



Mobile Phone Policy

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BANGOR CENTRAL INTEGRATED PRIMARY SCHOOL

MOBILE PHONE/DEVICE POLICY

*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, including, but not exclusive to, smart watches, iPad, tablets etc.*

Introduction

This policy is to provide guidance and information on some of the issues around children's use and misuse of mobile phones at Bangor Central Integrated Primary School. It will clearly set out the school's expectations and rules around the use of 'mobile phones' in the school setting.

It is the enhanced functions of many mobile phones which are of most concern and makes them susceptible to misuse. Misuse includes the taking and distribution of indecent/inappropriate images, exploitation and bullying.

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 everyone. As it can be difficult to detect when such devices are present or being used, particularly in relation to enhanced functions such as cameras and recording, any device with internet/communication connectivity is included.

Examples of Misuse:

- Online bullying by text, image or 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
- General distraction from work caused by staff accessing phones during working hours
- Making disrespectful comments, misrepresenting events or making defamatory remarks about staff 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, photographed or audio recorded in order to humiliate, embarrass and intimidate by publishing to a wider audience such as on Facebook or YouTube
- Publishing photographs of vulnerable children
- The use of a mobile phone for 'sexting' (the deliberate taking and sending of provocative images or text messages)

Given the potential for misuse, it is therefore important that as a school we take a clear decision on our response to the use of mobile phones, in school and that this policy is made clear to children, parents, staff and all visitors to the school.

As detailed at the start of this policy, this includes smart watches and all other devices capable of sending/receiving texts/communicating and/or recording.

Use of Mobile Phones in School by Children

For many young people today the ownership of a mobile phone is considered a necessary and vital part of their social life. There are a growing number of primary aged children who now have personal ownership of a mobile phone, including smart phones with internet capability, an integrated camera and video and/or audio recording capability.

The Department of Education, states in **Circular 2024/14** that;

'No pupils' personal mobile devices on the school premises - this type of approach is most suitable for primary school aged children and is the Department's recommended approach for primary schools (with exceptional circumstances permitted on a case-by-case basis).'

With that in mind the **Acceptable Use Guidelines** in Bangor Central Integrated Primary School are as follows:

NO child may bring a personal mobile phone, or other device with connectivity, to school.

If a child brings a phone/device to school, the agreed procedure is:

- The phone will be handed over to a member of staff who will send it to the office for safe keeping during the day.
- Parents will be notified, and it can then be collected at the end of the day from the office by a parent.
- Parents are informed that the school will not be held responsible for the security of a mobile phone brought into school.

*Application forms for applying with **exceptional** circumstances, can be collected from the school office and will be reviewed by the Principal or Vice Principal on a case-to-case basis. The Senior Leadership Team and/or Board of Governors will be consulted, if necessary.*

Dealing with Misuse

Parents are notified that appropriate action will be taken against those who are in breach of the acceptable use guidelines. In the case of repeated misuse, the parent/carer will be required to attend a meeting at the school.

In acts of misuse which cause serious harassment, alarm or distress to another child or member of staff, school leadership will consider the impact on the victim in deciding the sanction(s).

If images of other children or of a teacher have been taken, the phone will not be returned to the child until the images have been removed by the child in the presence of a Senior Leader & parent/guardian.

In some instances, acts of misuse may have to be reported to the PSNI. If required, evidence of an offence/ breach of Safeguarding or Child Protection will be preserved by confiscation of the device and keeping it safe until examined or by taking photographs of the screen.

Should you/your child need to communicate with each other during the school day this can be done via the school office - 028 91 460513

Use of Personal Mobile Phones in School by Staff

Staff are not permitted to make/receive personal calls/texts during contact time with children. If emergency contact is needed this should be made via the school office or they must ensure cover for their class and step out of the room.

- Staff should have their phones on silent or switched off and out of sight (e.g. in a drawer, handbag or pocket) during class time. Smart watches and other personal devices should be on aeroplane mode or silent during class times so as not to distract from work. Mobile phones should not be used in a space where children are present (e.g. classroom, playground) unless it is a school emergency.
- Use of personal phones (incl. receiving/sending texts and emails) should be limited to non-contact time when no children are present e.g. in office areas, staff room, empty classrooms. Should there be exceptional circumstances (e.g. sick relative, waiting call from doctor), then staff should make a Senior Leader aware of this and can have their phone in case of having to receive an emergency call.
- In exceptional circumstances, and by agreement with a member of SLT, a teacher may use a personal device to play music for a lesson/activity if this cannot be planned for and carried out using the school iPad/interactive whiteboard.
- If suitable technology cannot be used on the landline to support a member of staff with hearing loss/impairment then, by agreement with SLT, the member of staff can use a personal mobile. Other Acceptable Use procedures should be adhered to.
- It is also advised that staff security protect access to functions on their phone.
- A personal mobile phone may be taken on school trips in accordance with guidance - see 'The Use of Mobile Phones on Trips' section below.
- Camera or video functions on personal mobile phones must not be used by staff to take images of children in the school setting under any circumstances.
- Staff are not required to make work calls on their own phones, either mobile or landline, however, in some circumstances, if this should be necessary then they should use the prefix 141 before dialling the recipient's number or remove 'show caller ID' to ensure their own number is protected.
- Staff must never store parents', carers or children's telephone numbers on their personal mobile phones and staff must never give their private mobile number to parents, carers or children. (The exception to this is where a relationship exists with that parent outside of 'school' parameters.)

Staff should report any usage of mobile devices that causes concern to SLT.

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

Use of Mobile Phones by Visitors, Parents and Carers

- Visitors are not allowed to use mobile phones in the school building in the presence of children. Mobile phones can be used in the staff room or resource rooms when children are not present.
- If a visitor is seen using their mobile phone, any staff member can, and should, ask them politely to turn it off/desist from using it/remove it from children's view.
- The school recognises that children may inadvertently be included in photographs/recordings by another parent at a school performance eg: assemblies, concerts etc. We have a duty to warn parents and carers of the legal and safeguarding risks of publishing such content on any social media platform before any event begins. The placing of any photographs of children on social media may be in breach of the Data Protection Act if they are uploaded photos/recordings of other children without the explicit consent of that child's parents.

Mobile Phones used for Medical Purposes

Some children or adults may have a medical condition which is managed by an app on a mobile device e.g. diabetes, or they may have a medical need which means that a phone should always be readily available to ring for emergency services. In these cases, it is permissible for a phone to be switched on during the day and out of a bag, but all other acceptable use requirements apply.

Use of Mobile Phones on School Trips - Staff & Volunteers

- Personal phones must not be used for any purpose other than school business for the duration of a day trip. On residential trips this will apply while the member of staff is in the company of children. This means that personal calls or texts must not be made or accepted.
- 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 children in the group while the call or text is made away from sight and sound of children.
- Personal mobile phones may be used to take photos of trip activities but must be downloaded to a school device at the end of each day. Staff must then delete all photographs from their mobile devices. Volunteers are asked to set an example for the duration of the trip and therefore must not take photos or videos of any children, including their own child, using a mobile phone or any other mobile device, e.g. cameras or iPad, without the express permission of the party leader. 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 personal mobile device after the end of the trip.

- If school need to contact parents whilst on a school trip they should do so using the school mobile phone. If this is not possible staff should use their own mobile phone pre-dialling 141 (some mobile providers use a different prefix - volunteers are advised to check this with their provider) before the number so that their own number remains protected.
- Where parents are accompanying trips, they are informed not to make contact with other parents (via calls, text, email or social networking) during the trip.

Mobile Phones Outside of School

- School recognises that it is the responsibility of a parent/guardian to decide when to purchase their child a mobile phone.
- It is also the responsibility of a parent/guardian to monitor their child's phone usage and the apps they use. Below is information regarding the appropriate age for the use of social communication apps.
- Communication on such apps should be monitored regularly by parents and is not the responsibility of the school. However, should the effects of this communication begin to impact negatively in school, the Principal/SLT/Board of Governors will decide if it is necessary to intervene.
- Further information for parents can be found at the links below:

<https://smartphonefreechildhood.co.uk>

<https://delaysmartphones.org.uk>

<https://healthprofessionalsforsafeerscreens.org>

This policy supports the Anti bullying, Child Protection, Safeguarding, and Internet/E-Safety Policies.

APPS AND THEIR AGE RATINGS

13+		16+	
 Facebook	 Snapchat	 WhatsApp	
 Instagram	 Twitter		
 TikTok	 Kik		
 YouNow	 Yubo		
 House Party	 Monkey		
		17+	18+
		 Sarahah	 MeetMe
		 YOLO	 LiveMe