

# SOKE EDUCATION TRUST

## Mobile Device and Camera Use in School Policy

Approved via Governorhub

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## **MOBILE DEVICE AND CAMERA USE IN SCHOOL POLICY**

### **Aims**

Soke Education Trust and its associated schools recognise that parents may wish their children to have mobile phones for use in cases of emergency. However, mobiles/cameras can be used inappropriately and are potentially targets for theft and bullying especially via social media. The Local Governance Committee has therefore adopted this policy to:

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

### **Legislation and Guidance**

This policy is based on requirements set out in the document Keeping Children Safe in Education and the [2017 statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage \(EYFS\)](#). Photos of children must not be taken without prior discussion with the Headteacher or member of the Senior Leadership team and in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018.

Education and Inspections Act 2006

DfE Guidance on searching, screening and confiscation.

This policy complies with our funding agreement and articles of association.

### **Roles and Responsibilities**

#### **Staff**

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 2 years, reviewing it, and holding staff and pupils accountable for its implementation.

#### **Pupils**

- Mobile phones/cameras should not be used on school premises. Pupils who require a mobile phone to ensure their safety travelling to and from school should keep them switched off/on silent and out of sight in their bag or locker.
- In very unusual circumstances, such as a family emergency, pupils should seek staff permission to use their phone.
- Smart watches should not be brought to school. Smart watches pose the same concerns as mobile phones in terms of safeguarding.
- Pupils who ignore this policy and use a mobile/camera/smart watch on school premises without permission will be required to hand over their device to a member of staff and parents will be asked to collect it subsequently from the school office or class teacher.
- If a member of staff of the school has any suspicion that a mobile device has unsuitable material stored on it, pupils will be required to hand over the phone to a member of staff.

Parents will be asked to collect it from a senior member of staff. In circumstances where there is a suspicion that the material on the mobile may provide evidence relating to a criminal offence the device will be handed over to the police for further investigation<sup>1</sup>.

Parents will need to recover the device from the police in such circumstances.

- If deemed necessary schools are permitted to confiscate devices from pupils under sections 91 and 94 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006
- Staff have the power to search pupil's devices (as set out in the DfE's guidance on searching, screening and confiscation) if there is reason to believe it contains inappropriate 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 (consensual and non-consensual sharing nude or semi-nude)
  - Up skirting
  - Threats of violence or assault
  - Abusive calls, emails, social media posts or texts directed at someone on the basis of someone's ethnicity, religious beliefs or sexual orientation
- Pupils are strongly discouraged of bringing higher value devices into school.
- Pupils remain responsible for their own property and will bear the responsibility of any losses.
- Parents should be aware that whilst there are obvious benefits to students having a mobile device 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.
- Any failure to comply with the above guidelines may result in normal disciplinary action to be taken, including the consideration of permanent exclusion of the pupil concerned.

### **Parents, Volunteers and Visitors**

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

- Parents and visitors will be asked to turn phones off when volunteering in classrooms.
- Parents and visitors will be asked to turn their phones to silent whilst attending assemblies and other pupil-based celebration events so that there is no disruption to the school's programs.
- We accept that there may be some parents/carers who wish to use their mobile phone camera facility to take photographs of their child while performing in special assemblies or events. To safeguard the privacy of pupils all images must be used for their own personal use and not shared via social media.
- Adults either in school or accompanying children on school trips should not use their cameras or mobile phone cameras to take pictures of pupils or to contact other parents.
- Adults, visitors or volunteers in school should only use their mobile phone within the confines of the school office and personal cameras and mobile phone cameras should not be used to take pictures or recordings of children, their work, or anything else which could identify a pupil
- Inappropriate use of a mobile phone/camera is a safeguarding concern and will be logged and recorded in the same way as any other child protection issue. In circumstances where there is a suspicion that the material on the mobile may provide evidence relating to a criminal offence the phone/camera will be handed over to the police for further investigation<sup>1</sup>.

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.

## **Staff**

Staff (including volunteers, contractors and anyone else otherwise engaged by the school) are not permitted to make or receive calls, or send texts during contact time.

- For classroom-based staff, mobile phones should be switched to silent and left in a safe place during lesson times and any contact time with pupils.
- To make telephone contact with a pupil, they should use the school telephone in the office.
- Staff should always avoid contacting pupils or parents from their personal mobile phone and should not willingly give their mobile phone number to pupils or parents.
- The school cannot take responsibility for items that are lost or stolen.
- Staff use of mobile phones during their working day should be:
  - discreet and appropriate e.g.: not in the presence of pupils – using the staffroom or office to make calls is appropriate; using your phone calendar to book a meeting is appropriate; using your phone in the classroom during lesson time is not appropriate.
  - in keeping with their professional responsibilities and expectations.
- Staff must delete all photos and videos of children used for observation purposes and stored in passworded files from their school laptops or i-pads on a monthly basis unless it is deemed necessary to keep them as evidence (eg in EY setting). In which case, photographs that are kept for evidence will be kept on the individual staff members' school laptop; accessed by their own personal log-in, on their private Google drive and not in a Team drive. The file will be password protected. A diary note will be made and the photograph will be deleted when it is no longer required for evidence.
- Staff should never send to, or accept from, colleagues or pupils, texts or images that could be viewed as inappropriate.
- With regard to camera phones, a member of staff should never use their phone to photograph pupils(s) or allow themselves to be photographed by pupils. There may be, on occasions such as during school trips, a desire for staff to use their phone camera to take photographs, in such instances permission must be sought before doing so from the Headteacher and these must be deleted as soon as they have been used in line with the school acceptable use code of conduct policy.
- Staff must not use their personal mobile phones to process personal data or any other confidential school information.
- This guidance should be seen as a safeguard for members of staff, and staff should understand that failure to comply with the policy may result in the enforcement of the disciplinary procedure. Staff should refer to the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, Acceptable Use Code of Conduct and Whistleblowing Policy.
- Inappropriate use of a mobile phone/camera is a safeguarding concern and will be logged and recorded in the same way as any other child protection issue.
- 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

## **Work Phones**

Where appropriate to the role and activity, the school may provide work phone for work purposes. Only authorised staff are permitted to use school phones, and access to the phone must not be provided to anyone without authorisation.

Staff must:

- Only use phone functions for work purposes, including making/receiving calls, sending/receiving emails or other communications, or using the internet
- Ensure that communication or conduct linked to the device is appropriate and professional at all times, in line with our staff code of conduct

<sup>1</sup>*There has been a recent court case where a person has received a custodial sentence for showing someone a video on a mobile phone, which caused them distress. Parents and pupils should be aware that such incidents are likely to be treated seriously by the courts.*

### **Links to other policies**

Acceptable Use Code of Conduct  
Data Protection (GDPR)  
Safeguarding and Child Protection  
Whistleblowing