

Loudwater Combined School

Use of Mobile Devices Policy

Introduction and aims

At Loudwater Combined School we recognise that mobile devices, including smart phones and watches, are an important part of everyday life for our pupils, parents and staff, as well as the wider school community.

Our policy aims to:

- Promote, and set an example for, safe and responsible phone use.
- Set clear guidelines for the use of mobile devices for pupils, staff, parents and volunteers.
- Support the school's other policies, especially those related to Child Protection and behaviour.

This policy also aims to address some of the challenges posed by mobile devices in school, such as:

- Risks to child protection
- Data protection issues
- Potential for lesson disruption
- Risk of theft, loss, or damage
- Appropriate use of technology in the classroom

Roles and responsibilities

All staff (including teachers, support staff, and supply staff) are responsible for 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 Headteacher is responsible for monitoring the policy every two years, reviewing it, and holding staff and pupils accountable for its implementation.

Use of mobile devices by staff

Personal mobile devices:

- Staff (including volunteers, contractors and anyone else otherwise engaged by the school) are not permitted to make or receive calls, or send texts, while they are working face to face with the children.
- Use of personal mobile phones and other devices must be restricted to non-teaching time, and to areas of the school where pupils are not present (such as the Staff Room/Teacher PPA Room etc).
- Staff must NOT let children use their personal mobile devices under any circumstances.
- There may be circumstances in which it's appropriate for a member of staff to have use of their phone during contact time. For instance: For emergency contact by their child, or their child's school or whilst awaiting a call back from a doctor.
- In the case of acutely ill dependents or family members, the headteacher will decide on a case-by-basis whether to allow for special arrangements. If special arrangements are not

deemed necessary, school staff can use the school office number 01494 524919 as a point of emergency contact.

Data protection

Staff must not use their personal mobile phones or other devices to process personal data, or any other confidential school information. More detailed guidance can be found in the schools Data Protection Policy.

Safeguarding

Staff must refrain from giving their personal contact details to parents or pupils, including connecting through social media and messaging apps. Staff must avoid publicising their contact details on any social media platform or website, to avoid unwanted contact by parents or pupils.

Staff must not use their mobile phones or other devices to take photographs or recordings of pupils, their work, or anything else which could identify a pupil. If it's necessary to take photos or recordings as part of a lesson/school trip/activity, this must be done using school equipment.

Using personal mobiles for work purposes

In some circumstances, it may be appropriate for staff to use personal mobile phones for work. Such circumstances may include, but aren't limited to:

- Emergency evacuations
- Supervising off-site trips
- Supervising residential visits

In these circumstances, staff will:

- Use their mobile phones in an appropriate and professional manner, in line with our staff code of conduct
- Not use their phones or other devices to take photographs or recordings of pupils, their work, or anything else which could identify a pupil
- Refrain from using their devices to contact parents, wherever possible. If necessary, contact must be made via the school office

Use of mobile phones or other smart devices by pupils

Children who walk to school in Year 5 and Year 6 or Young Carers who need to be contactable, can bring a phone into school. This phone cannot be a smart phone and should only allow calls and texts to be made and received.

All such mobile phones are to be handed in to the school office and collected at the end of the day. They must not be left in school bags, or taken into the classroom. No mobile phones are to be taken on any school trips.

Sanctions

If a pupil is in breach of this policy, the mobile phone or device will be confiscated and the parents will be contacted.

If staff are informed or have reason to believe that a pupil's mobile phone or device has any inappropriate content, e.g. indecent images. Parents will again be contacted.

Only in exceptional circumstances will staff exercise the power to search pupils' phones or other smart devices, as set out in the DfE's guidance on searching, screening and confiscation. The DfE guidance allows staff to search a pupil's phone or device if they have reason to believe the phone contains pornographic images, or if it is being/has been used to commit an offence or cause personal injury.

Certain types of conduct, bullying or harassment can be classified as criminal conduct. The school takes such conduct extremely seriously, and will involve the police or other agencies as appropriate. Such conduct includes, but is not limited to:

- Sexting
- Threats of violence or assault
- Abusive calls, emails, social media posts or texts directed at someone because of someone's ethnicity, religious beliefs or sexual orientation.

Use of mobile devices by parents, volunteers and visitors

Parents, visitors and volunteers (including governors and contractors) must adhere to this policy as it relates to staff if they are on the school site during the school day.

This means:

- Not taking pictures or recordings of pupils, unless it's a public event (such as a school fair), or of their own child
- Using any photographs or recordings for personal use only, and not posting on social media without consent
- Not using devices in lessons, or when working with pupils

Parents, visitors and volunteers will be informed of the rules for mobile device use when they sign in at reception or attend a public event at school. A copy of this section of the policy will be shared with all visitors when they sign in at reception.

Parents or volunteers supervising school trips or residential visits must not:

- Use their phone or other device to contact other parents
- Take photos or recordings of pupils, their work, or anything else which could identify a pupil

Parents or volunteers supervising trips are also responsible for enforcing the school's policy for pupils using their phones and other devices, as set out above.

Parents must use the school office as the first point of contact if they need to get in touch with their child during the school day. They must not try to contact their child on his/her personal mobile during the school day.

Loss, theft or damage

Pupils bringing phones to school must ensure that phones are appropriately labelled, and are stored securely in the school office during the school day. Pupils must secure their phones as much as possible, including using passwords or pin codes to protect access to the phone. Staff must also

secure their personal phones and devices, as well as any work phone provided to them. Failure by staff to do so could result in data breaches.

The school accepts no responsibility for mobile phones that are lost, damaged or stolen on school premises or transport, during school visits or trips, or while pupils are travelling to and from school. Staff and pupils are made aware of this disclaimer.

A copy of this policy has been placed in the staff room and is available on Teacher Share/School Policies/Safeguarding information.

Confiscated phones or devices will be stored in the school office in a locked cabinet, parents will be asked to collect their child's mobile device as soon as possible. Any lost phones or devices should be returned to the school office, where we will then attempt to contact the owner.

Monitoring and review

The school is committed to ensuring that this policy has a positive impact of pupils' education, behaviour and welfare. When reviewing the policy, the school will take into account:

- Feedback from parents and pupils
- Feedback from teachers
- Records of behaviour and safeguarding incidents
- Relevant advice from the Department for Education, the local authority or other relevant organisations

December 2024