

MOBILE PHONE POLICY

Policy

This policy outlines the appropriate use of mobile phones on our school site.

Purpose

This policy applies to all individuals who have access to personal mobile phones on site. This includes staff, volunteers, governors, children, young people, parents, carers, visitors and contractors. This list is not exhaustive.

This policy should also be read in relation to the following documentation:

- Safeguarding Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Guidance on the Use of Photographic Images and Videos of Children in Schools

Rationale

The staff and governors of New Cangle CP School recognise that many students and staff own a mobile phone. We also recognise that some parents/guardians request their child brings a mobile phone to school for safety and security reasons on the way to and from school. Personal communication through mobile technologies is an accepted part of everyday life but such technologies need to be used well.

Teaching and learning needs to be conducted in an environment free from unnecessary distractions or disruptions. Therefore the school strongly discourages the bringing of mobile phones to school by pupils. The school is prepared to allow Year 5 and Year 6 pupils to bring mobile phones on the premises but only within the parameters of the policy as stated below.

Aims

To inform all members of our school community about the appropriate use of mobile phones at our school and to outline the procedures and processes of this policy.

Personal safety and security

Our school accepts that parents/guardians give their children mobile phones to protect them from everyday risks involving personal security and safety. There is also increasing concern about children walking to and from school. It is acknowledged that providing a child with a mobile phone gives parents reassurance that they can contact their child if they need to speak to them urgently.

Responsibility

- It is the responsibility of pupils who bring mobile phones to school to abide by the guidelines outlined in this policy.
- The decision to provide a mobile phone to their children should be made by the parents or guardians. It is incumbent upon parents to understand the capabilities of the phone and the potential use/misuse of those capabilities.
- Parents/Guardians should be aware if their child takes a mobile phone to school it is assumed household or other insurance will provide the required cover in the event of loss or damage. The school cannot accept responsibility for any loss, damage or costs incurred due to its use.

- Parents are reminded that in cases of emergency, the school office remains a vital and appropriate point of contact and can ensure your child is reached quickly and assisted in any relevant way.

Guidelines

Staff

- Except in urgent or exceptional situations and where agreed with the Headteacher, mobile phone use is not permitted during teaching time, while on duty or when in the presence of students. It is advised that staff set security to protect access to their phone.
- In accordance with the Acceptable Use Policy staff should not use personal devices for photography in school. Only school cameras or devices are to be used.
- Staff should report any usage of mobile devices that causes them concern to the Headteacher.
- Mobile phones should not be used to make contact parents during school trips – all relevant communications should be made via the school office.

Pupils

- In general, pupils should not bring valuable items to school, as they can be easily lost or stolen.
- Pupils remain responsible for all of their personal effects whilst at school. When pupils enter the school grounds the school takes no responsibility for mobile phones. Mobile phones are brought to school entirely at the owner's risk. The school accepts no responsibility for replacing lost, stolen or damaged mobile phones.
- There are no reasons why a pupil needs to have in their possession or use a mobile phone during the school day.
- If pupils bring a mobile phone into school then the phone must be handed in, switched off, to the class teacher first thing in the morning and collected by the pupil at home time, (the phone is left at the owner's risk as class teachers do not have lockable drawers in their classrooms).
- If pupils do bring their mobile phone to school, it should be clearly marked with their name and have security settings to prevent access by other users.

Parents

While we would prefer parents not to use their mobile phones while at school, we recognise that this would be impossible to regulate and that many parents see their phones as an essential means of communication at all times however we would ask that:

- Parents' usage of mobile phones, whilst on the school site is courteous and appropriate to the school environment.
- We allow parents to photograph or video school events such as shows or sports day using their mobile phones – **but insist that parents to not publish images (e.g. on social networking sites) that include any children other than their own.** Please refer to Guidance on Use of Photographic Images and Videos of children in schools.
- Also 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 or use their phone to take photographs of children.

Volunteers, Visitors, Governors and Contractors

All volunteers, visitors, governors and contractors are expected to follow our mobile phone policy as it relates to staff whilst on the premises.

Acceptable Uses

- Mobile phones should be switched off and handed into their class teacher before morning registration where they will be kept securely (not locked) in the teacher's drawer.
- Parents/Guardians are requested that in cases of emergency they contact the school reception so we are aware of any potential issue and make the necessary arrangements.
- While on school premises mobile phones are not used by pupils.

Unacceptable Uses

- Using mobile phones to bully and threaten other students is unacceptable. Cyber bullying will not be tolerated. In some cases it can constitute criminal behaviour. If the use of technology humiliates, embarrasses or causes offence it is unacceptable regardless of whether consent was given.
- Unless express permission is granted, mobile phones should not be used to make calls, send SMS messages, surf the internet, take photos or use any other application during the school day or while on school premises.
- The Bluetooth function of a mobile phone must be switched off at all times and not be used to send images or files to other mobile phones.
- Mobile phones are not to be used or taken into changing rooms or toilets or used in any situation that may cause embarrassment or discomfort to their fellow students, staff or visitors to the school.
- It is forbidden for pupils to "gang up" on another student and use their mobile phones to take videos and pictures to denigrate and humiliate that pupil and then send the pictures to other pupils or upload it to a website for public viewing. This also includes using mobile phones to photograph or film a pupil or member of staff without their consent.
- Should a pupil be seen with a mobile phone on school premises, the phone will be confiscated and parents will be asked to collect the phone at the end of the school day.
- It is unacceptable to take a picture of a member of staff without their permission. In the event that this happens the student will be asked and expected to delete those images.

Theft or Damage

- Pupils should mark their mobile phone clearly with their names.
- Pupils who bring a mobile phone to school should hand it to their class teacher before morning registration.
- The school accepts no responsibility for replacing lost, stolen or damaged mobile phones.
- The school accepts no responsibility for pupils who lose or have their mobile phones stolen while travelling to and from school.

- It is strongly advised that pupils use their passwords/pin numbers to ensure that unauthorised phone calls cannot be made on their phones (e.g. by other pupils, or if stolen). Pupils must keep their password/pin numbers confidential.

Sanctions

- Pupils who are seen with a mobile phone on school premises will have their phone confiscated by staff.
- On the first infringement of this policy the mobile phone would be confiscated by the teacher who will inform the parent/guardian to make a mutually convenient time to collect the phone.
- The school has the right to take action if a pupil is involved in incidents of inappropriate behaviour, that are covered in this policy, when a pupil is out of school and where they involve membership of the school community (examples would be cyber-bullying, use of images or personal information).

Inappropriate Use

Generally, a mobile phone will be used inappropriately if it:

- Disrupts or is likely to disrupt the learning environment or interfere with the operation of the school; or
- Threatens or is likely to threaten the safety or well-being of any person; or is in breach of the law.

Related Technology

The procedures applying to the inappropriate use and security of mobile phones apply equally to the inappropriate use of portable computer games, iPod and similar devices.

Exemptions

Exemptions of this policy can only be approved by the Headteacher and then only in exceptional circumstances.

Disclaimer

Pupils are not required to have a mobile phone and we support parents who make the decision that this is not necessary by ensuring that pupils are able to use the school landlines to contact parents in an emergency. Parents can, of course, contact the school via the landline after 9.00 am to check their child is at school safely. This policy does, however, recognise that some of our pupils do own a mobile phone. Any pupil who brings a mobile phone into school does so at their own risk and the school will not be held responsible for any loss or damage.