

Renfrewshire Council

Children's Services

Guidance on the use of mobile phones

for

Paisley Grammar Cluster Schools

Vision

'To enable all schools and local authorities to develop an ethos of citizenship that leads to respectful and responsible use of mobile technology. This will encourage schools to positively embrace mobile technology to enhance learning now and, in the future, whilst helping them protect staff, children and young people from the possible disruptive and harmful consequences of misuse.' Scottish Government "Guidance on Mobile Phones in Scotland's Schools" – Update 2024

Context

Mobile technology is an integral part of the lives of children and young people across Scotland, with many bringing their own mobile phone devices into school.

When used responsibly, mobile devices such as phones and tablets can be powerful tools to enhance learning and teaching, communication and social experience but it should also be recognised the significant challenges and impact these can have on children and young people. These devices may remove barriers to learning for some pupils. They can bring a sense of security to parents as their children enjoy more independent activities, such as walking to and from school unsupervised. Such devices can also be powerful tools when utilised by teachers to enhance learning and teaching.

There is a clear commitment to recognising, respecting and promoting children's rights in Scotland through the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and any local decisions relating to the use of mobile devices in school should be made acting in the best interests of the child and taking their views into consideration.

Digital Rights and Responsibilities (what individuals can and cannot do)

- Unacceptable Behaviour: Unacceptable behaviour, whether online or offline, is not tolerated. This includes, but is not limited to, bullying, harassment and the sharing of inappropriate content.
- Consequences: Pupils who misuse their phone will be subject to the school's own positive relationships and behaviour policies, which already set out how incidents will be dealt with, including agreed consequences and sanctions. Consistency is key to the successful implementation.
- Reporting: Incidents of misuse should be reported by pupils to a teacher or member of staff and there should be clear protocols outlining the support available in school for staff and pupils who are the subject of harassment using mobile phones.

Digital Etiquette (standards of conduct when using mobile phones)

- General restrictions: At all times during the school day, mobile phones must be switched off and out of sight (e.g. in school bags). Smart Watches, must have notifications turned off. No recordings are permitted on a smart watch.

- AirPods and wearables should not be used in class as pupils cannot hear the fire alarm.
- Privacy: Within the school and the playground the use of camera and filming is strictly prohibited.
- Any pupil attending extra-curricular activities, discos and school events should adhere to the policy.
- Mobile phones/devices are prohibited for all trips including residential trips.

Safe and Secure Use (precautions that can be taken to ensure digital safety)

- Curriculum Support: We will incorporate lessons on safe and responsible mobile technology use into our curriculum. In addition, work is ongoing in schools in developing responsible and global citizens, recognising and respecting children's rights, creating an anti-bullying culture and raising awareness of digital and online safety through Health and Wellbeing.
- Parental Involvement: We encourage parents and carers to discuss safe mobile phone use with their children. Guidance on this will be shared regularly, including new national and local guidance.

Emergency Contacts

In the case of emergency, pupils should contact a member of staff who will facilitate communication with parents or carer. Parents who need to make urgent contact with their child should contact the school office. Any unwell pupils or required absences should follow the school procedures and protocols.

Exceptions

Exceptions to this policy may be made for pupils with specific needs, such as young carers or those with medical conditions. The parameters of any exceptional arrangement will be agreed on by all relevant stakeholders and managed on a case-by-case basis.

Legal Aspects

We will adhere to all relevant legislation regarding mobile phone use, including laws related to data protection and online safety.

Taking photographs, videos or audio recordings of an individual without their permission may be regarded as a breach of that person's rights, and may, in some instances, be regarded as an offence by the police.

Should images of recordings be uploaded onto social networks without permission from the data subject, the individual should be asked to remove this as part of the normal behaviour policy of the school.

Staff should not handle the mobile phones – the pupil puts their mobile phone in their bag/box and retrieves it so they remain responsible for the device.

The Council does not accept responsibility for any damage to mobile phones whilst on school property.

Consequences

- If any phone/device found on display or switched on, the pupil will be reminded immediately by a member of staff to switch it off and put it in their school bag/box.
- Any pupil using a phone/device to photograph or record any other pupil or member of staff will have the phone removed until the end of the school day. Where appropriate the parent will be contacted and asked to collect it.
- Any pupil found to be using a mobile phone/device to bully or harass others within the school grounds will be disciplined in line with the school's anti bullying policy and, if applicable, reported to the police.
- If a pupil refuses to comply with the school policy then parents/carers will be informed immediately to come and collect the device.
- Spot checks where a pupil claims not to have a mobile phone will take place and could be followed up by a phone call to the parent.
- In cases of extreme misuse where criminal events have been recorded using a mobile device, this immediately becomes a police matter and the school should place the device in the hands of the police

without trying to access the contents. School staff cannot access content on a pupil's mobile phone without the pupil's consent, or the consent of their parent or carer where the pupil does not have capacity to consent.

Further Links

- <https://www.gov.scot/publications/mobile-phone-guidance-scotlands-schools/>
- <https://www.adesscot/Content/UserGenerated/file/RRlearningbeyondboundaries1.pdf>
- https://www.adesscot/Content/UserGenerated/file/InsightsfromYoungPeopleandTeachersinScotland_LearningBeyondBoundaries_TheStaffCollegeandADES_final301024.pdf
- <https://www.channel4.com/programmes/swiped-the-school-that-banned-smartphones>
- TED talk – <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DpiSEY3pe7U>
- Get Safe Online
 - <https://www.getsafeonline.org/personal/article-category/safeguarding-children/>
 - Health and Wellbeing resources
 - <https://sway.cloud.microsoft/8m9tr0cQVAE5mKOC?ref=Link>
 - <https://sway.cloud.microsoft/SpUNDeYyeo8YblbH?ref=Link&loc=mysways>

This policy will be shared with pupils, parents and carers annually.