

Cognita Schools Ltd

Safeguarding: Use of Mobile Devices and Cameras Policy

Meoncross School
including EYFS



September 2016

SCHOOL AIMS

- Academic Excellence
- Achievement in a wide range of activities
- Care and respect for the individual within a safe environment
- Creating opportunities for challenge and leadership
- Good discipline and a sense of order
- Service to others – in school and in the community

Safeguarding: Use of Mobile Devices and Cameras Policy

This policy should be read in conjunction with our policy “Acceptable use Policy”, and the associated agreement which is signed by all parents and pupils throughout the school.

AS MOST DEVICES ARE MULTI-PURPOSE, THIS POLICY APPLIES NOT ONLY TO MOBILE PHONES, BUT ALSO TO ANY OTHER ELECTRONIC DEVICE CAPABLE OF PLAYING OR RECORDING MUSIC OR VIDEO CLIPS OR CAPABLE OF TAKING PHOTOS.

RATIONALE

The implementation of our mobile phone policy will not cause any problems for the vast majority of Meoncross School pupils who use their mobile phones sensibly.

Generally, problems with mobile phones fall into three categories – text, speech and images. “Texting” enables students to 'talk' from any distance, from anywhere and at any time and gives them an outlet for personal and interpersonal interactions that may create or add to a range of problems which can have a negative impact on individuals. Extreme examples reported in the national press include 'cyber bullying'.

Camera and video phones combined with wireless technology enable students to make still images or videos of themselves or others and 'send' them to other phones or post them on the internet. Sometimes these can be candid images that have been taken without the consent or even knowledge of the person(s) involved. Occasionally, it can be with malicious intent.

Students with 'wireless' or blue tooth phones also can have unrestricted access to the internet and are able to download material from other similar devices. Many internet sites aim their content (text, music, images and videos) at young people who can download or upload files and then share them by sending them to other mobile phones. On some sites acceptable material, such as songs, cartoons or 'amusing' videos, are presented alongside unacceptable material putting vulnerable young people at risk.

At the extreme end there are a number of aspects of law that may apply to the misuse of mobile phones and other digital devices. In the most serious cases there may be a crime involved – for example, an incident being filmed might be an assault or breach of the peace. The misuse of phones might be an

offence under the Communications Act 2003, if it involves a message that is grossly offensive or is of an indecent, obscene or menacing character.

These technological developments combined with the ever-changing world that our young people are growing up in present new and unprecedented challenges for schools.

Our mobile phone policy aims to deal with these problems in school by banning the use of mobile phones during the school day. In particular, pupils are not allowed to use them at all on the school site at any time, for any purpose. If they are brought into school they must be handed into their form Teacher.

PURPOSE

The inappropriate use of mobile phones in school or during school supervised activities can be damaging to the aims of our school community and the well-being of members of that community. We also wish to reduce the opportunities for theft within school.

GUIDELINES

- i. We accept that some students and parents see possession of mobile phones as an aid to personal security and safety and consequently, where a student does bring a mobile phone to school, the phone must be handed into their Form Tutor. If contact with parents needs to be made by the pupil during the day, then the School Office phone can be used under the supervision of a member of staff.
- ii. Use of a mobile phone will lead to the application of proportionate sanctions, including temporary confiscation. All breaches of good conduct are considered on an individual basis taking into account the nature of the offence, its context and the prior behaviour history of the student concerned. The Headmistress or other member of the Senior Leadership Team will retain discretion in the application of sanctions depending on the nature of the individual situation considered.

SIXTH FORM STUDENTS

Mobile telephones may be used by sixth form students in the Sixth Form Common Room. This is a privilege exclusive to the sixth form. They should not be used outside of the Common Room. Failure to adhere to this rule, unless a teacher's permission has been granted, will result in immediate confiscation of the telephone and a subsequent loss of break and lunch privileges. Further failure will result in an SLT detention on Friday after school.