

St Jerome's Catholic Primary School

Mobile-Phone Policy

Rationale

Mobile phones are now a feature of modern society and an increasing number of our staff and pupils own one. It is recognised that parents/carers may choose to let their child keep a mobile phone with them when coming to school for safety reasons to maintain contact after the end of a school day.

It is also recognised that mobile phones and smart devices today can present some safety and behavioural issues for our staff and children. These would revolve around:

- Distraction from learning.
- The high value of many phones
- The integration of cameras into phones leading to potential child protection and data protection issues.
- Access to unfiltered internet content within a school context.
- Phone to phone interconnectivity through internet access, Bluetooth that provides the potential for the sharing of inappropriate content or illegal file sharing.
- The 'always on, always contactable,' nature of mobile phones that could provide potential for cyber bullying or the sharing of an individual's location.

The school wishes to have a balanced response that:

- Recognises parents/carers wishes to allow their child to own a mobile phone and have it available at the start and end of a school day.
- Respects our children's good behaviour and develops their self-control.
- Ensures children and staff are protected from the potential negative issues described above.

To achieve this aim we will adhere to the following guidelines:

Children

- Phones must always be switched off (not on silent mode) on entering school.
- Phones must be 'handed in' as the children enter class, stored for the day securely e.g. in a class box in the teacher's cupboard and then returned at the end of the day. The phones should not be taken out for any reason without a staff member's permission.
- Phones must not be used for any purpose (e.g. phoning, texting, surfing the internet, taking photos, checking the time, taking videos) whilst on our school site.
- If a child breaches these rules the phone will be confiscated and given to the main office. It will be returned to the child after a discussion with parents.
- Must not use a mobile phone in or **out of school** in an inappropriate manner that involves any member of our school community. This could include:
 - Sharing inappropriate content with other children.
 - Showing inappropriate content to other children.
 - Forwarding or authoring offensive or slanderous messages.
 - Threatening or bullying through text or internet eg WhatsApp or other communication apps.

If the school is made aware of inappropriate usage they will work with the parents/carers of the children concerned to take appropriate action. In the first instance we will contact the child's parent/carer to ask them to look at their child's phone with us. If we cannot contact the parent/carer, staff will investigate the phone for inappropriate content. In all cases the phone will be confiscated and will not be returned until the investigation is complete.

*NB: Schools now have a legal duty to act upon behaviour taking place out of school that impacts on another child or a member of our staff.

Parents/carers are requested:

- To keep mobile phones on silent or switched off when in arranged meetings with school staff.

Staff

The school and governors recognise how the use of mobile phones has changed. They are not just used for making calls or sending messages today. The school and governors trust the professional judgement of colleagues using the following guidelines that have been agreed by staff and governors.

- Phones must not be used for phoning, texting, surfing the internet, taking photos, taking videos **during lesson time**. Phones can be used to check the time, used as a timer or to check calendar dates.
- After informing, and in agreement with DSL or Head teacher, staff can access their phones to receive important messages/calls such as medical appointments, updates on health/welfare of relatives.
- Phones can be used to make calls in an emergency e.g. an accident takes place on the field and an ambulance is required.
- Phones must be stored out of sight during lesson time and meeting time. In staff meetings, they should only be used for work purposes.
- Phones on silent mode during meeting time except in exceptional circumstances in which case they should inform the member of staff leading the meeting.

N.B. As sanctioned by governors, staff are allowed to take photographs of the children on their phones to be published with immediate effect on our St Jerome's social media accounts. The images must then be promptly deleted and deleted from "recently deleted" on their phone. Generally, school i-pads should be used to take images during the school day.

Volunteers/Visitors

- Volunteers/Visitors should only use their phones in the school staffroom.
- Visitors to any school events may use their phone in line with our Video and Photographic Image policy.
- Any visitors to our school site will be challenged by staff if they observe that individual(s) using their phone(s) not in line with the above.

The school accepts no responsibility whatsoever for theft, loss, damage or health effects (potential or actual) relating to mobile phones. Any phone brought to school by a child is the responsibility of the child and their parent/carer. Staff are expected to be responsible for their own mobile phones.