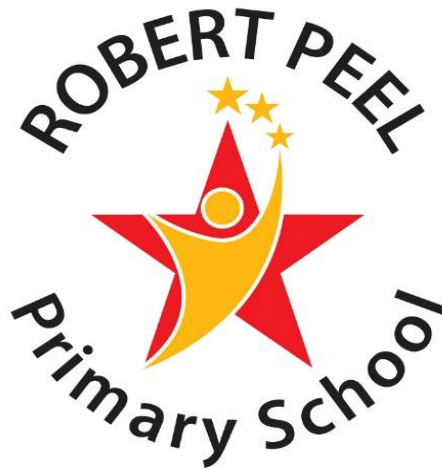


Robert Peel Primary School

Mobile Phone Policy



Date policy last reviewed: April 2024

Signed by:

_____ Headteacher Date: _____

_____ Chair of Governors Date: _____

Introduction & Aims

At Robert Peel Primary School we are committed to ensuring the safety of children in our care. We recognise that mobile phones in the school have a role to play for the purpose of communication, but we are aware that casual or inappropriate use of mobile phones on site could pose a risk to children and adults.

The enhanced functions of many mobile phones are of most concern and are most susceptible to misuse. Misuse includes the taking and distribution of indecent images, exploitation and bullying. Mobile phones can cause an unnecessary distraction during the working day and can be intrusive when used in the company of others.

When mobile phones are misused, it can impact on an individual's dignity, privacy and right to confidentiality. Such concerns are not exclusive to children and young people; hence there is a duty to protect the needs and vulnerabilities of everyone. It can be difficult to detect when such devices are present or being used, particularly in relation to enhanced functions, such as cameras. The use of all mobile phones is, therefore, limited, regardless of their capabilities.

The aim is to avoid distraction and disruption of the working day, and to minimise the opportunities for any individual to make any covert images or misuse functions in any other way.

This policy applies to all staff, volunteers and visitors.

Please note that for the purposes of this policy, the term 'mobile phone' also covers any electronic device with the capacity to be used as a form of communication, either through the device itself or any applications stored on the device.

Staff Personal Mobile Phones

- Staff must not be using or carrying personal mobile phones during the school in non-designated spaces. This protects staff from being distracted from their work and from allegations of inappropriate use. Phones must be safely stored during the school day.
- If staff have a break time during their working hours, they may use their mobile phones during these times in the staff room or designated spaces where children are not present.
- In an emergency, staff needing to make a personal call during a lesson or whilst on duty should first obtain agreement from SLT, ensure that adequate cover has been put in place and make the call in an area not used by children.
- Staff must give the school's telephone number to their next of kin in case it is necessary for the staff member to be contacted, in an emergency, during working hours.
- A personal mobile phone may be taken on school trips in accordance with guidance – see 'The Use of Mobile Phones on Trips' section below.
- Camera or video functions on personal mobile phones must not be used by staff to take images of children under any circumstances.
- Staff are not required to make work calls on their own phones, either mobile or landline, however, in exceptional circumstances, if this should be necessary then they are advised to use the prefix 141 before dialling the recipient's number to ensure their own number is protected.

- Staff must never store parents', carers' or children's telephone numbers on their mobile phones and staff must never give their private mobile number to parents, carers or children.
- Failure by staff to comply with the mobile phone policy guidelines could result in disciplinary action.

Children

- Children who walk to and from school without an accompanying adult may carry a mobile phone for safety. In these cases, children may bring a mobile phone into school but this is turned off on entry to the school's grounds and handed to their class teacher on arrival to their classroom. These phones will be locked securely during the school day and only handed back when the children are leaving school.
- Parents and carers need to be aware that whilst there are obvious benefits to children having a mobile phone 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.
- We would also like to alert parents and carers to the risks that using a mobile phone has while walking to and from school. Children who are concentrating on using their phone can have reduced general safety awareness which may result in road accidents and/or injury if a child is not paying attention to their surroundings.
- Mobile phones deposited to staff by children will be kept safely in a locked drawer/ cupboard. Whilst the school will take every reasonable care, it accepts no responsibility whatsoever for theft, loss, damage or health effects (potential or actual) relating to mobile phones. It is the responsibility of parents and carers to ensure mobile phones are properly insured. It is recommended that children's phones are security marked and password protected.
- Children are not allowed to bring mobile phones into any other areas of the school and are not taken on school trips.
- The only exception to this rule is where a mobile device is required for medical reasons for example diabetic children who use the device to monitor their sugar levels. In these cases a safety talk will have been undertaken with the child and parents on how the phone can be used safely in school.
- Any mobile phones discovered to have been brought into the school and not handed in to the office will be confiscated immediately. Parents or carers will be informed.
- If a member of staff has any suspicion that a mobile phone brought into school by a child has unsuitable material stored on it, the child will be required to hand over the phone immediately to a member of staff and parents or carers will be asked to collect it from a member of the Senior Leadership Team. In circumstances where there is a suspicion that the material on the mobile phone may provide evidence relating to a criminal offence the phone will be handed over to the school's safeguarding lead for further investigation and the parent or carer asked to collect it from them.

Visitors, Parents and Carers

- Notices are displayed in the entrance areas that mobile phones are not to be used.
- Visitors, contractors and supply staff are not allowed to use mobile phones on the school site and phones must be kept securely out of site. Mobile phones can be used in the staff room and designated areas. There may be occasions that contractors review their phones linked to their business. Clear safeguarding expectations are set out in Visitor Guidance documentation and this is shared with them. If photos are required of the site this will be overseen by a member of the Senior Leadership Team and no children will be present.
- If a visitor, parent or carer is seen using their mobile phone, they will be asked politely to turn it off/desist from using it/remove it from children's view.
- It is recognised that many parents and carers use their mobile phone as a camera/video device to record their child at special performances e.g. class assemblies, concerts, etc. On these occasions the use of a phone is permitted for photographing/videoing only; images should only be taken by parents and carers if they include their own child and the use of these images is for their own personal use and must not be uploaded for any internet use including Facebook or any other social networking sites or used in any form of publication unless they are solely of their own child. The school may request that at times no filming or photography takes places, this is to safeguard the children.
- The school recognises that children may inadvertently be included in photographs by another parent; the school, therefore, are obliged to warn parents and carers of the legal and safeguarding risks of publishing such photographs on any platform. The placing of any photographs of children on social media is dangerous and parents may be in breach of the Data Protection Act if they upload photos of other children without the explicit consent of that child's parents.

School Mobile Phones

- The school uses a mobile phone for the Squirrels Before and After School Club. Parents have this number to contact staff if they are arriving late during these sessions and it links to the Ring doorbell so staff can see who has arrived for drop-off or collection. Staff can use this phone to contact parents if required during the session as the emergency phone. The phone is stored out of the way of children and never leaves the school site, being locked up out of school hours. The camera feature is never used and the internet feature.
- The school uses two mobile phones for swimming. One is held in the office and one for emergency use by the pool. These are locked away when not in use and have no camera features.

The Use of Mobile Phones on School Trips

- Carrying mobile phones on trips can help to ensure safety for all members of the school party. However, it is important that the following guidance is adhered to in order to keep children safe and protect staff and volunteers from accusations of inappropriate use:

- The party leader should carry the office mobile phone for use in contacting other staff members or volunteers on the trip, contacting the school or contacting the emergency services.
- Members of staff and volunteers may carry their own, personal mobile phones within the following guidelines:
 - Personal phones should only be used to contact staff members or volunteers on the trip, the campus or emergency services. If possible, these calls should be made away from children.
 - Personal phones should not be used for any purpose other than school business for the duration of a trip.
 - On residential trips this will apply while the member of staff or volunteer is on duty. Staff and volunteers should ensure that next of kin are provided with the school number so that in an emergency the school is contacted and will make contact with the relevant person through the party leader.
 - If it becomes necessary for a member of staff or volunteer to make a personal call or text, then the party leader or another member of staff should be informed and take responsibility for the pupils in the group while the call or text is made away from sight and sound of any pupils.
 - Personal mobile phones must not be used under any circumstances to take photographs or videos of pupils. Volunteers are acting role models for the duration of the trip and therefore must not take photos or videos of any pupils, including their own child, using a mobile phone or any other mobile device, e.g. camera or tablet, without the express permission of the party leader. Volunteers may be asked to take photographs of their group using a school or centre device – this must be passed back to the party leader at the end of the trip.
 - The party leader may ask volunteers to provide them with their mobile phone number for the duration of the trip so that they can be contacted in case of emergency. The party leader undertakes to ensure that these numbers are not held on any mobile device or in any written form after the end of the trip.
 - It is advised that if the party leader is using their own mobile phone, then if they need to contact anyone during the trip they do so by pre-dialling 141 (some mobile providers use a different prefix – staff are advised to check this with their provider) before the number so that their own number remains protected.

This information will be shared with staff and volunteers assisting on trips as part of the trips briefing by the party leader.