

YSGOL CAERGEILIOG FOUNDATION SCHOOL



MOBILE PHONE POLICY

Introduction

This Policy is prepared in order to address the fact that Mobile phone technology has advanced significantly over the last few years - and it continues to evolve. Wireless connections in particular have extended the capabilities of mobile phones, enabling access to a wide range of new content and services globally.

Many phones now offer Internet and email access, alongside the most often standard functions of 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 are also associated risks.

Children and young people need to understand these risks in order to help them develop appropriate strategies for keeping themselves safe.

As with e-safety issues generally, risks to children and young people can be broadly categorised under the headings of,

- content,
- contact
and
- conduct

This can be managed by,

- reducing availability,
- restricting access
and
- increasing resilience.

Aim:

The aim of the Mobile Phone 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.

Scope:

This policy applies to all individuals who have access to personal or work-related mobile phones on site. This includes all employees, volunteers, committee members, children, young people, parents, carers, visitors and community users. This list is not exhaustive.

Policy statement:

It is recognised that it is the enhanced functions of many mobile phones 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 also recognised that mobile phones can cause an unnecessary distraction during the working day and can be intrusive when used in the company of others.

When mobiles phones are misused **it can impact on an individual's dignity, privacy and right to confidentiality**. Such concerns are not exclusive to children and young people; **hence there is a duty to protect the needs and vulnerabilities of all**.

It is appreciated that it can be very difficult to detect when such devices are present or being used, particularly in relation to enhanced functions, such as cameras.

Mobile phones are therefore not allowed in any part of the School Site.

The aim is to avoid distraction and disruption of the working day, and to minimise the opportunities for any individual to make any covert images or misuse functions in any other way.

NOTE: A zero-tolerance policy is in place with regards to the use of personal or work-related mobiles by any individual in these areas.

☒ Changing areas – (classrooms whilst children are changing for activities)

☒ toilets.

Code of conduct:

A code of conduct is promoted with the aim of

- creating a co-operative workforce, where staff work as a team, have high values and respect each other;
- thus creating a strong morale and sense of commitment leading to increased productivity.

It is therefore ensured that all employees:

- ☐ have a clear understanding of what constitutes misuse.
- ☐ are vigilant and alert to potential warning signs.
- ☐ 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 studies consistently indicate that imposing rigid regulations and/or 'bans' on the actions of others can be counterproductive, leading to a culture of suspicion, uncertainty and secrecy. The imposition of rigorous, inflexible rules is therefore avoided, unless the potential risks of not enforcing them far out-weigh the benefits.

AGREEMENT OF TRUST:

This Policy Agreement 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.

This Policy Agreement applies to any individual or practitioner on the School Site, including,

- All employees
- Pupils
- Parents
- Visitors
- Contractors

Work mobile:

The use of a **designated work mobile** is promoted as it is:

- ☐ an essential part of the emergency toolkit which is taken on off-site trips.
- ☐ an effective communication aid, enabling text, email messages and calls to be made and received.
- ☐ a back-up facility should problems be experienced with the landline – or where contact needs to be made outside of work hours.

Effective security measures are in place to safeguard against any potential misuse. Only authorised individuals have access to the work mobile, stored securely when not in use.

Personal calls are not permitted on the work mobile, other than in agreed exceptional circumstances. Contact or calls can be made via the work mobile in the event of an emergency. All calls are logged.

The work mobile is clearly labeled as such, and additional features such as cameras are disabled or not used.

Emergency contact:

It is recognised that mobile phones provide direct contact to others, and at times provide a necessary reassurance due to their ease of access, particularly at stressful times.

All Employees and Practitioners, therefore, in ***agreed exceptional circumstances*** are permitted to carry a mobile phone. This is to enhance their own well-being and piece of mind, to reduce stress and worry and to enable them to concentrate more effectively on their work.

Such use will be for an agreed limited period only, until any concerns or issues leading to the exceptional circumstance request have been resolved.

It is ensured at all times that the landline telephone remains connected and operational, except in circumstances beyond control. This means that it is available for emergency/urgent contact at all times.

The reliance on an answer phone is avoided and only used in exceptional circumstances.

This Policy was prepared : May 2013

It was accepted by the Governing Body : July 2013

It was reviewed : June 2021

It will be reviewed July 2022