



Phoenix Integrated Primary & Nursery School

Policy for acceptable use of mobile phones and related technologies by pupils.

Date: March 2022

Review Date: 20.09.23

Introduction

Phoenix Integrated Primary School and Nursery accept that, at times, some parents/guardians give their children mobile phones, to protect them from everyday risks involving personal security and safety outside of school. It is acknowledged that providing a child with a mobile phone gives parents reassurance that they can contact their child if they need to speak to them urgently outside of the school day.

Scope

- This policy provides teachers, pupils and parents/guardians with guidelines and instructions for the appropriate use of mobile phones and related technologies during school hours.
- This policy also applies to pupils during school excursions and extra-curricular activities.

Review

Due to the ever-changing nature of information and communication technologies, this policy will be reviewed annually and, if necessary, more frequently in response to any significant new developments, such as guidance or legislation.

Exemptions

Exemptions of this policy can only be approved by the Principal or Vice Principal and only in exceptional circumstances. Pupils may be allowed to use these technologies under the specific guidance of their teacher.

Guiding Principles

- Phoenix Integrated Primary and Nursery School strongly discourage pupils from bringing mobile phones to school.
- If parents deem that it is absolutely necessary for a pupil to bring a mobile phone to school, permission must be granted beforehand from the Principal or Vice Principal, giving valid reasons for doing so:
 - Eg. the child is going to stay with the grandparents overnight;
 - the child is going to a sleepover at a friend's home after school.
 - The child requires a mobile phone to contact parents on walk home from school (Year 5-7 pupils only)
- If permission is given, when the phone is brought to school, it must remain switched off and will be locked away during the school day.
- Should parents need to contact pupils during the school day, or vice versa, this should be done following the usual school procedures, i.e. via the school office.
- **Phones must never be used to photograph children inside or outside the school.**
- The procedures applying to the inappropriate use of mobile phones, apply equally to the inappropriate use of related technologies with similar capabilities, e.g. messaging, recording (audio & video), photography etc.
- It should be noted that it is a criminal offence to use a mobile phone to menace, harass or offend another person. The Board of Governors may consider it appropriate to refer any such matter to the Police Service of Northern Ireland (P.S.N.I.).
- Pupils must keep mobile phones out of sight and turned off until they have left the school grounds.

Smart watches and other devices

Pupils can wear smart watches to school (the exception to this being any watch with a camera). If a pupil wearing a smart watch also brings a phone to school, they must remember to hand the phone into their teacher at the beginning of the day. This means that the mobile phone will be turned off and the facility for sending/ receiving messages will be disabled on the watch. If a pupil is found to be sending/ receiving

messages using their watch during the school day, this will be dealt with in the same way as mobile phone misuse (see below).

For watches that have their own built in cellular data, meaning they can send/receive messages without the need of a turned on mobile phone, these too must be handed in at the beginning of the day.

Responding to incidents of mobile phone usage

If a pupil uses a mobile phone to, for example, make phone-calls on school premises, to send texts or to take photographs/video footage of either other pupils or staff, this will be regarded as a serious offence. The Principal or Vice Principal, on behalf of the Board of Governors will decide on appropriate disciplinary action, in line with the school's Positive Behaviour Policy.

Where a pupil is found by a member of staff to be using a mobile phone during the school day, the phone will be taken from the pupil and handed to either the Principal or Vice Principal. The mobile phone will be stored in the school office and the child's parent/guardian will be contacted to collect the phone from the office.

If images (photographic or video) of other pupils or teachers have been taken, the phone will not be returned to the pupil until the incident has been investigated according to the school safeguarding procedures. The phone will be returned to the pupil's parents/carers in the presence of a member of the Principal or Vice Principal and the child's parent/guardian has removed the images.

In exceptional circumstances a mobile phone may be retained until further advice has been sought.

Either the Principal or Vice Principal will contact parents/guardians in all cases where inappropriate photographs/video/audio footage have been found, advice will be sought from the EAWR's Child Safeguarding Team and the P.S.N.I. will also be contacted.

March 2022

Permission Request

I request permission for my child to bring their mobile phone to school for the following reason:

Child's name: _____ **Class:** _____

Signed: _____ (Parent/Carer).

The Principal/Vice Principal will contact you if we have any concerns about your application.