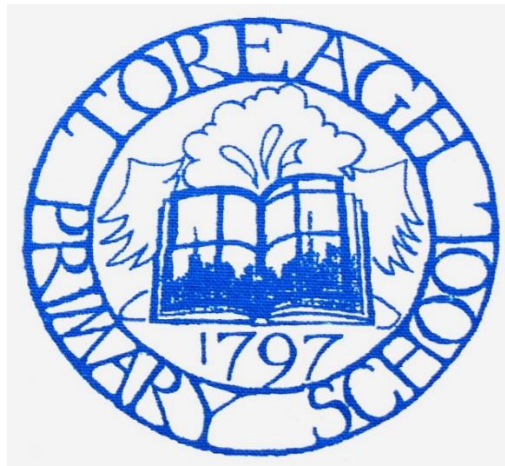


TOREAGH PRIMARY SCHOOL



Communication Technologies Policy

(mobile phones/ smart watches etc)

Date: March 2021

Review date: March 2024

Introduction and Aims

At Toreagh Primary School the welfare and well-being of our pupils 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 communication technology user guidelines. This is achieved through balancing protection against potential misuse with the recognition that communication technologies (phones/watches) are effective communication tools. It is recognised that it is the enhanced functions of many communication tools which 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, as it is difficult to detect specific usage, this policy refers to ALL communication devices.

Scope

This policy applies to all individuals who have access to personal communication technologies on site. This includes staff, volunteers, Governors, children, parents, carers, visitors and contractors. This list is not exhaustive.

This policy should also be read in relation to the following documentation: -

- Safeguarding Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy

Code of Conduct

A code of conduct is promoted with the aim of creating a co-operative workforce where staff work as a team, have high values and respect each other; thus creating a strong morale and sense of commitment, leading to the highest standards across the school. 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 misinterpreted 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 behaviours; and
- are aware of the importance of reporting concerns promptly.

It is fully recognised that imposing rigid regulations on the actions of others can be counterproductive. An agreement of trust is therefore promoted regarding the carrying and use of mobile devices within the setting, which is agreed to by all users.

Mobile Devices – 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 their devices on silent or switched off and out of sight (eg in a drawer, handbag or pocket), during class time.

- Mobile devices should not be used in a space where children are present (eg classroom, playground).
- Use of devices (including receiving/sending texts and e-mails), should be limited to non-contact time when no children are present eg in office areas, staff room, empty classrooms.
- It is also advised that staff use the security function to protect access to their phones.
- Should there be exceptional circumstances (eg acutely sick relative), then staff should make the Principal aware of this and can have their device in case of needing to receive an emergency call.
- Staff are not at any time permitted to use recording equipment on their mobile devices, for example, to take recordings of children, or sharing images. Legitimate recordings and photographs should be captured using school equipment such as iPads.
- Staff should report any usage of mobile devices which causes them concern, to the Principal.

Mobile Devices 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 include taking photographs of children
- where parents are accompanying trips they are informed not to make contact with other parents (via calls, text, e-mail or social networking), during the trip, or use their devices to take photographs of children.

Personal Mobile Devices – Pupils

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

- pupils are not permitted to have mobile devices (phones/ smart watches etc) in school or on school trips
- mobile devices brought to school or on school trips will be confiscated and returned at the end of the day.

CHILDREN'S USE OF MOBILE DEVICES OUTSIDE SCHOOL SHOULD BE MONITORED CLOSELY BY PARENTS/GUARDIANS – THIS IS TOTALLY THE RESPONSIBILITY OF PARENTS /GUARDIANS

Governors, Music Tutors, Volunteers, Visitors, and Contractors

All Governors, music tutors, volunteers, visitors, and contractors are expected to follow our mobile device policy as it relates to staff whilst on the premises. On arrival such visitors will be informed of our expectations regarding the use of mobile phones.

Parents

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

We therefore ask that parents' usage of mobile devices whilst on the school site is *courteous and appropriate* to the school environment.

Parents may wish to photograph or video school events such as sports day, using their mobile phones – **but insist that parents do not publish images (eg on social networking sites), that include any children other than their own.**

Dissemination

The Communication Technology Policy will be shared with staff and volunteers as part of their induction. It will also be available to parents via the school office and website.