



**Hilderthorpe**  
**PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Aiming High ~ Reaching Higher

## **Mobile Phone Policy**

**Approved by Governors: April 2024**

**Policy Review Date: April 2026**

At Hilderthorpe Primary School we are committed to ensuring the safety of children in our care. We recognise that mobile phones in the school have a role to play for the purpose of communication, but we are aware that casual or inappropriate use of mobile phones in school could pose a risk to children and adults.

The enhanced functions of many mobile phones are of most concern and are most susceptible to misuse. Misuse includes the taking and distribution of indecent images, exploitation and bullying. Mobile phones can cause an unnecessary distraction during the working day and can be intrusive when used in the company of others.

When mobile 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 everyone.

#### **Facts and figures to support this policy DfE February 2024:**

By the age of 12, 97% of children own a mobile phone.<sup>1</sup> While mobile phone ownership is very high once a pupil starts secondary school education, it remains parents' responsibility for deciding whether their child has a phone or not.

The majority (63%) of 8-11-year-olds use social media and messaging apps, rising to 93% for children between 12 and 15 years old.<sup>2</sup> By understanding which apps their children are using, parents can make informed choices about their child's mobile phone use and support schools in providing education about online safety.

The National Behaviour Survey (2021-2022) found that 29% of secondary school pupils (rising to 40% for key stage 4 pupils) reported mobile phones being used without permission in most of their lessons.<sup>3</sup> This not only distracts the single pupil using the phone, but disrupts the lesson for a whole class, and diverts teachers' efforts away from learning. Parents can play an important role in supporting the school in effectively implementing its policy on mobile phones and eliminating this form of distraction for pupils in lessons.

Mobile phones have already been prohibited or restricted in one in four countries worldwide, including France, The Netherlands and several Australian

states and territories. In this respect, restrictions on the use of mobile phones is not unique to schools in England.

Screen time can displace positive activities. Socialising, exercise, and good sleep are positive influences on wellbeing. All these can be displaced by screen time. By prohibiting the use of mobile phones during break and lunchtimes at school as well as in lessons, more time for socialising and exercise can be created during the school day. We urge parents and carers to consider the impact screen time has on their child's sleep and work together with schools to promote children's wellbeing.

One in five children have experienced bullying online. Data from Office of National Statistics (2020) suggests that one in five children (19%) aged 10-15 experienced at least one type of bullying behaviour online, and out of them, around three quarters (72%) said they experienced at least some of it at school or during school time. Around half of children (52%) who experienced online bullying behaviours said they would not describe them as bullying and around one in four (26%) did not report their experiences.

Three in ten pupils cite making and maintaining friendships and their mental health as a cause of worry, anxiety or depression. By removing mobile phones, children and young people can spend more time staying active and socialising face to face with their peers, activities which have a positive impact on wellbeing.

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. It can be 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.

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

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 must 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 in a secure location.
- If staff have a break time during their working hours, they may use their mobile phones during these times in the staff room or an office where children are not present.
- In an emergency, staff needing to make a personal call during a lesson or whilst on duty should first ensure that adequate cover has been put in place and make the call in an area not used by children.
- Staff will share 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 working hours.
- A personal mobile phone may be taken on school trips in accordance with guidance - see 'The Use of Mobile Phones on Trips' section below / Appendix 1.
- Camera or video functions on personal mobile phones must not be used by staff to take images of children under any circumstances.
- Staff are not required to make work calls on their own phones, either mobile or landline, however, in exceptional circumstances, if this is necessary then they are advised to withhold caller ID before dialling the recipient's number to ensure their own number is protected.
- Staff must never store parents', carers' or children's telephone numbers on their mobile phones and staff must never give their private mobile number to parents, carers or children.
- Failure by staff to comply with the mobile phone policy guidelines could result in disciplinary action.

## Children

- Children who walk to and from school without an accompanying adult may carry a mobile phone for safety. In these cases, parents may apply for consent from school. Please refer to appendix 2.
- If consent from school is gained, the phone will be given to the Class Teacher at the start of the day and collect it at the end of the day. Use and access to the phone will be strictly restricted within this time.
- Parents and carers need to 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 and 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.

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 and carers to ensure mobile phones are properly insured. It is recommended that pupil's phones are security marked and password protected.

- Children are not allowed to use their mobile phones in any areas of the school.
- Any mobile phones discovered to have been brought into the school without consent from school will be confiscated immediately. Parents or 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 or 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 school's Safeguarding Lead or to the Head Teacher for further investigation and the parent or carer asked to collect it from them.

### **Visitors, Parents and Carers**

- All Visitors will not use mobile phones within school and phones must be kept in their bags.
- Mobile phones can be used in the staff room.
- It is recognised that many parents and carers use their mobile phone as a camera/video device to record their child at special performances e.g. class assemblies, concerts, etc. On these occasions the use of a phone is permitted for photographing/videoing only; images should only be taken by parents and carers 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 school recognise that children may inadvertently be included in photographs by another parent; the school, therefore, are obliged to warn parents and 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 may be in breach of school Safeguarding Policies and the Data Protection Act if they upload photos of other children without the explicit consent of that child's parents.

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

Carrying mobile phones on trips can help to ensure 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:

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 emergency services. If possible, these calls should be made away from children.
- Personal phones should not be used for any purpose other than school business for the duration of a 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.
- Personal mobile phones must not be used under any circumstances to take photographs or videos of pupils. Volunteers are acting role models 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. camera or tablet, without the express permission of the visit / trip leader. Volunteers may be asked to take photographs of their group using a school device - this must be passed back to the visit / trip leader at the end of the trip.
- The visit / trip 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 visit / trip 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 or her own mobile phone, then if they need to contact anyone during the trip they do so by withholding caller ID before the number so that their own number remains protected.

## **Appendix 1 Guidance for volunteers on trips.**

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

Thank you for volunteering to help on our trip. During the trip we ask that you follow the guidelines below in accordance with the school's 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 facility number so that in an emergency the school is contacted and will make contact with the relevant person through the visit / party leader.
- If it becomes necessary for a member of staff or volunteer to make a personal call, then the trip / visit 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.
- Personal mobile phones must not be used under any circumstance to take photographs or videos of pupils. Volunteers are asked to set an example 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 visit / trip leader. Volunteers may be asked to take photographs of their group using a school or centre device - this must be passed back to the party leader at the end of the trip.
- The visit / 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 visit / trip leader is using her or his own mobile phone, then if they need to contact anyone during the trip they do so by withholding caller ID (volunteers 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 visit / trip leader.
- Thank you for your support and co-operation to ensure the safety of all the pupils.

<b>Headteacher:</b>	Mrs S Hall	<b>Date:</b>	April 2024
<b>Chair of Governing Body:</b>	Rev R Hare	<b>Date:</b>	April 2024

## Appendix 2

### Guidance and Consent - Mobile Phone Policy for Pupils

Hilderthorpe Primary School has established the following Acceptable Use Policy for mobile phones that provides parents and pupils with guidelines and instructions for the appropriate use of mobile phones during school. We are sure that you will support us with this policy to promote positive behaviour and safety within our school.

Whilst we acknowledge parents may wish to allow their child to bring a mobile phone to school, Hilderthorpe Primary School discourages pupils from bringing one to school.

1. Parents and pupils must read and understand the Acceptable Use Policy before they are given permission to bring mobile phones to school.
2. The Acceptable Use Policy applies to pupils during school hours on the school site. Mobile phones are not permitted on school trips or residential trips unless consent has been confirmed.
3. If parents need to contact pupils for any reason during the school day, this should be done via the school office and not via the child's mobile phone.
4. Only pupils who have written permission from their parents are entitled to bring mobile phones to school. We advise parents to only request permission for pupils who walk to and from school without an adult. Please complete the attached permission slip if you wish your child to bring his/her mobile phone to school and return the slip to the school office.
5. If pupils bring a mobile phone to school, the phone must be switched off until they leave the school premises at the end of the day.

6. Pupils must hand their mobile phones to their class teacher on arrival at school.
7. Pupils' mobile phones will be kept locked away until the end of the school day.
8. Mobile phones seen on the school premises being used at an inappropriate time will be confiscated immediately by a member of staff until the end of the day. At this time, it will be the responsibility of the parents to collect the phone from school, not the pupil. If a pupil is found taking photographs or video with a mobile phone of anyone, this will be regarded as a serious offence and action will be taken in line with our behaviour policy.
9. **The school cannot be held responsible for the security of pupils' mobile phones at any time.**

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**Hilderthorpe Primary School Mobile Phone Permission Slip**

Name of

Child: \_\_\_\_\_ Class: \_\_\_\_\_

My child needs to bring a mobile phone to school as he/she walks to/from school without an adult.

I accept that the school cannot be held responsible for the security of my child's mobile phone and understand that if the phone is used inappropriately at the school, the phone will be confiscated immediately and I will be responsible for collecting it from school.

Signature of Parent /

Carer: \_\_\_\_\_

Date:-----