

Mobile Phone & Smart Technology Policy

This policy outlines the Trust's position on mobile phone/smart technology use by children to ensure a safe, focused and respectful learning environment. It supports safeguarding, reduces distractions, and promotes positive social interaction.

Scope

This statement applies to all children and staff enrolled or working at a REAch2 school. It does not apply to visitors, who are expected to follow separate guidance on appropriate mobile phone/smart technology use.

Statement

Mobile phones are not permitted to be used or carried by children before/after school or during the school day, including during lessons, break times and lunch periods in any REAch2 school or within the grounds of the school. This includes smartwatches and other connected devices with communication capabilities.

Staff should not use their own mobile phone/smart technology or any other personal device for personal reasons in front of children throughout the school day. There may be occasions where it is appropriate for a teacher to use a mobile phone or similar device, for instance to issue rewards and sanctions or use multi-factor authentication whilst in the classroom, but personal communication, i.e. calls or messages, should be taken away from the classroom. (Please see the Code of Conduct/Staff Handbook and Acceptable Use Policies for more information).

Rationale

Staff and children need to be made aware of the risks of such devices and the rationale that sits behind this policy i.e:

- Safeguarding: Mobile phones/smart technology can be used to access inappropriate content, take unauthorised photos or videos, or engage in cyberbullying.
- Learning focus: Phones/smart technology are a distraction and can disrupt lessons and concentration.
- Social development: Encouraging face-to-face interaction support emotional and social growth.
- Equity: Reduces pressure on families to provide expensive devices.

Implementation

Staff, children and parents should be reminded of the school's policy on mobile and smart technology at least annually.

Before and After School:

- Children must not use their mobile phones/smart technology on the school site, whether in school hours, breakfast club or after school care clubs.
- Children who need a phone/smart technology for safety reasons (e.g. walking home alone), must hand their mobile phone /smart technology into the school office upon arrival and collect it at the end of the day, however this should be kept to those children who walk to and/or from home independently/are walking home after an after school activity alone.
- Phones/smart technology must be switched off and stored securely by staff during school hours.
- When the mobile phone is handed into the office, the school accepts the responsibility for looking after the phone and staff have a duty of care to take reasonable steps to keep it safe. *This does not mean the school automatically becomes liable if it is lost, stolen or damaged, but liability could arise if the loss resulted from the school's negligence (e.g. leaving phones unsecured when they should reasonably have been locked away).*

During School hours:

- Children are not permitted to use or access mobile phones/smart technology.
- Any phone/smart technology seen or heard during the school day will be confiscated and will need to be collected by a parent. *(Schools have the power to confiscate mobile phones or similar devices as a disciplinary penalty. The law*

protects staff from liability in any proceedings brought against them for any loss or damage to items they have confiscated as a sanction, providing they have acted lawfully. Staff should consider whether the confiscation is proportionate and consider any special circumstances relevant to the case)

Communication with Parents

- This statement will be shared with parents/carers via the school's newsletter, the school website and when a child starts at the school.
- Parents are asked to support the Trust's position by not contacting children directly during the school day.

Medical Exceptions

- We recognise that there are exceptional circumstances where access to a mobile device/smart technology is necessary for health and safety reasons.
- Children with documented medical conditions that require the use of a mobile phone/smart technology e.g. to monitor blood glucose levels, manage asthma, or communicate with healthcare providers, may be exempt from this policy. In such cases, parent or guardians should provide appropriate medical documentation and work with school staff to develop an agreed-upon plan.
(Please see the policy for 'supporting pupils with medical conditions' for more information).

Monitoring and Review

This statement will be reviewed every 2 years by the Trust's Head of IT and updated as necessary to reflect changes in technology, safeguarding guidance or Trust/school needs.