



**RATHCOOLE PRIMARY SCHOOL
AND NURSERY UNIT
AND ASC PROVISION**



**ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY for MOBILE PHONES
AND RELATED TECHNOLOGIES:**



**RATIFIED BY GOVERNORS
Term 3 2022
DATE FOR REVIEW
Term 3 2022**

**Signed – Chair of Governors: Alison Bennington
Signed – Principal: Emma Quinn**

Introduction

Rathcoole Primary School has established the following Acceptable Use Policy for Mobile Phones and Related Technologies. The policy provides teachers, pupils, parents/guardians with guidelines and instructions for their appropriate use during school hours. This policy also applies to students during school excursions and extra-curricular activities.

Pupils

- Rathcoole Primary School **strongly discourages** pupils from bringing mobile phones to school.
- The school takes no responsibility for mobile phones. Mobile phones are brought to school entirely at the owner's risk. The school accepts no responsibility for replacing lost, stolen or damaged mobile phones.
- If pupils bring mobile phones to school, the phones must remain **switched off** and left into the school office (in the safe) while pupils are in class, the school building, the school grounds or during off site activities.
- Should parents need to contact pupils during the school day, or vice versa, this should be done following the usual school procedures: via the school office.
- Where a pupil is found by a member of staff to be using a mobile phone during the school day, the phone may be taken from the pupil and handed to the Principal or office staff to be secured in the safe. The mobile phone will be stored in the school office/safe until the end of the school day. The pupil may collect the phone at the end of the school day and the child's parent/guardian will be contacted.
- Phones must **NEVER** be used to photograph other children within the school. There are children in school whose parents have opted for 'no photographs' in the consent forms.
- If a pupil uses a mobile phone inappropriately (eg. Phone calls on school premises, to send inappropriate texts or to take inappropriate photographs/video footage of either other pupils or teachers), this will be regarded as a serious offence and the Principal will decide on appropriate disciplinary action in line with the school's Positive Behaviour Policy.

- If a pupil repeatedly misuses their mobile phone on school premises they will be required to leave the phone at the school office during the school day. The pupil will collect the mobile phone before leaving the premises at the end of the school day.
- It should be noted that it is a **criminal offence** to use a mobile phone to menace, harass or offend another person. The Principal may consider it appropriate to refer any such matter to the PSNI.
- If images (photographic or video) of other pupils or teachers have been taken, the phone will not be returned to the pupil until the pupil, in the presence of the Principal or the child's parent/guardian has removed the images. A member of the school's staff (Principal or Designated/Deputy Designated teacher) will always contact a parent/guardian before asking a child to delete material from their mobile phone.
- The Principal or Designated/Deputy Designated teacher will contact parents/guardians in all cases where inappropriate photographs/video/audio footage has been found.

RELATED TECHNOLOGY

- The procedures applying to the inappropriate use of mobile phones, apply equally to the inappropriate use of related technologies with similar capabilities, eg, messaging, recording (audio & video), photography etc.

EXEMPTIONS

- Exemptions of this policy can only be approved by the Principal and then only in exceptional circumstances. Pupils may be allowed to use these technologies under the specific guidance of their teacher on a specific day. Eg., the last day of term.

Staff

The use of the word **staff** in this policy also refers to **governors, volunteers, students (teaching and non-teaching) and work experience pupils** working in the school. **All such personnel** are required to adhere to this policy.

- Staff should not use their personal mobile phone or personal technology to take photographs of the pupils without good reason. E.g., a personal phone may be used if pupils are on a school trip and the member of staff has forgotten to bring a school camera. The photographs must be removed from the member of staff's phone at their earliest convenience. But this is not the preferred method and not recommended. If staff wish to do this they must alert a colleague that they have chosen to do so.
- Staff must have their phones or tablets on 'silent' or switched off during class time.
- Staff may not make or receive calls during teaching time. If there are extreme circumstances (eg. acutely sick relative), the member of staff will have made the principal aware of this and can have their phone on in case of having to receive an emergency call.

- Use of phones or tablets must be limited to non-contact time when no children are present.
- Phones and tablets must be kept out of sight (eg. drawer, handbag, pocket) when staff are with children.
- Calls/ texts must be made / received in private during non-contact time.
- Phones or tablets will never be used to take photographs of children or to store their personal data.
- A mobile will be carried to sporting fixtures away from school or on an educational visit for contacting parents in the event of an emergency.

SOCIAL MEDIA

- The use of social media sites (Eg., Facebook, Twitter, etc.) are now commonplace with the result that the lines between work and personal life can become blurred. To protect staff, pupils and the reputation of the school the following guidelines should be followed:
- Staff should not use the C2K system to engage in personal social media activities. This inappropriate use of social media sites may be treated as a disciplinary matter.
- If staff use social media sites for personal use, they are reminded that they have a responsibility to ensure they are posting comments or images that are not detrimental to their position as a member of staff of this school, the privacy or rights of pupils or the reputation of the school.
- **A common sense approach to the use of social media websites is recommended.**
- Under no circumstance should offensive or discriminatory comments be made about work colleagues on the internet. This may amount to cyber-bullying or defamation and could be deemed a disciplinary matter.

PARENTS AND THE VISITORS

- We request that parents and visitors do not use mobile phones or tablets in the school building or grounds.
- Mobile phones or tablets must never be used to take photographs in the school building or grounds.

CONCLUSION

- This policy will be reviewed in 2023 or amended in advance of this timescale as appropriate in line with appropriate guidance/legislation.