

Policy for the use of phones on site for children and parents



Policy Author:	Headteacher
Approved by:	To be approved at the next Full Governing Body
Approved date:	
Review date:	

Aims:

- To set clear guidelines in relation to mobile phones for children.
- To ensure safe and appropriate practice at Holy Trinity Primary School.

This policy works in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Safeguarding
- Behaviour
- Anti- bullying
- IT acceptable use

We are a smartphone free school, and we distinguish between basic phones and smartphones. In this policy, the terms mobile phone, basic phone and brick phone are used to mean a mobile phone without access (or potential access) to the internet. The term smartphone is used to mean any mobile phone with access (or potential access) to the internet.

Rationale for restrictions and delaying smartphone use:

The school leadership team and governors have determined that waiting longer to introduce smartphones benefits children's mental health and well-being, focus and broader development. The restrictions also aim to mitigate practical challenges posed by mobile phones, such as the risk of theft, loss, or damage and greater risk to pedestrian safety due to loss of focus.

Specific concerns regarding smartphone use by children include:

- Social and emotional mental health: Access to platforms with age limits (usually 13+) can expose children to social media stress, unrealistic images, peer pressure, and online bullying. Three in ten pupils worry about maintaining friendships and their mental health (source: National Behaviour Survey: Findings from Academic Year 2021/22, cited in the DfE guidance re mobile phones in school.)
- Wellbeing and sleep: Screen time displaces positive activities like socialising, exercise, and good sleep. The blue light from screens and the temptation to scroll and message late at night can affect sleep quality, impacting mood, concentration, and behaviour at home and school.
- Safety risks: Smartphones pose risks of cyberbullying and exposure to harmful content, such as violence or inappropriate material. Even with parental controls, they can give access to unsuitable websites, videos, and messages. One in five children aged 10-15 have experienced at least one type of bullying behaviour online (source: Office for National Statistics (ONS), based on the 10- to 15-year-olds' Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW))

The government has introduced guidance which encourages all schools to introduce rules which prohibit the use of phones at school, to help pupils focus on their education, and the friends and staff around them. The guidance may be found at the following link: [Mobile phones in schools - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/mobile-phones-in-schools)

Roles and Responsibilities

- All pupils are responsible for adhering to this policy.
- All staff (including teachers, support staff, and supply staff) are responsible for adhering to and enforcing this policy.
- Volunteers, or anyone else otherwise engaged by the school, must alert a member of staff if they witness, or are aware of, a breach of this policy.
- The Senior Leadership Team (SLT) are responsible for monitoring the policy, reviewing it, and holding staff and pupils accountable for its implementation.

Online Safety

- Holy Trinity Primary School is committed to monitoring and managing the use of mobile devices in the context of safeguarding and adhering to our obligations under the Department of Education's Filtering and Monitoring Standards.
- All mobile phone use at the school must comply with our Acceptable ICT Use Policies and Safeguarding Policy

The Use of Mobile Phones by Children:

- Only pupils from years 5 (Summer term) and 6 are permitted to bring a mobile phone to school; however, this will need to be handed in at the school office on arrival at school and can be collected at the end of the school day. We accept that parents/carers may provide their child with a phone to protect them from everyday risks involving personal security and safety. We acknowledge that providing your child with a mobile phone gives parents reassurance that they can contact their child if they need to speak to them urgently either on their journey to, or from, school. Please be aware that children are not permitted to have their phones on them during the school day.
- We advise parents to consider a brick/non-smart phone when purchasing a phone for their child.

Daily procedures:

Children who bring a mobile phone to school are required to adhere to the following procedures:

- Turn off their mobile phone before entering the school.
- Hand the mobile phone to an adult at the gate for safekeeping immediately upon arrival at school.
- The mobile phone will be locked away until the end of the school day. The mobile phone may not be kept in the child's school bag.
- Children must collect their mobile phone at the end of the school day from their class teacher.

- The mobile phone must not be turned on until after they have left the school premises.
- If attending the Breakfast Club before school or Afterschool Club at the end of the day, the mobile phone must be handed in to the Club staff.

Exemptions:

In line with the Equality Act 2010, we recognise limited cases where pupils should be exempt from the rules because they have a special educational need, a disability, a medical need, or, because of a safeguarding concern.

- If a smartphone is required for medical reasons e.g. diabetes, its acceptable use will form part of an agreed and regularly reviewed care plan.
- Any smartphone that has been agreed for other reasons following a formal meeting with the headteacher, will need to be handed to the office for the day. To arrange a meeting contact the school office in the first instance.

Consequences:

- **Confiscation:** Children found in possession of a mobile phone who have not handed it in, will have the phone confiscated. It will be kept in the school office, and parents will be notified.
- **Collection:** The child will not be permitted to collect the mobile phone without their parent/carer coming to the school and meeting a member of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT).
- **Liability:** The school accepts no responsibility for replacing lost, stolen, or damaged mobile phones.

The Use of Mobile Phone by Adults:

Ensuring the safe and appropriate use of mobile phones and smartphones for parents/carers:

This section details the expectations for parents and carers accessing the school premises during drop-off, collection, or other activities.

- **Restriction:** Parents and carers should not be using mobile phones on the school premises, particularly when dropping off or picking up children at the end of the day. We ask all parents and carers to help us maintain a focused, screen-free environment for our children during drop-off and collection times, allowing children to transition smoothly and securely from their school day

Exceptions for parents/carers for special events and photo sharing:

- **Exceptions:** Exceptions to this rule are made for special events such as class assemblies, performances, concerts and Sports Day as the school appreciates that parents/carers may wish to keep memories of such occasions.
- **Sharing restrictions:** Parents and carers are reminded before each event that Images and videos taken on these occasions should not be shared on social

media. Sharing restrictions are vital for child protection, data protection, religious or cultural reasons and personal privacy.

Use of Mobile Phones for Volunteers and Visitors:

Upon their initial visit volunteers and visitors are given information informing them they are not permitted to use mobile phones on the premises. If they wish to make or take an emergency phone call, they may use the office telephone. Neither are volunteers or visitors permitted to take photographs or recordings of the children.

The Governing Body of Holy Trinity Primary School allows staff to bring in mobile phones for their own personal use. However, they must be always kept in their bags or cupboards and are not allowed to be used in the classrooms when children are present, in toilets, or in school play areas. If staff fail to follow this guidance, this should be reported to the Head Teacher who will decide what action should be taken.

If staff need to make an emergency phone call which would mean breaching this policy, they must do so from a school phone, make a call outside of the school premises or use their mobile phone in the staffroom.

Staff must ensure that there is no inappropriate or illegal content on their personal device.

There are digital cameras/iPads available within the school and only these should be used to record visual information within the consent criteria guidelines of the local authority and the school.

When children undertake a school trip or journey, mobile phone use by adult leaders should be limited to contact with the school office or venues being visited, except in emergencies and then only by approved telephones.

Members of staff may only contact a parent/carer on school approved mobile phones.

All staff should consistently enforce the school's policy on the use of mobile phones.

Review:

Holy Trinity School is committed to monitoring and managing mobile device use in the context of safeguarding and adhering to the Department of Education's Filtering and Monitoring Standards.

This policy will initially be reviewed after one year, and then every two years thereafter.