



ST MATTHEW'S MOBILE PHONE POLICY

March 2023

1.0 Introduction and aims

St Matthew's recognizes 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 and increasingly 5G. For many these devices can provide security and reassurance; however there 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 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 answer personal calls, or texts (via mobile phone or smart watch), whilst children are present or during contact time.
- Staff should not use their phones to watch content over the internet, unless in a room where children are not present.
- Staff (including volunteers and supply staff) should only use their mobile phones and smart devices for personal contact in rooms where children are not present.
- It is recognized that due to the size and layout of our school, staff use mobile phones to communicate for work purposes. Staff working in classrooms should

ensure devices are kept out of sight of children, but may have them on their person.

- Staff may message, take and receive calls from other members of staff that are related to work. Staff should seek to communicate out of sight/earshot of children where possible. However, we recognize that when help is needed, this may not always be possible. School will endeavor to use Walkie-Talkies to communicate in known situations that can be planned for.
- We are aware that staff may use online platforms to communicate with each other. This may facilitate logistics (such as notification of absences, and day-to-day practicalities). Staff need to ensure these communications never identify individual children (use initials where necessary) and are at all times appropriate.
- Staff may communicate socially with one another. We advise that such social communications are kept separate from school related communications (e.g. in a separate group).
- Staff should not use their phones to show children images, photos, online content or music. They should be aware that their mobile phones are not subjected to the same Firewall security that internal devices are, and therefore the risk of inappropriate content is greater.
- Staff using their mobile phones to play music through sound systems, to children, should restrict this to playlists they have judged to be appropriate. They should not leave the device unattended at any point.
- Staff should ensure their phone with a password, pin or other safety feature, so that it cannot be accessed if lost or left unattended.

2.2 Safeguarding

- Staff should not contact pupils or parents from their personal mobile phone in or out of school time (for work related matters) or give their mobile phone number to pupils or parents, unless a risk assessment has been completed with the DSL, or in exceptional circumstances (see below). If a member of staff needs to make telephone contact with a pupil, a school telephone should be used. .
- Staff should not share personal contact details through social media and messaging apps for work purposes. If a member of staff has contacts from the school community for social reasons, and receive a work related communication, they should notify the DSL, who will plan the appropriate response through school.
- We advise staff to regularly monitor and update their privacy settings on social media sites
- Friend requests from contacts that are not personal (i.e. contact is known through work alone and is not a social contact) should not be accepted and should be reported to a DSL. Staff should also not respond to posts made by such contacts and never to posts that are work-related.
- All contact made from children who are pupils of St Matthew's, should be reported to a DSL and not accepted.

- Contact from children who are under the legal age for use of social media should be reported to a DSL.
- Staff should never send to, or knowingly accept from, colleagues or pupils, texts or images that could be viewed as inappropriate. If staff were to receive an inappropriate message, it should be reported to a DSL.
- Staff are not permitted to take photos or videos of pupils or anything else (e.g., work) that might identify the pupil on personal devices.
- If photos or videos are being taken as part of the school curriculum or for promotional purposes then school equipment must be used, if the child is able to be identified. However, school recognizes that staff may use their phone to capture models and unidentifiable work by pupils. They may also use their phone to take photographs of features around the school when preparing work for the children. Staff should not allow themselves to be photographed by a pupil(s), unless on a school device.
- School recognizes that members of staff may have friends and family who are part of the school community, especially when they have a child attending the school. Staff should ensure that all communication is unrelated to work. Staff may therefore have photographs of children taken outside school in social situations, but it is recommended that parental consent is given prior to them being taken.

2.3 Using a personal mobile for work purposes, other than with other staff members.

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

- Emergency evacuations
- Parental contact in an emergency
- School visits
- Safe and well calls (such as during lockdown)
- When staff may be working from home.

Staff should ensure the phones settings do not reveal their personal number where possible, using 141 before making a call.

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:

- Pupils are dissuaded from bringing mobile phones to school.
- Pupils should not bring into school any other 'smart' devices, (e.g. smart watches), or any other devices that can store images or access the internet.

- If it is deemed necessary for a pupil to bring a mobile phone to school, (e.g., in the case of older pupils because they travel to and from school independently), then the expectation is that the pupil hands their phone to the class teacher on arrival to the classroom. The device will be returned at the end of the day.
- Pupils will not be permitted to use their phones until the line is being dismissed from the playground.
- Pupils may not use their phones between arriving at the school gate and handing it to the class teacher.
- Pupils may not use their device to take any photographs whilst on the school premises.
- Pupils may not share, or show other pupils content and messages on their devices.

4.0 Parents, visitors and volunteers:

Parents, visitors and volunteers are respectfully requested not to use their mobile phones at all on the school site/in any area where children/young people 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 UK *General Data*
- Staff who are parents of children in the school have the right to take photographs/videos of their child in circumstance where other parents are allowed to do so, such as assemblies and productions, as long as they adhere to the guidance given to all parents around not sharing the images on social media.
 - *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.
 - There will be special occasions, such as productions, assemblies and Sport's days, when parents will be granted permission to take photographs/videos of their child. Parents will be reminded not to share such images on social media.

4.1 Contractors:

Contractors should not use their mobile phones unless necessary whilst on the school site. It is recognized that they may need to communicate with others in order to complete their work. Where possible, they should move to an area out of sight/earshot of children. If this is not possible, they should be mindful that the content of their conversation is appropriate.

Contractors may not take photographs on the school site, without prior permission of the school business manager or Caretaker. Where photographs need to be taken during the school day, they must ensure that a member of the school staff is present.

Contractors may not take any photographs that include children.

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 and pupils, the school retains no liability for any device that is brought into school which is either lost, stolen or damaged
- For both staff and pupils, the school retains no liability for any device that is used in a manner that is against the owner's consent.
- Staff should be aware that all communications, including non-work-related, still need to be appropriate and comply with the staff code of conduct and disciplinary rules of the school.

Related Policies and guidance:

Model Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy (September 2022)

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 2022)

Guidance for schools and other establishments on the use of images (September 2022)

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

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