



WyreForestSchool

Communication Specialist

Mobile Phone Policy

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Signature:			

Contents

1. Introduction and aims	2
2. Roles and responsibilities	2
3. Use of mobile phones by staff	2
4. Use of mobile phones by pupils.....	4
5. Use of mobile phones by parents/carers, volunteers and visitors.....	5
6. Loss, theft or damage	5
7. Monitoring and review.....	5

1. Introduction and aims

At WFS we recognise that mobile phones, including smart technology eg: smart watches, that we will refer to as mobile phones, are an important part of everyday life for our pupils, parents/carers and staff, as well as the wider school community.

Our policy aims to:

- Promote, and set an example for, safe and responsible phone use
- Set clear guidelines for the use of mobile phones for pupils, staff, parents/carers and volunteers
- Support the school's other policies, especially those related to child protection and behaviour

This policy also aims to address some of the challenges posed by mobile phones in school, such as:

- Risks to child protection
- Data protection issues
- Potential for lesson disruption
- Risk of theft, loss, or damage
- Appropriate use of technology in the classroom

2. Roles and responsibilities

2.1 Staff

All staff (including teachers, support staff and supply staff) are responsible for enforcing this policy.

Volunteers, or anyone else otherwise engaged by the school, must alert a member of staff if they witness, or are aware of, a breach of this policy.

The headteacher is responsible for monitoring the policy every 3 years, reviewing it, and holding staff and pupils accountable for its implementation.

3. Use of mobile phones by staff

3.1 Personal mobile phones

Staff (including volunteers, contractors and anyone else otherwise engaged by the school) are not permitted to make or receive calls, or send texts, while children are present. Use of personal mobile phones must be restricted to non-contact time, and to areas of the school where pupils are not present (such as the staffroom).

There may be circumstances in which it's appropriate for a member of staff to have use of their phone during contact time. For instance:

- For emergency contact by their child, or their child's school
- In the case of acutely ill dependents or family members

The headteacher will decide on a case-by-basis whether to allow for special arrangements.

If special arrangements are not deemed necessary, school staff can use the school office number 01562 827785 as a point of emergency contact.

3.2 Data protection

Staff must not use their personal mobile phones to process personal data, or any other confidential school information, including entering such data into generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools such as chatbots (e.g. ChatGPT and Google Bard).

3.3 Safeguarding

Staff must refrain from giving their personal contact details to parents/carers or pupils, including connecting through social media and messaging apps.

Staff must avoid publicising their contact details on any social media platform or website, to avoid unwanted contact by parents/carers or pupils.

Staff must not use their mobile phones to take photographs or recordings of pupils, their work, or anything else which could identify a pupil. If it's necessary to take photos or recordings as part of a lesson/school trip/activity, this must be done using school equipment.

3.4 Using personal mobiles for work purposes

In some circumstances, it may be appropriate for staff to use personal mobile phones for work. Such circumstances may include, but aren't limited to:

- Emergency evacuations
- Supervising off-site trips if no school SIM is available
- Supervising residential visits

In these circumstances, staff will:

- Use their mobile phones in an appropriate and professional manner, in line with our staff code of conduct
- Not use their phones to take photographs or recordings of pupils, their work, or anything else which could identify a pupil
- Refrain from using their phones to contact parents/carers. If necessary, contact must be made via the school office

3.5 Work phones

Some members of staff are provided with a mobile phone by the school for work purposes.

Only authorised staff are permitted to use school phones, and access to the phone must not be provided to anyone without authorisation.

Staff must:

- Only use phone functions for work purposes, including making/receiving calls, sending/receiving emails or other communications, or using the internet
- Ensure that communication or conduct linked to the device is appropriate and professional at all times, in line with our staff code of conduct.

- Whilst carrying out personal care phones must be left outside BMA's.

3.6 Sanctions

Staff that fail to adhere to this policy may face disciplinary action.

See the school's staff disciplinary policy for more information.

4. Use of mobile phones by pupils

Following guidance from the DfE 'Mobile Phones in Schools' February 2024, mobile phone usage by pupils is prohibited at Wyre Forest School, this includes the use of smart watches. The exceptions to this rule are:

1. Pupils who travel independently to school and require a mobile phone to keep them safe whilst in the community.
2. Pupils who use mobile devices whilst on school transport to support self-regulation.
3. Sixth form pupils who are preparing for adulthood and life after school.

In these cases, devices must be handed to staff on arrival to school. Class teacher will keep them locked away securely until the end of the school day.

In sixth form pathway, pupil's phones will be kept securely in their lockers. At times, sixth form pupils may be allowed to use their phones under the direction and supervision of staff. Phones must be placed face up on the desk in clear view of staff. Phone cameras and social media must not be used.

These pupils must adhere to the school's acceptable use agreement for mobile phone use (see appendix 1).

Phones must not be taken on off-site visits.

The school accepts no responsibility for mobile phones that are lost, damaged or stolen on school premises or transport or while pupils are travelling to and from school.

4.1 Sanctions

- If a pupil is in breach of this policy, the phone may be confiscated and kept securely. (Schools are permitted to confiscate phones from pupils under sections 91 and 94 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006). This will be recorded on BROMCOM. Parents will be called by the class teacher to collect the phone.
- If staff have concerns about unsafe use of mobile phones, this must be recorded on CPOMS and referred to SLT or the safeguarding team where appropriate. If there is a report of inappropriate behaviour or a suspicion of inappropriate content on a phone, SLT may decide to search the phone. The search will be carried out jointly by the Headteacher and DSL, as per our Searching, screening and confiscation policy. Staff have the power to search pupils' phones, as set out in the DfE's guidance on searching, screening and confiscation. The DfE guidance allows a search of a pupil's phone if there is reason to believe the phone contains pornographic images, or if it is being/has been used to commit an offence or cause personal injury.
- Certain types of conduct, bullying or harassment can be classified as criminal conduct. The school takes such conduct extremely seriously and will involve the police or other agencies as appropriate.

Such conduct includes, but is not limited to:

- Sexting (consensual and non-consensual sharing nude or semi-nude images or videos)

- Upskirting
- Threats of violence or assault
- Abusive calls, emails, social media posts or texts directed at someone on the basis of someone's ethnicity, religious beliefs or sexual orientation

5. Use of mobile phones by parents/carers, volunteers and visitors

Parents, carers, volunteers and visitors are not permitted to use phones whilst on school site. This includes when dropping off and collecting children. This means:

- Not taking pictures or recordings of pupils, unless it's a public event (such as a school fair), or of their own child
- Using any photographs or recordings for personal use only, and not posting on social media without consent
- Not using phones in lessons, or when working with pupils

Parents/carers, visitors and volunteers will be informed of the rules for mobile phone use when they sign in at reception or attend a public event at school.

Parents/carers must use the school office as the first point of contact if they need to get in touch with their child during the school day. They must not try to contact their child on his/her personal mobile during the school day.

6. Loss, theft or damage

Pupils bringing phones to school must ensure that phones are appropriately labelled and are stored securely when not in use.

Pupils must secure their phones as much as possible, including using passwords or pin codes to protect access to the phone's functions. Staff must also secure their personal phones, as well as any work phone provided to them. Failure by staff to do so could result in data breaches.

The school accepts no responsibility for mobile phones that are lost, damaged or stolen on school premises or transport, during school visits or trips, or while pupils are travelling to and from school.

Lost phones should be returned to school office. The school will then attempt to contact the owner.

7. Monitoring and review

The school is committed to ensuring that this policy has a positive impact of pupils' education, behaviour and welfare. When reviewing the policy, the school will take into account:

- Feedback from parents/carers and pupils
- Feedback from teachers
- Records of behaviour and safeguarding incidents
- Relevant advice from the Department for Education, the local authority or other relevant organisations