



# THE HERMITAGE SCHOOLS

*Inspire, Learn, Achieve*

## Mobile Phone Policy

Person Responsible:	Behaviour and Welfare Leaders
Date Adopted:	Summer Term 2015
Date of last review:	Summer Term 2024
Date of next review:	Summer Term 2025

### Rationale

The Schools are committed to ensuring the safety of children in their care. We recognise the importance of mobile phones in school for communication purposes, but are aware that casual or inappropriate use of mobile phones in the school could pose a risk to children and adults.

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. The use of all mobile phones is therefore limited, regardless of their capabilities. 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.

This policy applies to all staff, volunteers, visitors and children.

**Please note that for the purposes of this policy, the term 'mobile phone' also covers any electronic device with the capacity to be used as a form of communication, either through the device itself or any applications stored on the device.**

### Staff Personal Mobile Phones

- Staff will not carry personal mobile phones while working. This protects staff from being distracted from their work and from allegations of inappropriate use. Phones must be safely stored out of sight of children and should be on silent so that they cannot be heard by children.
- If staff have a break time during their working hours, they may use their mobile phones during these times, but this must not be in an area where children are present.

- In an emergency, staff needing to make a personal call during a lesson or whilst on duty should first obtain agreement from their line manager, ensure that adequate cover has been put in place and make the call in an area not used by children.
- Staff must give the school telephone number to their next of kin in case it is necessary for the staff member to be contacted in an emergency during school working hours.
- A personal mobile phone may be taken on school journey outings in accordance with guidance – see ‘The Use of Mobile Phones on School Trips’ section below.
- Camera or video functions on personal mobile phones must not be used in school by staff to take images of children under any circumstances.
- Staff should not be required to make work calls on their personal phones, either mobile or landline. However, if this should be necessary then they are advised to use the prefix 141 (some mobile providers use a different prefix – staff are advised to check this with their provider) before dialling the recipient’s number to ensure their own number is protected.
- Failure by staff to comply with the mobile phone policy guidelines could result in disciplinary action.

### **Children**

- The schools recognise that older children who walk to and from school without an accompanying adult may carry a mobile phone for safety. In these cases, children may bring a mobile phone onto the school premises, but must deposit it with their class teacher at the start of the day and collect it from the class teacher at the end of the day. Parents/carers should be aware that whilst there are obvious benefits to pupils having a mobile phone in terms of personal safety, there are also some associated risks such as potential for theft, bullying and inappropriate contact, including grooming by unsuitable persons. We would also like to alert parents/carers to the risks that using a mobile phone has while walking to and from school. Children who are concentrating on using their phone can have reduced general safety awareness which may result in road accidents and/or injury if a child is not paying attention to their surroundings.
- Mobile phones deposited with the class teacher by children, will be kept in a classroom cupboard. Whilst the school will take every reasonable care, it accepts no responsibility whatsoever for theft, loss, damage or health effects (potential or actual) relating to mobile phones. It is the responsibility of parents/carers to ensure mobile phones are properly insured. It is recommended that pupils’ phones are security marked and password protected.
- Children are not allowed to bring mobile phones into any other areas of the school.
- Any mobile phones discovered to have been brought into the schools and not handed in to the class teacher will be confiscated immediately. Parents/carers will be asked to collect the mobile phone from the school office.
- Children are not allowed to carry mobile phones on any school trips.
- If a member of the staff has any suspicion that a mobile phone brought into school by a pupil has unsuitable material stored on it, the pupil will be required to hand over the phone immediately to a member of staff and parents/carers will be asked to collect it from a member of the Senior Leadership Team. In circumstances where there is a suspicion that the material on the mobile phone may provide evidence relating to a criminal offence, the phone will be handed over to the relevant school’s Designated Safeguarding Lead or the Executive Headteacher for further investigation and the parent/carer asked to collect it from them.

### **Visitors and Parents/Carers**

- The schools will display a notice advising visitors and parents/carers that mobile phones are not to be used in certain areas in school. This includes all uses including phone calls, texting and

photographing. If a visitor or parent/carer is seen using their mobile phone, they will be asked politely to turn it off/desist from using it/remove it from children's view.

- It is recognised that many parents/carers use their mobile phone as a camera/video device to record their child at special performances in school, e.g. class assemblies, concerts, etc. On these occasions the use of a phone will be permitted for photographing/videoing only; a member of staff will always remind parents/carers before a performance that images should only be taken if they include their own child and that the use of these images is for their own personal use and must not be uploaded for any internet use including Facebook or any other social networking sites or used in any form of publication unless they are solely of their own child.
- The schools recognise that children may inadvertently be included in photographs taken by another parent/carer; the schools, therefore, are obliged to warn parents/carers of the legal and safeguarding risks of publishing such photographs on any platform. The placing of any photographs of children on social media is dangerous and parents/carers may be in breach of the Data Protection Act if they upload photos of other children without the explicit consent of that child's parents/carers.

### **School Mobile Phones**

There are currently a number of mobile phones registered for school use. These mobile phones may be used on the school premises using the following guidance:

#### **The Caretaker's Mobile Phone**

- This mobile phone is for use solely by the schools' caretaker and must not be used by any other member of staff or persons not employed by the school.
- It is the caretaker's responsibility to ensure that this phone is kept safely on his/her person at all times and is only used for school business.
- This phone is for making or receiving calls regarding school business and must not be used for personal calls.
- This phone must not be used for taking photographs or videoing at any time.
- The caretaker will make every possible effort to ensure that this phone is not used when pupils are present, however it must be recognised that this may not always be possible.

#### **The Office Mobile Phones**

- These phones are for emergency use in the office or by named members of staff, should the main telephone line be out of action or to provide emergency contact for staff to the office when they are working in a remote area of the school, e.g. the field or Forest School area.
- It is the responsibility of the office staff to ensure that these phones are kept fully charged and in credit.
- These phones must not be used for taking photographs or videoing at any time.
- These phones may be used on school trips by the party leader – see guidance below re 'The Use of Mobile Phones on School Trips'
- It is the responsibility of the party leader to notify the office in advance that a phone will be required.
- Personal calls are not permitted to be made on these phones, other than in agreed exceptional circumstances. Contact or calls can be made via the office mobiles in the event of an emergency.
- If any member of staff is required to drive in a working capacity, and has responsibility for an office mobile phone, the phone must be switched off whilst driving.

## **The Use of Mobile Phones on School Trips**

The schools recognise that the use of mobile phones on school trips can be beneficial in ensuring safety for all members of the school party. However, it is important that the following guidance is adhered to in order to keep children safe and protect staff and volunteers from accusations of inappropriate use:

- The party leader may carry an office mobile phone for use in contacting other staff members or volunteers on the trip, contacting the school or contacting the emergency services. If an office mobile phone is unavailable (e.g. if another trip is on the same day) then the party leader should follow the advice below for staff use of personal mobile phones.
- Members of staff and volunteers may carry their own, personal mobile phones within the following guidelines:
  - Personal phones should only be used to contact staff members or volunteers on the trip, the school or emergency services. If possible, these calls should be made away from pupils.
  - Personal phones should not be used for any purpose other than school business for the duration of a day trip. This means that personal calls or texts should not be made or accepted. On residential trips this will apply while the member of staff or volunteer is on duty. Staff and volunteers should ensure that next of kin are provided with the school number, so that in an emergency the school is contacted and will make contact with the relevant person through the party leader.
  - If it becomes necessary for a member of staff or volunteer to make a personal call or text, then the party leader or another member of staff should be informed and take responsibility for the pupils in the group while the call or text is made away from sight and sound of any pupils.
  - Party leaders may use personal mobile phones to upload photos to the schools' social media accounts e.g. Twitter or Facebook, but these photos must be deleted immediately after uploading and prior parental permission must be in place.
  - Volunteers are acting as staff members for the duration of the trip and therefore must not take photos or videos of any pupils, including their own child, using a mobile phone or any other mobile device, e.g. cameras or iPads, without the express permission of the party leader. Volunteers may be asked to take photographs of their group using a school camera – this must be passed back to the party leader at the end of the trip.
  - The party leader may ask volunteers to provide them with their mobile phone number for the duration of the trip so that they can be contacted in case of emergency. The party leader undertakes to ensure that these numbers are not held on any mobile device or in any written form after the end of the trip.
  - It is advised that if the party leader is using his/her own mobile phone, then if they need to contact anyone during the trip they do so by pre-dialling 141 (some mobile providers use a different prefix – staff are advised to check this with their provider) before the number so that their own number remains protected.

Appendix 1 provides guidance for volunteers on school trips.

## Appendix 1

### Use of mobile phones - guidance for volunteers on school trips

Thank you for volunteering to help on our school trip. During the trip you are acting as a member of staff with regard to the safety and well-being of the children in your group and we therefore ask that you follow the guidelines below in accordance with the schools' mobile phone policy.

- Personal phones should only be used to contact staff members or volunteers on the trip, the school or emergency services. If possible, these calls should be made away from pupils.
- Personal phones must not be used for any purpose other than school business for the duration of a day trip. On residential trips this will apply while the member of staff or volunteer is on duty. This means that personal calls or texts must not be made or accepted. Staff and volunteers should ensure that next of kin are provided with the school number so that, in an emergency, the school is contacted and will make contact with the relevant person through the party leader.
- If it becomes necessary for a member of staff or volunteer to make a personal call, then the party leader or another member of staff should be informed and take responsibility for the pupils in the group while the call or text is made away from sight and sound of any pupils.
- Mobile phones must not be used under any circumstances to take photographs or videos of pupils. Volunteers are acting as staff members for the duration of the trip and therefore must not take photos or videos of any pupils, including their own child, using a mobile phone or any other mobile device, e.g. cameras or iPads, without the express permission of the party leader. Volunteers may be asked to take photographs of their group using a school camera – this must be passed back to the party leader at the end of the trip.
- The party leader may ask volunteers to provide them with their mobile phone number for the duration of the trip so that they can be contacted in case of emergency. The party leader undertakes to ensure that these numbers are not held on any mobile device or in any written form after the end of the trip.
- It is advised that if the party leader is using his/her own mobile phone, then if they need to contact anyone during the trip they do so by pre-dialling 141 (some mobile providers use a different prefix – staff are advised to check this with their provider) before the number so that their own number remains protected.

If you have any questions regarding these guidelines, please speak to the party leader.

**Thank you for your support and co-operation to ensure the safety of all the pupils.**