

## **ST JAMES' RC PRIMARY SCHOOL**

### **MOBILE PHONE POLICY**

This policy has the School's Motto at its heart.

**Faith in action,**

**Growing together,**

**Walking in the footsteps of Christ**

#### **Introduction and Aims**

At St James' RC Primary School, the welfare and well-being of our pupils is paramount. The aim of the 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. This is achieved through balancing protection against potential misuse with the recognition that mobile phones are effective communication tools. It is recognised that it is the enhanced functions of many mobile phones that cause the most concern, offering distractions and disruption to the working day, and which are most susceptible to misuse - including the taking and distribution of indecent images, exploitation and bullying. However, as it is difficult to detect specific usage, this policy refers to ALL mobile communication devices.

#### **Scope**

This policy applies to all individuals who have access to personal mobile phones on site. This includes staff, volunteers, 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 and Child Protection Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Preventing Radicalisation Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Code of Conduct
- On line Safety and Social Media Policy

#### **Code of conduct**

A code of conduct is promoted with the aim of creating a cooperative workforce, where staff work as a team, have high values and respect each other creating strong staff morale and a sense of commitment. Our aim is therefore that all practitioners:

- Have a clear understanding of what constitutes misuse;
- Know how to minimise risk;
- Avoid putting themselves into compromising situations which could be misinterpreted and lead to possible allegations;

- Understand the need for professional boundaries and clear guidance regarding acceptable use;
- Are responsible for self-moderation of their own behaviours;
- Are aware of the importance of reporting concerns promptly.

It is fully recognised that imposing rigid regulations on the actions of others can be counterproductive. An agreement of trust is therefore promoted regarding the carrying and use of mobile phones within the setting, which is agreed to by all users:

### **Personal Mobiles - Staff**

- Staff are not permitted to make or receive calls or texts during **contact** time with children. Emergency contact should be made via the school office.
- Staff should have their phones on silent or switched off and out of sight (e.g. in a drawer or a bag) during class time.
- Mobile phones should not be used in a space when children are present.
- Use of phones (including 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. acutely sick relative – spouse/child) then staff should give the school telephone number to the persons involved and the office staff will bring the message to class.
- In the case of a Medical Mobile Phone – please see the care plan of the child. They must only be used to check medical applications.
- During periods of National Lockdown/School Closures/Classes being in bubbles, teachers may use phones to contact the office in appropriate situations.

Staff should report any usage of mobile devices that causes them concern to the Head teacher.

### **Mobile Phones for work related purposes**

We recognise that mobile phones provide a useful means of communication during offsite activities. However, staff should ensure that:

- Mobile use on these occasions is appropriate and professional following all policies.
- Mobile phones should not be used to make contact with parents during school trips – all relevant communications should be made via the school office. If there is no phone available to be used other than a staff member's phone the call must be made from a withheld number.
- COVID- during any time when a class bubble has been required to isolate essential phone calls to parents may be made from teacher's personal phones but all calls must be made from a withheld number.
- Staff should always aim to take photographs and videos using school equipment such as school cameras and iPads. However, in the **rare instance** that a personal device is used the photographs must be immediately emailed to school and then deleted as soon as possible from the phone and any back up service (e.g. cloud.) Prior permission must be given for this by the Head teacher.

Where parents are accompanying trips, they are informed not to contact other parents (via calls, text, email or social networking) during the trip or use their phone to take photographs of children.

### **Personal Mobiles – Pupils**

We recognise that mobile phones are part of everyday life for many children and that they can play an important role in helping pupils to feel safe and secure. However, we also recognise that they can prove a distraction in school and can provide a means of bullying or intimidating others mainly through the use of social media and messaging apps. Therefore:

Pupils are **strongly advised not to bring mobile phones in to school.** Acting on advise from local Police and CEOP we advise that children should not bring phones that are able to access the internet into school. They are a risk not only to the child's well being but also to their safety. If the parent of a **Year 6 child only**, who walks to or from school alone, wishes them to have a mobile phone:

- The parents need to sign the permission form that is available in the office.
- The phone must be switched off **before** entering the school gates.
- The phone must be given to the Year 6 teacher first thing in the morning and collected at the end of the day.
- It must not be switched on until the child leaves the school gates at the end of the day.
- All phones are left at the owner's own risk and the school is not responsible for any damage or the loss of any phone.
- The phone must not be used **anywhere** on the school premises. This includes the school grounds.

Mobile phones brought to school without permission or are used on the school grounds will be confiscated and returned **to the parents.**

Where mobile phones are used in or out of school to bully or intimidate others, then the Head teacher does have the power to intervene 'to such an extent as it is reasonable to regulate the behaviour of pupils when they are off the school site' - refer to Anti-Bullying Policy. Letters will be sent to parents to advise them if the school are made aware of a serious e safety incident using mobile phones (e.g. whatsapp/Instagram/other social media apps.)

### **Other Devices– Pupils/Staff**

We recognise that other devices play an important role in people's lives and we must use these in accordance with e safety guidance to ensure that both children and adults are safe. Staff who choose to wear wearable devices (Apple watches/smart watches/fit bits) do so at their own risk and will not use them during **contact** time with children. We also ask that they are on silent for the duration of any contact time. Children are not permitted to wear any form of smart device (fit bit/apple watches/smart watches) during school hours. If a child wears such a device to school, the teacher will collect the device, keep it safely until the end of the day and return it to the child to take home. If a device is repeatedly worn, the child's parents will be asked to collect the device.

### **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. On arrival, such visitors will be informed of our expectations around the use of mobile phones.

### **Parents**

While we would prefer parents not to use their mobile phones while on school premises, we recognise that this would be impossible to regulate and that many parents see their phones as essential means of communication at all times, for example on the school playground at drop off and pick up. We therefore ask that parents' usage of mobile phones, whilst on the school site is courteous and appropriate to the school environment. **When working as a volunteer at school all parents are expected to follow the phone policy as it relates to staff.**

Where parent volunteers are **accompanying** trips or volunteering in school they are informed not to contact other parents (via calls, text, email or social networking) during the trip/visit or to use their phone to take photographs of children. This includes trips out of school and also volunteers helping (e.g. cooking, reading, Forest School.)

When attending school events as a spectator we allow parents to photograph or video events such as shows or sports days using their mobile phones – but insist that parents do not publish images (e.g. on social networking sites) that include any children other than their own.

### **Dissemination**

The mobile phone policy will be shared with staff and volunteers as part of their induction. It will also be available to parents via the school office and website.

### **Monitoring and Evaluation**

This policy will be updated in line with any new developments in the school and/or any new government guidance.

It was last reviewed in: summer 2021

It will next be reviewed in: summer 2024

This statement of policy was approved by the Governing Body at their meeting on:-

Date: \_\_\_17<sup>th</sup> June 2021\_\_\_\_\_

Signed :

\_\_\_\_\_*Mary Hutchinson*\_\_\_\_\_ (Chairperson)

\_\_\_\_\_*L Weeks*\_\_\_\_\_ (Head teacher)