

Ursula Taylor Church of England School



Mobile Phone Policy

For children, staff, volunteers and visitors.

February 2024

Introduction and Aims

At Ursula Taylor Church of England School the welfare and well-being of our children is paramount. The aim of the mobile phone policy is to allow users to benefit from modern communication technologies, whilst promoting safe and appropriate practice through establishing clear and robust acceptable user guidelines. This is achieved through balancing protection against potential misuse with the recognition that mobile phones are effective communication tools. It is recognised that it is the enhanced functions of many mobile phones that cause most concern, offering distractions and disruption to the working day, and which are most susceptible to misuse – including the taking and distribution of indecent images, exploitation and bullying. However, it is difficult to detect specific usage, this policy refers to **ALL** mobile communication devices.

Scope

This policy applies to all individuals who have access to personal mobile phones on site. This includes, staff, volunteers, committee members, children, young people, parents, carers, visitors and contractors. This list is not exhaustive.

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

- ✚ Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- ✚ Staff Handbook / Code of Conduct
- ✚ Behaviour Policy
- ✚ Anti-Bullying Policy
- ✚ E-Safety / Acceptable Use Policy

Code of Conduct

A code of conduct is promoted with the aim of creating a cooperative workforce, where staff work as a team, have high values and respect for each other; thus creating a strong morale and a sense of commitment leading to increased productivity.

Our aim is therefore that all practitioners:

- ✚ Have a clear understanding of what constitutes misuse
- ✚ Know how to minimise risk
- ✚ Avoid putting themselves into compromising situations which could be misrepresented and lead to possible allegations
- ✚ Understand the need for professional boundaries and clear guidance regarding acceptable use

- ✚ Are responsible for self-moderation of their own boundaries
- ✚ Are aware of the importance of reporting concerns promptly

It is fully recognised that the rigid regulations on the actions of others can be counterproductive. An agreement of trust is therefore promoted regarding the carrying of mobile phones within the school, which is agreed by all users.

Personal Mobiles – Staff

- ✚ Staff are not permitted to make/receive calls/texts during contact time with children. Emergency contact should be made via the school office
- ✚ Staff should have phones on silent or switched off and out of sight (e.g. in a drawer, cupboard, bag or pigeon hole) during class time.
- ✚ Mobile phones should not be used in a space where children are present
- ✚ Use of phones (including receiving/sending texts and emails) should be limited to non-contact time when no children are present e.g. in office areas, staffroom, empty classrooms
- ✚ It is also advised that staff, security protect access to functions of their phone
- ✚ Should there be exceptional circumstances (e.g. acutely sick relative), then staff should ask the Headteacher if they can have their phone with them in case of having to receive an emergency call
- ✚ Staff are not at any time permitted to use recording equipment on their mobile phones, e.g. to take recordings of children, or sharing images. Legitimate recordings and photographs should be captured using school equipment such as cameras and ipads
- ✚ Staff should report any usage of mobile devices that cause them concern, to the Headteacher
- ✚ Staff should respectfully challenge anyone using a mobile device when children are present.

Mobile Phones for work related purposes

We recognise that mobile phones provide a useful means of communication on off-site activities. However, staff should ensure that:

- ✚ Mobile use on these occasions is appropriate and professional (and will never involve taking photographs of children)
- ✚ Where possible mobile phones should not be used to make contact with families during school trips – all relevant communications should be made using the school mobile phone, or through the school office
- ✚ Where parents/carers are accompanying school trips they are informed not to make contact with other parents/carers (via calls, texts, email or social networking) during the trip or use their phone to take photographs of children. Mobile phones should be on silent and kept away from children.

Personal Mobiles – Children

We recognise that mobile phones are part of everyday life for many children and that they can play an important role in helping children to feel safe and secure. However, we also recognise that they can prove a distraction in school and can provide a means of intimidating or bullying others. Therefore:

- ✚ Children are NOT permitted to have mobile phones in school or on school trips.

Unless:

- ✚ The child is in Year 4 (Summer Term only), Year 5 or Year 6 and walks to and from school without an adult. Phones will be permitted to aid emergency contact on the journey to and from school. If a parent wishes their child to have a phone in school for this reason, this is to be done with the knowledge that the school will not take responsibility for the mobile phone whilst on school premises.
- ✚ Children in Y4 (Summer Term only) Y5 and Y6 must turn off and hand in their phone on arrival at school. They will be stored in the child's classroom in a lockable drawer. They will then be collected at the end of the school day for the journey home.

- ✚ ONLY children whom walk to / from school will be permitted to have mobile phones in school. Children who bring a phone to school who are not walking will have their phone confiscated and a parent will be required to collect it from a member of the Senior Leadership Team.
- ✚ All phones MUST be clearly labelled for easy identification.
- ✚ Phones brought to school will not be the responsibility of the school or staff, we take no responsibility for any damage or loss that may occur when phones are on school grounds.

Where mobile phones/ devices are used in or out of school to intimidate or bully others, then the Headteacher has the power to intervene. In order for mobile phones to be used successfully and appropriately, parents/carers and school staff will work in partnership to ensure that our children are fully aware of how to keep themselves and others safe and also that their responsibilities to behave in an appropriate manner are clear and fully understood.

The Headteacher has the power to intervene in any situation where a child is using a mobile phone inappropriately, either endangering themselves, or using a phone to intimidate or bully another child. The Headteacher reserves the right to remove the permission to have a phone in school.

Governors, Volunteers, Visitors and Contractors

All Governors, Volunteers and Contractors are expected to follow our mobile phone policy as it relates to staff whilst on the premises.

On arrival, such visitors will be informed of our expectations around the use of mobile phones.

Parents/Carers

Whilst we would prefer parents / carers not to use their mobile phones while at school, we recognise that this would be impossible to regulate and that many parents / carers see their phone as essential means of communication at all times.

We therefore ask that usage of mobile phones, whilst on the school site is *courteous* and *appropriate* to the school environment. Mobile phones should not be used in areas where children are present including circulation areas e.g. corridors, cloakrooms and by the school office.

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

Dissemination

This mobile phone policy will be shared with members of the school community as detailed above and will be part of the Staff induction process. It will be available via the school office and website.

Date Updated: February 2024

Date for Review: February 2026

Ursula Taylor Church of England Primary School

Mobile Phone Parental Information

(only for Year 4 (Summer Term) Year 5 and Year 6 children)

Dear Parent / Carer,

As a parent/carer, it is entirely your decision whether your child walks to school on their own or has a phone. There is no requirement for children walking to / from without an adult to have one.

However, in accordance with our mobile phone policy, if your child is walking to / from school without an adult and you wish them to have a mobile phone for emergency use, please read the following information to ensure you are aware of our expectations and the responsibilities we ask you and your child/ren to uphold.

Please ensure you discuss the following with your child/ren and talk them through emergency procedures that you would like them to follow.

- ✚ Your child **MUST** turn off their phone and hand it to their class teacher at the start of the school day. Phones will be stored in a locked drawer in their classroom and will only be released at the end of the school day before walking home.
- ✚ Only children who walk to / from school without an adult will be permitted to have a mobile phone in school and only then, if a parent has completed and returned the attached permission form.
- ✚ Any child who has an unauthorised phone in school, will have the phone confiscated and a parent will be required to collect the phone from a member of the Senior Leadership Team.
- ✚ ALL phones **MUST** be clearly labelled to aid identification
- ✚ Mobile phones will not be allowed for school trips – phones will be stored in school in the usual way.
- ✚ An emergency phone number for the school must be stored in the phone 01234 359128 named 'Ursula Taylor EMERGENCY' – This is for dire emergencies only and if a parent cannot be contacted. (NB This number will only be available for use between 8:15 am and 4:30pm)
- ✚ Children must **NOT** use their phone on the journey to and from school for anything other than emergencies. Children need their focus to be on Road Safety and getting home as quickly and safely as possible.
- ✚ If a child is found to have used their phone inappropriately, the school reserves the right to withdraw the privilege of having a phone in school and will enforce the school behaviour policy to deal with incidents
- ✚ Whilst children are wearing school uniform they are expected to abide by the school behaviour policy and procedures.

Review Due: February 2026