



# Hayfield Cross

Church of England Primary School

## Mobile Phone & Smart Devices Policy

Written by:	Richard Albert
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*Remember that I commanded you to be strong and brave. So don't be afraid. The Lord your God will be with you everywhere you go<sup>3</sup> (Joshua 1:9)*

As the harvest grows from the soil, Hayfield Cross came to life in 2015. From nothing, we have grown at the heart of our new community, persevering through challenge into a flourishing school. Guided by our Christian values the seeds of Joy, Integrity and Fellowship are planted as we instil this pioneering spirit in our children, challenging them through exciting learning to aspire to greatness in all that they do.

# Hayfield Cross Church of England School

## Mobile Phone & Smart Devices Policy

*Stay with me, and do not fear. For he who seeks my life seeks your life. But you shall be in safekeeping with me. (Samuel 22:23)*

### Introduction

At Hayfield Cross Church of England School, the welfare, protection and safety of every child in our care is of paramount importance, and we take our responsibility to safeguard children seriously. We have procedures in place which we ask everyone to respect, to help promote the safety of the children in our care.

Please note that for the purposes of this policy, the term 'mobile phone' also covers 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; whilst the term 'camera' refers to anyone that can capture images or videos.

This policy applies to all children, staff, volunteers and visitors and should be read in conjunction with our safeguarding policies. This policy forms part of our safeguarding practice.

### Mobile Phones

We recognise the role that mobile phones play in today's world, but we are equally aware of the potential risk that may be posed to children and adults.

The enhanced functions of many mobile phones are of most concern and are most susceptible to misuse. Misuse includes the taking and distribution of indecent images, exploitation and bullying. Mobile phones can also cause an unnecessary distraction during learning time/the working day and can be intrusive when used in the company of others.

When mobile phones are misused, it can impact 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 everyone.

It can be 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.

### Staff, Supply Staff & Volunteers

We believe our adults working with our children should be completely attentive during their hours of work to ensure all children in the school receive the best quality care and education. Mobile phones must not be used during working hours.

Mobile phones must not be on in classrooms or on the playground. Staff must not carry personal mobile phones while working. Mobile phones in classrooms must be kept in locked drawers/cupboards. This protects staff from being distracted from their work and from allegations of inappropriate use.

Mobiles may only be used on a designated break and only in a child free area of the school. Only a school mobile phone should be used on outings, however, in the event that this is not available staff may use mobiles on outings for school emergency use only.

Mobiles must never be used to take photographs of any of the children or any area of the school or the work or any member of staff at work.

Staff must give the school telephone number to their next of kin in case it is necessary for the staff member to be contacted, in an emergency, during working hours.

Staff must never store parents', carers' or children's telephone numbers on their mobile phones and staff must never give their private mobile number to parents, carers or children.

Failure by staff to comply with the mobile phone policy guidelines could result in disciplinary action.

It is the responsibility of all members of staff to be vigilant and report any concerns to the Headteacher, a DSL or a member of the SLT.

All concerns will be taken seriously, logged and investigated appropriately (see allegations against a member of staff policy).

## Visitors

We ask all visitors (including Parents & Carers) not to use mobile phones in the school from 08:30am until 3.20pm. This includes all uses including, texting and photographing. Visitors and supply staff are not allowed to use mobile phones on the school site and phones must be kept in their bags. Mobile phones can be used in the staff room. If a visitor, parent or carer is seen using their mobile phone, they will be politely asked to turn it off/desist from using it/remove it from children's view.

It is recognised that many parents and carers may wish to use their mobile phone as a camera/video device to record their child at special performances e.g. class assemblies, concerts, etc. On these occasions the use of a phone is permitted for photographing/videoing only; images should only be taken by parents and carers if they are of their own child and that the use of these images is for their own personal use and must not be uploaded for any internet use including Facebook or any other social networking sites.

## Children

Children who walk to and from school, without an accompanying adult, may carry a mobile phone for safety. In these cases, children may bring a mobile phone to the school but must deposit it with their teacher at the start of the day. It is then stored in a locked box and collected from the teacher at the end of the day.

Parents and carers need to be aware that whilst there are obvious benefits to children having a mobile phone in terms of personal safety there are also some associated risks (see Appendix 1) such as potential for theft, bullying and inappropriate contact, including grooming by unsuitable persons.

We would also like to alert parents and carers to the risks that using a mobile phone has while walking to and from school. Children who are concentrating on using their phone can have reduced general safety awareness which may result in road accidents and/or injury if a child is not paying attention to their surroundings.

Children are not allowed to bring mobile phones into any other areas of the school or on school trips.

## Loss, Theft or Damage

Whilst the school will take every reasonable care, it accepts no responsibility whatsoever for theft, loss, damage or health effects (potential or actual) relating to mobile phones. It is the responsibility of parents and carers to ensure mobile phones are properly insured. It is recommended that children's phones are security marked and password protected.

## Misuse of mobile phones or failure to comply with school procedures

Any mobile phones discovered that have been brought into the school and not handed in to the office will be confiscated immediately and our normal behaviour policy followed. Parents or carers will be asked to collect the mobile phone from the school office.

If a member of staff has any suspicion that a mobile phone brought into school by a child has unsuitable material stored on it, the child will be required to hand over the phone immediately to a member of staff and parents or carers will be asked to collect it from a member of the senior leadership team. In circumstances where there is a suspicion that the material on the mobile phone may provide evidence relating to a criminal offence, the phone will be handed over to the school's safeguarding lead or to the Headteacher for further investigation and the parent or carer asked to collect it from them.

## Cameras

Photographs taken for the purpose of recording a child or group of children participating in activities or celebrating their achievements is an effective form of recording their progression in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 and 2. However, it is essential that photographs are taken and stored appropriately to safeguard the children in our care (and also in line with permissions given by parents and carers as part of our GDPR procedures).

Only the designated school camera and iPads are to be used to take any photo within the setting or on outings. Images taken on these cameras must be deemed suitable without putting the child/children in any compromising positions that could cause embarrassment or distress. Images taken must only be downloaded onto school laptops and computers.

Under no circumstances must cameras of any kind be taken into the bathrooms without prior consultation with the Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher(s). If photographs need to be taken in a bathroom i.e. photographs of the children washing their hands for display purposes, then the Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher(s) must be asked first and staff be supervised whilst carrying out this kind of activity. At all times the camera must be placed in a prominent place where it can be seen.

## Smart Watches

Smart watches are not permitted. As with mobile phones, if these come to school, they must be deposited in the locked box in the classroom.

## School Mobile Phones

A school mobile phone will be issued to trip leaders and to people carrying out specific functions for the school. Carrying mobile phones on trips can help to ensure safety for all members of the school or centre party. However, it is important that the following guidance is adhered to in order to keep children safe and protect staff and volunteers from accusations of inappropriate use:

The party leader should carry the office mobile phone for use in contacting other staff members or volunteers on the trip, contacting the school or contacting the emergency services. If the school mobile phone is unavailable (e.g. if another trip is on the same day) then the party leader should follow the advice below for staff use of personal mobile phones.

Members of staff and volunteers may carry their own, personal mobile phones within the following guidelines:

- Personal phones should only be used to contact staff members or volunteers on the trip, the school site or emergency services. If possible, these calls should be made away from children.
- Personal phones should not be used for any purpose other than school business for the duration of a trip. This means that personal calls or texts should not be made or accepted. On residential trips this will apply while the member of staff or volunteer is on duty. Staff and volunteers should ensure that next of kin are provided with the school site number so that in an emergency the school site is contacted and will make contact with the relevant person through the party leader.
- If it becomes necessary for a member of staff or volunteer to make a personal call or text, then the party leader or another member of staff should be informed and take responsibility for the children in the group while the call or text is made away from sight and sound of any child.
- Personal mobile phones, cameras or devices must not be used under any circumstances to take photographs or videos of children.
- Volunteers may be asked to take photographs of their group using a school device – this must be passed back to the party leader at the end of the trip.
- The party leader may ask volunteers to provide them with their mobile phone number for the duration of the trip so that they can be contacted in case of emergency. The party leader undertakes to ensure that these numbers are not held on any mobile device after the end of the trip.

It is advised that if the party leader needs to use their own mobile phone to contact anyone during the trip they do so by pre-dialling 141 (some mobile providers use a different prefix – staff are advised to check this with their provider) before the number so that their own number remains protected.

## **Appendix 1**

### **Examples of Misuse of Mobile Phones**

- Online bullying by text, image and email messaging
- Taking and sharing inappropriate pictures
- Access to inappropriate websites bypassing the school filtering system
- General disruption to learning caused by children accessing phones in lessons
- Making disrespectful comments, misrepresenting events or making defamatory remarks about teachers or other children
- Children posting material on social network sites with no thought to the risks to their personal reputation and sometimes with the deliberate intention of causing harm to others
- The deliberate engineering of situations where people's reactions are filmed or photographed in order to humiliate, embarrass and intimidate by publishing to a wider audience such as on Facebook or YouTube
- Publishing photographs of vulnerable children, who may be on a child protection plan, where this may put them at additional risk
- The use of a mobile phone for 'sexting' (the deliberate taking and sending of provocative images or text messages)