

Rasharkin Primary School



Acceptable use of Mobile Phones and Other Related Technologies Policy

RATIONALE

Rasharkin Primary School accepts that some parents/guardians give their children mobile phones to protect them from everyday risks involving personal security and safety. There is also increasing concern about children travelling alone on transport or walking to school. It is acknowledged that providing a child with a mobile phone gives parents reassurance that they can contact their child if they need to speak to them urgently. However as many of our children are collected or travel home on the bus home we expect few children will need to have a mobile phone with them in school.

Rasharkin Primary School strongly discourages pupils from bringing mobile phones (including smart phone watches) to school.

Rasharkin Primary School therefore 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.

- 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 kept out of sight 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 a member of the teaching staff. The mobile phone will be stored in the school office 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 (e.g. 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 would 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 or a member of the school's SLT 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 a member of the teaching staff or the child's parent/guardian has removed the images. A member of the school's teaching staff will always contact a parent/guardian before asking a child to delete material from their mobile phone.
- A member of the school's teaching staff will contact parents/guardians in all cases where inappropriate photographs/video/audio footage has been found.

RELATED TECHNOLOGY

November 2017, Oct 2022

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

SEXTING

Sexting is the sending or posting of sexually suggestive images, including nude or semi-nude photographs, via mobiles or over the Internet. There are two aspects to Sexting:

Sexting between individuals in a relationship

Pupils need to be aware that it is illegal, under the Sexual Offences (NI) Order 2008, to take, possess or share 'indecent images' of anyone under 18 even if they are the person in the picture (or even if they are aged 16+ and in a consensual relationship) and in these cases the PSNI will be contacted. Please be aware that, while offences may technically have been committed by the child/children involved, the matter will be dealt with sensitively and considering all of the circumstances and it is not necessarily the case that they will end up with a criminal record. It is important that particular care is taken in dealing with any such cases. Adopting scare tactics may discourage a young person from seeking help if they feel entrapped by the misuse of sexual images. Advice will be sought from CPSS.

Sharing an inappropriate image with an intent to cause distress

Schools are not required to investigate incidents. It is an offence under the Criminal Justice and Courts Act 2015 to share an inappropriate image of another person without the individuals consent. Police should be contacted to help prevent further such incidents. (Ref: Articles 33-35 of the Act for more detail)

If a young person has shared an inappropriate image of themselves that is now being shared further, whether or not it is intended to cause distress', the child protection procedures should be followed.

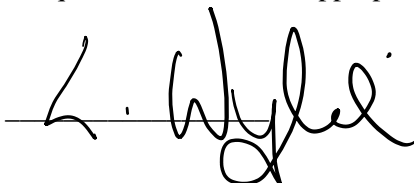
(Ref: DE Circular 2007/1 - guidance on Internet Use Policy; DE Circular 2011/22 - advice on the safe use of the internet and digital technologies; DE Circular 2013/25 - guidance on e-Safety policy and Acceptable Use Policy; DE Circular 2016/27 - guidance on online safety; DHSSPS Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland (2016) - Section 7.2.9 offers advice on Risks of Misuse of Digital Technologies)

EXEMPTIONS

Exemptions of this policy can only be approved by the Principal and then only in exceptional circumstances.

This policy will be reviewed as required or in line with appropriate guidance/legislation.

Signed (Chair of Governors):



Date: 26/10/22