

Oakgrove Integrated Primary & Nursery School



Policy for acceptable use of mobile phones and related technologies by pupils.

Date: December 2023

Review Date: December 2024

Introduction

Oakgrove Integrated Primary School and Nursery accept that, at times, some parents/guardians give their children mobile phones, to protect them from everyday risks involving personal security and safety outside of 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 outside of the school day.

Scope

- This policy provides teachers, pupils and parents/guardians with guidelines and instructions for the appropriate use of mobile phones and related technologies during school hours.
- This policy also applies to pupils during school excursions and extra-curricular activities.

Review

Due to the ever-changing nature of information and communication technologies, this policy will be reviewed annually and, if necessary, more frequently in response to any significant new developments, such as guidance or legislation.

Exemptions

Exemptions of this policy can only be approved by the Principal and only in exceptional circumstances. Pupils may be allowed to use these technologies under the specific guidance of their teacher.

Guiding Principles

- Oakgrove Integrated Primary and Nursery School strongly discourage pupils from bringing mobile phones/smart watches/wearable technology to school.
- If parents deem that it is absolutely necessary for a pupil to bring a phones/smart watches/wearable technology to school, permission must be granted beforehand from the Principal, giving valid reasons for doing so:
 - eg the child is going to stay with the grandparents overnight;
 - the child is going to a sleepover at a friend's home after school.
- If permission is given, when brought to school, it must remain switched off and left in the office for safekeeping.
- Should parents need to contact pupils during the school day, or vice versa, this should be done following the usual school procedures, i.e. via the school office.
- phones/smart watches/wearable technology **must never be used to photograph children inside or outside the school except with the express permission of the principal or vice-principal.** (Any such photography must be within the guidelines of the school's Acceptable Use Policy.)
- The procedures applying to the inappropriate use of phones/smart watches/wearable technology, apply equally to the inappropriate use of related technologies with similar capabilities, e.g. messaging, recording (audio & video), photography etc.
- It should be noted that it is a criminal offence to use a mobile phone to menace, harass or offend another person. The Board of Governors may consider it appropriate to refer any such matter to the Police Service of Northern Ireland (P.S.N.I.).

Responding to incidents of phones/smart watches/wearable technology usage

If a pupil uses a phones/smart watches/wearable technology to, for example, make phone-calls on school premises, to send texts or to take photographs/video footage of either other pupils or staff, this will be regarded as a serious offence. The Principal will decide on appropriate disciplinary action, in line with the school's Positive Behaviour Policy.

Where a pupil is found by a member of staff to be using a phones/smart watches/wearable technology during the school day, the device will be taken from the pupil and handed to a member of the school's Leadership Team (L.T.). The device will be stored in the school office and the child's parent/guardian will be contacted to collect the device from the office.

If images (photographic or video) of other pupils or teachers have been taken, the device will not be returned to the pupil until the incident has been investigated according to the school safeguarding procedures. The device will be returned to the pupil's parents/carers in the presence of a member of the L.T. and the child's parent/guardian has removed the images.

In exceptional circumstances a device may be retained until further advice has been sought.

A member of the school's L.T. will contact parents/guardians in all cases where inappropriate photographs/video/audio footage have been found, advice will be sought from the EAWR's Child Safeguarding Team and the P.S.N.I. will also be contacted.

N. Gill
September 2023

Permission Request

I request permission for my child to bring their mobile phone to school for the following reason:

Child's name: _____ **Class:** _____

Signed: _____ (Parent/Carer).

The Principal will contact you as soon as a decision has been made.