

# **MOBILE PHONES AND CAMERAS POLICY**



**Learning, Developing, Growing Together**

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# **SPINFIELD SCHOOL**

## **POLICY ON THE USE OF MOBILE PHONES AND CAMERAS**

This policy applies to all pupils in the school, including in the EYFS

### **1. Use of Cameras and the manipulation and storage of images**

In this policy terms such as 'photography', 'pictures', 'images', 'camera', 'device' and 'digital technology' include both still and video media. The term 'camera' includes mobile phones, ipads and other equipment which has the capacity to take photographs.

At Spinfield School we recognise that the appropriate use of photography enhances many aspects of school life and the pupils' education. Mobile phone technology has become more sophisticated over recent years and will continue to evolve. Wireless connections in particular, extend the capabilities of mobile phones further; which allow access to new content and services, such as the internet, social networking sites and instant messaging. Many mobile phones offer camera, video and audio recording as standard. Mobile phones, alongside other technologies aim to change the way we communicate. This speed of communication often provides security and reassurance; however, as with any other form of technology, there are associated risks.

This policy is intended to ensure an environment in which children, parents and staff are safe from images being recorded and inappropriately used by providing a clear framework to ensure that the use of cameras and the storage of images:

- reflect good practice
- the safeguarding needs of the pupils are met
- staff are not distracted from their work with children.

The policy also recognises that learning to use digital technology is an important part of the computing curriculum. Teaching needs to ensure that pupils are able to learn how to use digital cameras and to edit and store photographs with an understanding of safeguarding requirements, for themselves and others, which is appropriate for their age and taking due account of the cyber-bullying aspects of the school's anti-bullying policy.

Photography is used at the school for a variety of purposes, including:

- Recording pupils' achievements, learning and progress, providing evidence to support EYFS assessments
- Recording school events and providing material for displays
- Communication with parents, for example to help reassure new parents or carers of young children that they have settled well into school life and provide prompt information on their children's activities on residential trips
- For publicity purposes (brochures, prospectus, media articles, website etc.)
- To support work undertaken by members of staff or students on placements for training and gaining further qualifications.

On their child's admission to the school, parents are asked to sign a consent form in relation to their child being photographed at school or during school events. Responses to the photography consent form are collated and all staff are made aware of the results. It is important that staff familiarise themselves with this information. If parents withhold consent for certain aspects of photography in

relation to their child, this must be respected. Images should be checked to determine whether photographs have been taken which inadvertently include pupils for whom consent has not been given. If this is the case, images should be destroyed, cropped or otherwise edited to ensure that parental consent is respected. If an image is edited for this reason, the original must be destroyed.

Periodically, professional photographers visit the school by arrangement to take portrait photographs and formal pictures of sports teams etc. Care should be taken that parental consent is respected and also that parents have not unintentionally withheld consent regarding such photographs. Any areas of doubt should be discussed with the Headteacher, who will arrange for parents to be contacted as appropriate. It is not compulsory for pupils to be included in portrait and team photography, nor is there any obligation on parents to purchase the resulting photographs.

From time to time a teacher, student or trainee teacher on placement may undertake a case study of a child, for example, as part of a training course to gain a qualification. In such situations, parental consent with regard to photography must be respected. Case studies will only be undertaken following prior written consent from the parent or carer and, except by prior arrangement between the Headteacher and the parent/carer, the child's name will be changed in the case study to protect his or her identity.

Occasionally a photograph may be taken which inadvertently catches a pupil in an unfortunate, embarrassing or compromising position. If this is the case, the image and any copies of it must be destroyed immediately.

### **Photography by parents**

It is very difficult to police the use of cameras by parents, for example in assemblies or at sports fixtures. However, if members of staff have concerns about the suitability of photography by parents, they should consult the Headteacher, who will consider the situation with reference to this policy and the school's safeguarding procedures and take appropriate action. Concerns will be taken seriously, logged and investigated appropriately.

Any parent who works at the school, for example as a volunteer, must abide by this policy. The teacher responsible (for example the Trip Leader for an educational visit which uses parent volunteers) must ensure that the parents involved are aware of this policy and abide by it.

If parents wish to make a video recording of a school event (nativity, concert, drama production etc), prior permission must be obtained from the Headteacher, who will consider the situation with respect to this policy and the levels of consent given by parents of other children involved. Since it is difficult to ensure that parental consent is respected in these situations, and not appropriate to share the details of consent given for particular children with other parents, the Headteacher may refuse permission for a video recording of the event to be made. As an alternative, the school may make an official video recording/DVD, the editing of which, before it is made available to parents, will ensure that parental consent is respected.

### **Use of equipment**

Except with permission from the Headteacher, staff may not use their own cameras, phones or other equipment to take pictures in school or at school events. School cameras are available for this purpose. A camera is kept and used in Early Years, all images are deleted after use in learning journeys and display.

Users bringing personal devices in to the school must ensure there is no inappropriate or illegal content on the device. Staff must ensure that this policy is observed when using other equipment which can be used in connection with photographs (photocopier, scanner, printer, ipads etc.)

### **Editing and storage of photographs**

All images taken by members of staff or volunteers at school or on school activities remain the property of the school. The school may require images to be deleted or edited as appropriate and may also select images taken by members of staff or volunteers for other purposes, with due attention paid to the requirements of this policy.

When editing images, staff must take due professional care and ensure that edited images do not mislead or misrepresent. Care must also be taken to ensure that images do not result in their subject being vulnerable to embarrassment, teasing, bullying or abuse.

Close attention must be paid to the storage of images, particularly whilst kept on portable media such as flash cards and memory sticks. Staff are responsible for the security of such media and the images they contain and must take all reasonable measures to ensure that they are kept safe and do not come into the possession of unauthorised people.

Unless specific prior consent has been obtained, members of staff and volunteers must not post school images on personal pages of social networking sites or other websites. The use of images on the school's official website and other approved sites is carefully monitored to ensure that it is in line with this policy and parental consent. The age limit for having a Facebook account is 13 and other social networks have similar restrictions. However, parents do not always enforce these restrictions. Staff must be vigilant in respect of any inappropriate use by pupils of school images or their own photographs of school events on social networks and must report any concerns to the designated person for child protection.

This policy is available on the school's website and all parents are made aware of how to find it. Final responsibility for the appropriate use of photography at school and in connection with school events rests with the Headteacher and the Child Protection Officer. They monitor school images and may require an image to be deleted, edited or removed from a particular document, website etc in accordance with the requirements of this policy.

The school assesses the risk of access to archived images by inappropriate individuals to be very low. Staff and volunteers must ensure that their use and storage of images maintains a similarly acceptable level of risk.

## **2. Use of mobile phones by members of staff and by volunteers in school**

Mobile phones provide many benefits to school life, notably in improving health and safety through better communication with staff in more remote parts of the school grounds and on off-site visits. However, mobile phones, particularly those capable of taking pictures, also present a challenge to the school community to ensure that pupils are safeguarded in relation to the potential for improper use and also that their education is not impeded by the use of mobile phones at inappropriate times. Pupils are not encouraged to have mobile phones in school however, some year 6 children may bring them in and hand them in to the class teacher who will keep them secure in a box in a cupboard.

Staff must be vigilant to ensure that the use of mobile phones, including their use by volunteers and visitors is always appropriate and that the safeguarding needs of the pupils are met. Any concerns should be discussed with the Headteacher or Designated safeguarding lead. Concerns will be taken seriously, logged and investigated appropriately.

Where a member of staff, visitor or volunteer has a mobile phone with the facility to take pictures, its use is subject to the policy on the use of cameras and the manipulation and storage of images, above. EYFS staff phones are kept secure in their area.

On arrival at school, staff should switch their phones off to silent during the course of the school day. Staff may use their phone at break times and lunch time provided that (i) pupils are not present, (ii) they are not on duty and (iii) this does not prevent them from responding to a request for assistance from another member of staff or other aspects of their professional duties. **Mobile phones must not be used in classrooms by staff during the school day** as there is always the possibility that other members of the school community could be aware of confidential conversations. Staff are expected to keep their phones in their classroom cupboard during lesson time. Phones are generally not to be used in the classrooms or areas where the children may be working. As part of our school policy on emergency procedures, each classroom has a red card that can be used in an emergency to summon help.

The school Site Manager and Headteacher are exempt from the restrictions on the use of mobile phones whilst on duty so that they can be contacted at all times by the school office in case of emergency. There is a school mobile phone available for staff to take on educational visits or outside in the school grounds.

By arrangement with the Headteacher, a member of staff's personal mobile phone may be designated as the means of communication for specific activities. The use of mobile phones by staff whilst on school duties must respect national legislation and common courtesies. For example, they must not be used whilst driving and should be switched to silent at events and venues where this is expected.

Parents and visitors are requested not to use mobile phones in school. They must not be used on school premises. This information is also displayed in guidance for volunteers.

**The school assesses the risk to pupils through the improper use of mobile phones to be very low.**