

Heritage Park Primary School

Mobile Phone and Electronic Devices Policy



Approved by: Paresh Desai (Chair of Governors)

Last reviewed on: January 2021

Next review due by: January 2022

HERITAGE PARK PRIMARY SCHOOL **MOBILE PHONES AND ELECTRONIC DEVICES POLICY**

Introduction

Mobile phone and smart watch technology has advanced significantly over the last few years and continues to evolve. Many phones and smart watches now offer internet and e-mail access, alongside standard functions of messaging camera, video and sound recording.

Mobile phones and smart watches are changing the way and speed in which we communicate. They can provide security and reassurance; however there are also associated risks. Children need to understand these risks in order to help them develop appropriate strategies for keeping themselves safe.

This policy applies to all individuals who have access to personal or work-related mobile phones and smart watches with camera functions in school.

Aims

The aim of the mobile phone and electronic devices policy is to promote safe and appropriate practice through establishing clear and robust acceptable use guidelines. This is achieved through balancing protection against potential misuse with the recognition that mobile phones are effective communication tools which, in turn, can contribute to safeguarding practice and protection.

The School's Approach

It is recognised that mobile phones and smart watches can cause an unnecessary distraction during the working day and can be intrusive when used in the company of others. It is also recognised that it is the enhanced functions of many mobile phones and smart watches 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 appreciated that it can be very difficult to detect when mobile phones and smart watches are present or being used, particularly in relation to enhanced functions, such as cameras. The use of all mobile phones and smart watches containing camera facilities are, therefore, limited regardless of their capabilities.

Other than in exceptional circumstances, members of staff should store their mobile phone and smart watches with camera functions in their staff locker and have it switched to silent. Staff must pause the NHS Test and Trace App upon arrival at school or turn their mobile phone off during working hours. Calls and texts should not be taken or made during the school day, except during designated break times, and any calls should be made in the staffroom, the offices or outside the front of school, away from children. Staff must not give their mobile phone numbers to children and/or parents and not enter into instant messaging communications with pupils. Staff are not permitted to use

their phone or smart watch for taking, recording or storing images; school equipment is provided for this purpose. Staff should only use their personal phones to contact families if they precede any phone call with a blocking system so their phone number is not shared, e.g. such as dialling 141 before the number or using a specialised app. Staff are strongly encouraged to use a school telephone wherever possible but we acknowledge, due to the coronavirus pandemic, that this may not always be the case, e.g. staff working from home.

Children are not permitted to bring mobile phones or smart watches to school either during the school day or at events held at the school outside of the normal school day. Should a child do so, the phone will be kept in the school office until the end of the school day when it will be returned to them.

Supply teachers, new staff and visitors are given a guide on appropriate use of technology when they enter the school (see appendix 1). Parents and visitors on the school site may use their phones, or other technology, to take photographs of their child during school performances but are reminded of the fact that these photographs must be for personal use only and no photographs or videos containing other children may be shared on any form of social media. The school reserves the right to view any images taken.

In circumstances such as off site visits, staff will agree with the Head or Deputy Head the appropriate use of personal mobile phones in the event of an emergency.

This policy 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.

Parents, Visitors and Contractors

Parents, visitors and contractors are respectfully requested not to use their mobile phones in any area where children are present.

Photos of children must not be taken without prior discussion with a member of the Senior Leadership Team and in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018 and the school 'Parental Conduct Policy'.

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

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' Appendix C2).

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

Conclusion

By following this policy we at Heritage Park Primary School will ensure that there are effective procedures in place to safeguard the adults and children in school by preventing the unacceptable use of mobile phones and smart watches in school.

Related Policies and Guidance

Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy (January 2021)

Guidance for Safer Working Practice for Adults who work with Children and Young People in Education Settings (May 2019, alongside April 2020 addendum)

Keeping Children Safe in Education (updated January 2021)

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