Winterbourne Earls CE Primary School
Mobile Phone Policy

Date: January 2025
Review Date: January 2027

Rationale
Winterbourne Earls is committed to ensuring the safety of all children in its care. We recognise the importance of mobile phones in school for communication purposes, but are aware that casual or inappropriate use of mobile phones in the school could pose a risk to children and adults.

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 mobiles 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. The use of all mobile phones is therefore limited. 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.
This policy applies to all staff, volunteers and visitors.

Please note that for the purposes of this policy, the term 'mobile phone' also covers any electronic device such as a Smartwatch with the capacity to be used as a form of communication, either through the device itself or any applications stored on the device.

Staff Personal Mobile Phones

- We recognise that safe two factor authentication for CPOMS is key so that sharing of information is controlled and monitored. This authentication can only be carried out via a mobile phone or i-pad allocated solely to a staff member. The practicalities of accessing and setting up specifically allocated i-pads outweighs the controlled use of personal mobile phones. So, in order to ensure staff can report safeguarding concerns as quickly as possible, authentication codes need to be accessed via each staff member's mobile phone. We trust all staff to log responses to safeguarding concerns promptly and always on the day of the incident. In this specific case, staff need to be away from other children in a central area out of class to use their phone to authenticate on a Chromebook/Laptop to log their concern. Afterwards, phones used for authentication need to be placed either in the teacher's desk drawer or out of sight in a locker/bag.

- Staff can carry personal mobile phones whilst away from their class in communal areas or at break times. Phones can be stored in desks provided they are face down and on silent or in bags/lockers; this protects staff from being distracted from their work and from allegations of inappropriate use.

- When staff have a break time during their working hours, they may use their mobile phones during these times, but this must not be in an area where children are present.

- In an emergency, staff needing to make a personal call during a lesson or whilst on duty should first obtain agreement from the Head Teacher, ensure that adequate cover has been put in place and make the call in an area not used by children.

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

- A personal mobile phone should be taken on school journey outings in accordance with guidance – see 'The Use of Mobile Phones on School Trips' section below.

- Camera or video functions on personal mobile phones **must not be used** in the school by staff to take images of children under any circumstances. I-pads or school digital cameras will be used to take photographs or videos in school and on trips.

- Staff should not be required to make work calls on their own phones, either mobile or landline, however, if this should be necessary then they are advised to use the prefix 141/change their own phone settings to hide/conceal their mobile number, before dialling the recipient's number to ensure their own number is protected. In such cases, an attempt to call from the school office landline should be made first.

- 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 (unless they are friends outside of school.)

- Failure by staff to comply with the mobile phone policy guidelines could result in disciplinary action. Any staff member concerned about any adult's misuse of a mobile phone in school should report this to the Headteacher informally and then formally on a Low Level Concern sheet.

Children

- Any mobile phones discovered to have been brought into the school by a child will be taken away immediately to the office. Parents/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 pupil 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/the head teacher for further investigation.

Children are not allowed to carry mobile phones on any school trips.

Visitors and Parents/Carers

- The school will display a notice advising visitors and parents/carers that mobile phones should not be used in any area of the school site, except to take emergency calls. If a visitor or parent/carer is seen using their mobile phone, s/he will be asked politely to turn it off/stop using it/remove it from children's view. We appreciate that parents/carers on their phones waiting to pick up their child may give the wrong message to the child excited to recount their day.

- It is recognised that many parents/carers would like to use their mobile phone as a camera/video device to record their child at special performances in school e.g. nativity performances, music concerts, etc. Some parents, however, have not given permission for images of their children to be taken and/or used on the website/newsletters. During performances, we would prefer parents to enjoy watching their children and not use their phones for taking photographs or videos. However, should parents still wish to record any part of a performance, they need to acknowledge that by taking images of their own child, images of children whose parents do not give permission could be inadvertently included. We then need to assure that the use of these images is for parents' own personal use and the school, therefore, is obliged to warn parents of the legal and safeguarding risks of publishing such photographs on any platform. The placing of any photographs of children on social media is dangerous and parents may be in breach of the Data Protection Act if they upload photos of other children without the explicit consent of that child's parents. A member of staff will always remind parents/carers before a performance of this legal responsibility and any parents wishing to photograph/record their child will be required to sign to say that this is understood. Staff will always ensure parents can take photos of their child after or outside of the concert/performance and post pictures on Seesaw and/or the website.

- Photographs of any sort should not be taken during any church service.

The Use of Mobile Phones on School Trips

The school recognises that the use of mobile phones on school trips can be beneficial in ensuring safety for all members of the school 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 his/her personal mobile phone for use in contacting other staff members or volunteers on the trip, contacting the school or contacting the emergency services.

- 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 or emergency services. If possible these calls should be made away from pupils.
- Personal phones should not be used for any purpose other than school business for the duration of a day trip. This means that personal calls or texts should not be made or accepted. On residential trips, staff or volunteers will need to keep in contact with their family with calls made where appropriate in the evenings away from the children. Staff and volunteers should ensure that next of kin/childcare providers are given the school office number so that in an emergency the school 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 pupils in the group while the call or text is made away from sight and sound of any pupils.
- Mobile phones must not be used under any circumstances to take photographs or videos of pupils. Volunteers are acting as staff members for the duration of the trip and therefore must not take photos or videos of any pupils, including their own child, using a mobile phone or any other mobile device, e.g. cameras or i-pads, without the express permission of the party leader. Volunteers may be asked to take photographs of their group using a school camera or i-pad – this must be passed back to the party leader at the end of the trip.
- The party leader may ask volunteers to provide him/her 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 or not held on any mobile device or in any written form after the end of the trip.
- It is advised that if the party leader is using his/her own mobile phone, then if they need 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 (or change the visibility of the mobile phone number in your phone settings) so that their own number remains protected.
- If any member of staff is required to drive in a working capacity, he/she must not use his/her phone whilst driving.

Appendix 1 provides guidance for volunteers on school trips and should be given to those volunteers prior to the trip.

Appendix 1

Use of mobile phones - guidance for volunteers on school trips

Thank you for volunteering to help on our school trip. During the trip you are acting as a voluntary member of staff with regard to the safety and well-being of the children in your group and we therefore ask that you follow the guidelines below in accordance with the school's mobile phone policy.

Personal phones should only be used to contact staff members or volunteers on the trip, the school or emergency services. If possible, these calls should be made away from pupils.

- Personal phones must not be used for any purpose other than school business for the duration of a day trip. This means that personal calls or texts must not be made or accepted. Staff and volunteers should ensure that the next of kin is provided with the school number so that in an emergency the school 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, then the party leader or another member of staff should be informed and take responsibility for the pupils in the group while the call or text is made away from sight and sound of any pupils.

- Mobile phones must not be used under any circumstances to take photographs or videos of pupils. Volunteers are acting as staff members for the duration of the trip and therefore must not take photos or videos of any pupils, including their own child, using a mobile phone or any other mobile device, e.g. cameras or i-pads, without the express permission of the party leader. Volunteers may be asked to take photographs of their group using a school camera or i-pad – 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 or not held on any mobile device or in any written form after the end of the trip.

- It is advised that if the party leader needs 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.

If you have any questions regarding these guidelines please speak to the Head Teacher.

Thank you for your support and co-operation to ensure the safety of all the pupils.