

Introduction and aims

At High Ercall Primary School, the welfare and wellbeing of our pupils is paramount. The aim of the Safe use of Technology Policy is to allow users to benefit from modern technologies, whilst promoting safe and appropriate practice through establishing clear and robust guidelines. This is achieved through balancing protection against potential misuse with the recognition that mobile phones and other smart technology are effective communication tools. It is recognised that it is the enhanced functions of many mobile phones and other devices that cause the most concern, offering distractions and disruption to the working day, and which are the most susceptible to misuse – including the taking and distributing of indecent images, exploitation and bullying. This policy refers to all mobile communication and other technology such as personal iPads or smart watches.

Scope

This policy applies to all individuals who have access to personal technology on site. This includes staff, volunteers, governors, children, parents, visitors and contractors.

The policy should be read in conjunction with:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Anti-bullying Policy
- Staff Handbooks
- Staff Code of Conduct

Statutory regulation

The Early Years Safeguarding and Welfare requirements (section 3) require all schools to have a clear policy on the use of personal mobile phones and devices. This policy applies to all year groups, including EYFS.

Personal Devices – staff

- Staff in all year groups must have their phones switched off or to silent, and they must be kept out of the classroom (in a cupboard or in a bag which is put away).
- Staff are NOT permitted to make / receive calls / texts during contact time with children. Any necessary contact should be made via the school office.
- Mobile phones or any other personal technology must not be used in a space where children are present – this includes phones, digital watches where messages / photos can be taken, iPads.
- Use of technology should be limited to non-contact times with children and in an area where no children are present.
- It is advised that staff protect their mobile phones with security features.
- Should there be exceptional circumstances when a phone is needed during contact time, the Headteacher should be consulted and a decision will be made. The school phone number can be given about by staff for emergency use – for example to the school of a staff member's child.
- Staff are not permitted to use recording equipment on their personal devices for photographic or video footage. School equipment must be used.
- Staff should report inappropriate usage to the Headteacher as a low level concern

Mobile phones for work related purposes

We recognise that on occasions, a mobile phone may be used for off-site activities, as an appropriate method of communication. Staff should ensure that:

- Mobile phone use is appropriate and professional.
- Mobile phones should not be used to contact parents – this should be done through the school office unless it is deemed an emergency. In an emergency it is advisable to ensure that a personal number is not shared when calling a parent by using number withheld facilities.

- Where parents are accompanying children on trips, they must be informed that it should not be used to inform other parents or take photographs.
- Photographs are taken on school cameras / ipads.

Personal Devices – Pupils

We realise that mobile phones have become an important part of everyday life for many children and that they can be a method of keeping them safe and secure. However we also recognise that they can prove to be a distraction in school and can be a means of bullying or intimidating others. Therefore:

- **Pupils are not permitted to have mobile phones or any other devices including smart watches which can message or take images, at school.**
- If, in the rare event of a pupil bringing in a mobile phone for issues of personal safety, it must be handed into the school office immediately. Parents must contact the school beforehand to request permission.
- Mobile phones brought in without permission will be confiscated and will need to be collected by an adult.
- Technology such as phones, iPad and smart watches are not allowed on trips or residential visits.
- Watches such as Fitbits or similar technological devices will be permitted, providing they cannot be used for messaging or communication, or taking images, but must not distract through the school day.

Where technology is used on or off site to bully or intimidate others, the Headteacher does have the power to intervene 'to such an extent as it is reasonable to regulate the behaviour of pupils when they are off the school site'.

Volunteers, visitors, Governors and Contractors

All visitors, volunteers, governors and contractors are expected to follow our policy whilst on the premises. This is outlined in our Visitors Information Sheet, which is shared on arrival at school. Phones must be turned off and put away. They should not be out in front of pupils unless permission has been given by the headteacher. Volunteers must not take personal photographs when supporting on trips, even if it is of their own child. This must be shared with all volunteers in trip preparation.

Parents

Parents working on a voluntary basis in school would be expected to follow our policy whilst on site. We would ask parents on site to ensure that their use of mobile phones is courteous and appropriate to the school environment.

We allow parents to photograph or video school events such as shows or sports day using mobile phones – **but insist that parents do not publish any images (including on any social media sites) that include children other than their own.**

Dissemination

This policy will be shared with staff, external providers and volunteers on induction. It will be available to parents on the school website.