



Abbots Ripton Church of England Primary School

Policy on the use of mobile phones and other smart devices in school

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(adapted from a model policy produced by Cambridgeshire Safeguarding Team – September 2023)

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Our church school creates a firm foundation where together, with God's help and with the help of others, we learn for life, achieve our best and grow in faith.

1.0 Introduction and aims

It is widely recognised that many children have access to personal communication devices including mobile phones, smart phones and smart watches. Children using these devices are likely to have unlimited and unrestricted access to the internet via mobile networks such as 3G, 4G, 5G, Airdropping and 'Nearby Share' (see Annex 1 for more details). For many, these devices can provide security and reassurance; however there are also associated risks. Safeguarding of children within the school is paramount.

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

The terms 'phone' or 'mobile phone' in this guidance denotes mobile phones, smart phones, airpods, iPods, iPads, MP3 players, MP4 players and smart watches.

1.1 The guidance aims to:

- Set out clear guidance for the use of mobile phones for staff (including supply staff), pupils and volunteers
- Set out clear guidance for visitors and contractors
- Ensure robust safeguarding
- Support schools' other policies relating to child protection and behaviour

2.0 Staff responsibilities

All staff (including teachers, support staff, and supply 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.

2.1 All staff:

- The school expects staff to lead by example and therefore should not make or receive personal calls, or texts (via mobile phone or smart watch), whilst children are present or during contact time.
- Staff (including volunteers and supply staff) should only use their mobile phones and smart devices for personal contact in the staff room or in the school office.

- Other than in agreed exceptional circumstances, mobile phones should be switched off or on silent and left in a safe place and smart watches silenced during lesson times. If a staff member needs to receive a call for exceptional reasons, phones can be left with the school office who will answer the call and then go to collect the staff member to come to the office.

2.2 Safeguarding

- If a member of staff is off site (for example on a trip) and needs to make telephone contact with a parent, they should use the school mobile phone. If this is not possible, they may use their own mobile phone with caller ID disabled.
- Under no circumstances will it be acceptable for a member of staff to make telephone contact with a pupil.
- Staff should not give their mobile phone number to pupils or parents.
- Staff should not share personal contact details through social media and messaging apps.
- Staff should regularly monitor and update their privacy settings on social media sites.
- Staff should never accept a 'friend request' or respond to any posts that may deliberately or inadvertently include them but inform the Headteacher of any such contact.
- 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 or anything else (e.g. a pupil's work) that might identify the pupil.
- If photos or videos are being taken as part of the school curriculum or for promotional purposes, then school equipment must be used. Staff should not allow themselves to be photographed by a pupil(s).

2.3 Using a personal mobile for work purposes

In some circumstances, it may be appropriate for staff to use a personal mobile phone for work purposes. Where possible this should always be agreed with the Headteacher in advance. Such circumstances may include, but are not limited to:

- Emergency evacuations

- Parental contact in emergency's (mobile phones setting that allow for the number not to be identified should be used)

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.

3.0 Pupils:

We recognise that we may have some pupils who will bring mobile phones to school (e.g. in the case of older pupils because they travel to and from school independently). We will request that phones are taken to the school office on arrival at school and collected at the end of the school day. Parents are also requested to let us know when their child may be arriving with a phone.

Smart watches are not permitted to be worn by any pupil.

4.0 Parents, visitors and contractors:

Parents, visitors and contractors are respectfully requested not to use their mobile phones at all 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 for example the staffroom or office.
- Photos of children must not be taken without prior discussion with the Headteacher and in accordance with the UK *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*" 2022. Any individual bringing a personal device into the school must ensure that it contains no inappropriate or illegal content.

5.0 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 process will be followed (please refer to the school's 'Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy').
- For both staff (including supply staff), pupils, visitors and contractors the school retains no liability for any device that is brought into school which is either lost, stolen or damaged.

Related Policies and guidance:

Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy (September 2023)

Guidance for Safer Working Practice for Adults who work with Children and Young People in Education Settings February 2022

Keeping Children Safe in Education (September 2023)

Guidance for schools and other establishments on the use of images (September 2023)

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

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Annex 1 - Airdrop and Nearby Share

Airdrop

- AirDrop is a feature available on iPhones and Mac computers (iOS 7, iPadOS 13, OS X 10.10, or later required).
- It lets physically close Mac and iOS devices share files, photos, websites etc.
- There are no size limits on files.
- It uses Bluetooth and Wi-Fi to transmit the files.
- AirDrop automatically detects nearby supported devices within a maximum distance of 30 feet.
- When a receiver of content is selected, they will be notified and offered the option to accept or decline the incoming file.

Nearby Share.

- Nearby Share is available on Android 6.0+ phones.
- Like AirDrop, it allows users to instantly share files, links and pictures with people around them.
- It also works through Bluetooth or WiFi.
- When Nearby Share is turned on, a list of devices available within sharing proximity is visible.
- When a receiver of content is selected, they will be notified and offered the option to accept or decline the incoming file.

Safeguarding risks posed by both Airdrop and Nearby Share.

- Being exposed to age-inappropriate sexualised and/or violent content.
- Photo sharing as a form of cyberbullying, with the person featured in the image being the target.
- The sharing of self-generated sexual imagery, with or without the permission of the original image/video creator.
- Images of teachers or other staff members shared as part of teacher targeted bullying, including 'upskirting' images (the practice of taking an illegal photo of someone's genitals or genital area, without consent).

If a member of staff or a pupil report receiving inappropriate content then we will follow their Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and procedures.