Cottam Primary School

Guidelines on the use of Mobile Phones in School

September 2026

Children at the heart of our school. School at the heart of our community

Introduction and Aims

At Cottam Primary School the welfare and well-being of our pupils is paramount. The aim of these guidelines is to allow users to benefit from modern communication technologies, whilst promoting safe and appropriate practice through establishing clear and acceptable mobile phone use. This is achieved through balancing protection against potential misuse with the recognition that mobile phones are effective communication tools. It is recognised that it is the enhanced functions of many mobile phones that cause the 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** mobile communication devices.

The DFE recommend that all schools should be mobile-phone free environments by default.

Scope

These guidelines apply to all individuals who have access to personal mobile phones on site. This includes staff, volunteers, governors, children, young people, parents, carers, visitors and contractors. This list is not exhaustive.

These guidelines should be read in relation to the following documentation:

- Child Protection Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Bring Your Own Device Policy (BOYD - does not include mobile phones)
- Behaviour Policy (incorporates the Mobile Phone Guidance)
- Guidance for Safer Working Practice for Adults who work with Children and Young People in Education Settings

Code of Conduct

The Staff Code of Conduct is promoted with the aim of creating a cooperative workforce, where staff as a team have high values and respect each other; thus creating a strong morale and sense of commitment leading to increased productivity. 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
- are aware of the importance of reporting concerns properly

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 phones within the setting, which is agreed by all users.

Personal Mobile Phones – 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 phones on silent or switched off and out of sight (e.g. in a drawer, handbag or pocket) during class time.
- Mobile phones should not be used in a space where children are present (e.g. classroom, playground).
- Use of mobile phones (including receiving/sending texts and emails) should be limited to noncontact time when no children are present e.g. in office areas, staff room, empty classrooms.
- It is also advised that staff use security measures to prevent access to functions of their phone.
- Should there be exceptional circumstances (e.g. acutely sick relative), then staff should make the Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher and the office staff aware of this and can have their mobile phone available in case of having to receive an emergency call. In the event of there not being a good mobile phone

signal it may be advisable to pass on the school's landline number and the office staff will make sure that if a call is received, they will contact the staff member immediately.

- Whilst carrying out their professional role, staff are not permitted to use their personal mobile phones to take recordings or photographs of children or to share images. Legitimate recordings and photographs should be captured using school equipment such as cameras and iPads.
- Staff should report any usage of mobile devices that causes them concern to the Headteacher.

Use of Mobile Phones for Work Related Purposes

- We recognise that mobile phones provide a useful means of communication on off-site activities. However, staff should ensure that:
- Use of mobile phones on these occasions is appropriate and professional (and will never include taking photographs of children).
- When parents are accompanying an educational visit, they are informed that they must not make contact with other parents (via calls, text, email or social networking) during the trip or use their mobile phone to take photographs or recordings of children.
- Staff are permitted to use their mobile phone for 2 factor authentication for specific school based electronic platforms such as CPOMS.

Personal Mobile Phones – Pupils

All pupils will be informed of the school's policy on prohibiting the use of mobile phones. They will be reminded of the policy – including consequences and sanctions for not following it – at the start of each school year and again, where appropriate, at regular intervals.

We recognise that mobile phones 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 of bullying or intimidating others. Therefore, pupils are not permitted to bring a mobile phone to school or on trips.

In the rare event of a parent wishing for his/her child to bring a mobile phone to school to contact the parent after school, the parent must discuss the issue first with their child's teacher. The phone must be handed in, switched off, to the teacher first thing in the morning and collected from them by the child at home time (the phone is left at the owner's own risk).

Mobile phones are prohibited for the use of children in school. Mobile phones brought to school by pupils without permission will be taken from the child, stored and returned to them at the end of the school day.

Where mobile phones are used in or out of school to bully or intimidate others, then the Headteacher does have the power to intervene to such an extent as it is reasonable to regulate the behaviour of pupils when they are off the school site – see Behaviour Policy.

Pupils should also be taught the benefits of having a mobile phone-free environment and be encouraged to see such an environment as desirable and valuable. This will help to create intrinsic motivation to support the school culture.

Volunteers, Visitors, Governors and Contractors

All volunteers, visitors, governors and contractors are expected to follow our use of mobile phones guidelines whilst on the school premises. On arrival all visitors will be informed of our expectations around the use of mobile phones. (See also Bring Your Own Device Policy)

Parents

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

We therefore ask that parents' usage of mobile phones whilst on the school site is courteous and appropriate to the school environment. We allow parents to photograph or video school events such as shows or sports day using their mobile phones whilst at the same time strongly advising them that they must not under any circumstances publish images (e.g. on social networking sites) that include any children other than their own.

Use of Mobile Phones for Managing Medical Conditions

Where a mobile phone is required to support the management or monitoring of a medical need, for example, monitoring diabetic blood glucose levels, the school will work with the staff member, child, parent/carer and relevant health professionals to ensure appropriate arrangements are in place.

A risk assessment and individual management plan will be completed to clearly set out how the mobile phone will be used, where it will be kept, who will have oversight of its use, and the arrangements for responding to any medical alerts or information. These arrangements will ensure that the child's medical needs can be safely managed while also maintaining the school's expectations regarding the appropriate use of mobile phones.

Dissemination

The use of mobile phone guidelines will be shared with staff and volunteers as part of their induction. It will also be available to parents via the school office and the website. Parents should also be encouraged to reinforce and discuss the policy at home as appropriate, including the risks associated with mobile phone use and the benefits of a mobile phone-free environment.