off/on silent and not used during the course of the day, except with express permission. Children are not allowed to use their phones to text, call, take photos or video record on the school grounds. Please note that pupils bring their phones to school at their own risk. No liability for loss and damages is accepted. If children are found to be breaking the school rules, they will be asked to leave their mobile phones at the school office for collection at the end of the day. If the rules are continuously not adhered to, a parent/carer will be asked to collect the mobile phone and the pupil will not be permitted to bring it into school after that.
- Parents, 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 our core business of teaching and learning. Under no circumstances is any individual permitted to take images or make recordings on a mobile phone. Any individual bringing a personal

device into the setting must ensure that it contains no inappropriate or illegal content.

6.2 **Safe storage**

Staff must ensure they store their personal belongings, including mobile phones, safely whilst at work. Staff leave their belongings 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.

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

6.3 **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 with the Headteacher, are permitted to keep the volume of their phone switched on. This is to enhance their own wellbeing and peace of mind, to reduce stress and worry, enabling 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.

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. The reliance on an answer phone is avoided except for times outside of school / nursery operating hours or should children be taken off the premises on a trip. The answer phone is always checked promptly on opening or return.

R. McCarthy
Head Teacher
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