

Fenstanton and Hilton Primary School Policy on the Use of Mobile Phones in School

October 2020

Introduction and Aims

At Fenstanton and Hilton Primary School the welfare and well-being of our pupils is paramount. The aim of the Use of Mobile Phone Policy is to allow users to benefit from modern communication technologies, whilst promoting safe and appropriate practice through establishing clear and robust acceptable mobile user guidelines. While mobile phones and personal communication devices are commonplace in today's society, it is recognised that personal mobile phones have the potential to be used inappropriately.

Effective guidance is in place to avoid the use of mobile phones causing unnecessary disruptions and distractions within the workplace, and to ensure effective safeguarding practice is promoted to protect against potential misuse.

Most mobile phones now offer Internet and email access, alongside messaging, camera, video and sound recording. Mobile phones alongside other forms of technology are changing the way and speed in which we communicate. They can provide security and reassurance; however there also associated risks. Safeguarding of children within the school is paramount.

The launch on the NHS Test and Trace App, which is available for those aged sixteen or over to download, has reinforced the need for school's to have a clear policy in place with regards to staff, pupil and visitor use of mobile phones.

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

This guidance should be seen as a safeguard for members of staff, the school and the Local Authority. Staff should understand that failure to comply with the policy is likely to result in the enforcement of the Whistleblowing Policy and associated procedures.

School staff:

Staff may wish to have their personal mobile phones at work for use in case of emergencies, however there is a clear expectation that all personal use is limited to areas and times when there are no children present, or likely to be present.

- The school expects staff to lead by example. Other than in agreed exceptional circumstances, mobile phones should be switched off or on silent and left in a safe place during lesson times.
- Staff should not contact pupils or parents from their personal mobile phone in or out of school time, or give their mobile phone number to pupils or parents. If a member

of staff needs to make telephone contact with a pupil, a school telephone should be used. If teachers are having to work from home during the coronavirus pandemic and need to contact parents/carers to check on their wellbeing staff need to precede any phone call with a blocking system so their phone number is not shared with parents/carers.

- Staff should never send to, or accept from, colleagues or pupils, texts or images that could be viewed as inappropriate
- Staff are not permitted to take photos or videos of pupils. If photos or videos are being taken as part of the school curriculum or for a professional capacity, the school equipment will be used for this. Staff should not allow themselves to be photographed by a pupil(s).
- In circumstances such as outings and off site visits, staff will agree with their Line Manager the appropriate use of personal mobile phones in the event of an emergency.
- Whilst school staff are encouraged to download the NHS Test and Trace App to their personal devices to support contact tracing, there is no need for personal devices to remain switched on or to be carried upon the staff member's person for the purposes of Test and Trace. Staff are advised to pause the app upon arrival at school and store their phone in the usual way. In the event of a school based contact of a staff member testing positive for Covid-19, existing school protocols would enable close contacts to be traced as guided by Public Health. This includes: staff members avoiding skin to skin contact with students; staff members avoiding congregating in areas where social distancing cannot be maintained like staff rooms; seating plans in place being adhered to; children being organised into bubbles and contact between bubbles kept to a minimum; timetabling of staff to work with specific bubbles or individuals being adhered to; staff members who teach across bubbles maintain a distance of 2m from pupils wherever possible; This guidance should be seen as a safeguard for members of staff and the school. Any breach of school policy may result in disciplinary action against that member of staff.

Pupils:

- Pupils are dissuaded from bringing mobile phones to school. Our expectation is that up to Year 5 pupils will be collected from school and do not need to bring a mobile phone to school. If it is deemed necessary for a pupil in Year 5 or 6, due to personal safety on journeys to and from school, to bring a mobile phone to school, then parents/carers need to request permission from the head teacher. If permission is given and a pupil brings a mobile phone to school the school accepts no responsibility for any loss or damage whilst the device is on school premises.
- Where a pupil does bring a mobile phone to school, the phone must remain switched off during the school day and may not be used for any purpose on school premises or during off-site activities, such as swimming or sports. Under no circumstances should there be access to phones during the school day or phones

left in pupils' bags or coats. If permission to bring a mobile phone to school is given then the mobile phone would be kept in the school office during the day.

Parents, visitors and contractors:

Parents, visitors and contractors are respectfully requested not to use their mobile phones at all on the school site or in any area where children are present. Should phone calls and/or texts need to be taken or made, use is restricted to those areas not accessed by children to avoid any unnecessary disturbance or disruption to others. Should phone calls/and or texts need to be taken or made, visitors are asked to leave the premises to do so.

Photos of children must not be taken without prior discussion with a member of the Senior Management Team and in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018 and using the 'Use of images consent form' (please refer to the school's document "Guidance for schools and other establishments on the use of images".)

Any individual bringing a personal device into the school must ensure that it contains no inappropriate or illegal content.

The School will not be displaying a QR code for the NHS Test and Trace programme, We continue to expect visitors not to use their phone on the school site/in areas where children are present including for the purposes of the NHS Test and Trace App as our own arrangements enable contact tracing.

In the event of a school based contact of a visitor testing positive for Covid-19, existing school protocols would enable close contacts to be traced as guided by Public Health. In the event of a visitor coming on site they are required to observe social distancing, remaining at least 2m from pupils and staff at all times. If parents/carers need to come on site, for example to collect a child who is displaying symptoms of Covid-19, they are asked to observe social distancing from anyone who is not in their household whilst on the school site. In these circumstances the school's signing in/out arrangements would document this visit.

Inappropriate or illegal content:

Where there is a suspicion that the material on a mobile phone may be unsuitable and may constitute evidence relating to a criminal offence, the 'Allegations of Abuse' process will be followed (please refer to the school's 'Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy').

Staff, students or volunteers remain responsible for their own property and will bear the responsibility of any losses.

Related Policies and guidance:

Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy (September 2020)

Guidance for Safer Working Practice for Adults who work with Children and Young People in Education Settings (April 2020)

Keeping Children Safe in Education (September 2020)

Guidance for schools and other establishments on the use of images (July 2019)

Data Protection: A toolkit for schools, DfE, (August 2018)