Mobile Phone Policy

Sir John Heron Primary School

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1. Introduction and aims

At Sir John Heron, we recognise that mobile phones and similar devices, including smartphones, are an important part of everyday life for our pupils, parents/carers and staff, as well as the wider school community.

Our policy aims to:

- Promote safe and responsible phone use.
- Set clear guidelines for the use of mobile phones for pupils, staff, parents/carers, visitors and volunteers.
- Support the school's other policies, especially those related to child protection and behaviour, such as the Staff Code of Conduct, Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, Data Protection Policy.

This policy also aims to address some of the challenges posed by mobile phones in school, such as:

- Risks to child protection.
- Data protection issues.
- Potential for lesson disruption.
- Risk of theft, loss, or damage.
- Appropriate use of technology in the classroom.

Note: throughout this policy, 'mobile phones' refers to mobile phones and similar devices.

2. Relevant guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the Department for Education's non-statutory mobile phone guidance and behaviour guidance. Further guidance that should be considered alongside this policy is Keeping Children Safe in Education.

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 Staff

All staff (including teachers, support staff and supply staff) are responsible for consistently enforcing this policy.

Volunteers, or anyone else otherwise engaged by the school, must alert a member of staff if they witness, or are aware of, a breach of this policy.

The headteacher is responsible for monitoring the policy every two years, reviewing it, and holding staff and pupils accountable for its implementation.

Staff will address any questions or concerns from parents/carers quickly, and clearly communicate the reasons for prohibiting the use of mobile phones.

4. Use of mobile phones by staff

4.1 Personal mobile phones

Staff (including volunteers, contractors and anyone else otherwise engaged by the school) are not permitted to use their personal mobile phone, while children are present during the school day. Use of personal mobile phones must be restricted to non-contact time, and to areas of the school where pupils are not present (such as the staffroom).

There may be circumstances in which it's appropriate for a member of staff to have use of their phone during contact time for urgent personal reasons, subject to senior leader agreement. For instance (this list is non-exhaustive):

- For emergency contact by their child, or their child's school.
- In the case of acutely ill dependents or family members.

The headteacher will decide on a case-by-basis whether to allow for special arrangements.

If special arrangements are not deemed necessary, school staff can use the school office number (020 8514 9860) as a point of emergency contact.

4.2 Data protection

Staff must not use their personal mobile phones to process personal data, or any other confidential school information, including entering such data into generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools such as chatbots (e.g. ChatGPT and Google Bard).

More information can be found in the school's Data Protection Policy, ICT acceptable use policy and Artificial Intelligence policy.

4.3 Safeguarding

Staff must not give their personal contact details to parents/carers or pupils, including connecting through social media and messaging apps.

Staff must avoid publicising their contact details on any social media platform or website, to avoid unwanted contact by parents/carers or pupils.

Staff must not use their personal mobile phones to take photographs or recordings of pupils, their work, or anything else that could identify a pupil. If it's necessary to take photos or recordings as part of a lesson/school trip/activity, this must be done using school equipment.

4.4 Using personal mobiles for work purposes

In some circumstances, it may be appropriate for staff to use personal mobile phones for work. Such circumstances may include, but are not limited to:

- **Classroom management:** Issuing homework, rewards or sanctions.
- **Authentication:** Use of multi-factor authentication.
- **Emergency procedures**: i.e. Lockdown, Evacuations, Invacuations.
- **Educational Visits:** Facilitating essential communication between staff, the school, and parents while off-site
- Supervising residential visits
- **SLT only**: Taking photographs to create reels for use on school's social media accounts, such as Instagram.

Staff should review the school's educational visits policy and emergency procedures, i.e. Lockdown Policy and Fire Emergency Management Procedure.

In these circumstances, staff will:

- Use their mobile phones in an appropriate and professional manner, in line with our staff code of conduct.
- Not use their phones to take photographs or recordings of pupils, their work, or anything else that could identify a pupil. Any necessary educational or trip photography must be conducted using official school equipment. For SLT taking photographs for the school's social

media account, photographs must be deleted immediately once photos have been uploaded onto the school's social media account.

- Refrain from using their phones to contact parents/carers. If necessary, contact must be made via the school office.

4.5 Work phones

Some members of staff are provided with a mobile phone by the school for work purposes.

Only authorised staff are permitted to use school phones, and access to the phone must not be provided to anyone without authorisation.

Staff must:

- Only use phone functions for work purposes, including making/receiving calls, sending/receiving emails or other communications, or using the internet.
- Ensure that communication or conduct linked to the device is appropriate and professional at all times, in line with our staff code of conduct.

4.6 Sanctions

Staff that fail to adhere to this policy may face disciplinary action.

See the school's staff disciplinary policy for more information.

5. Use of mobile phones by pupils

Pupils should not bring mobile phones to school, except under special circumstances (see 5.2).

Pupils that do bring a mobile phone into school must drop this at the main school office on arrival and collect it at the end of the school day.

Pupils are not allowed to use their mobile phones during the school day, including during lessons, in the time between lessons, at breaktimes and at lunchtimes.

5.1 Use of smartwatches by pupils

Smartwatches are wristwatches with smart technology in them. They can be used to tell the time, send and receive text and voice messages, make calls and listen to music. Some smart watches have wellness and health-related features.

Children should not bring smartwatches to school.

5.2 Exceptions for special circumstances

Some pupils are allowed to bring a mobile phone to school under the following circumstances:

- Pupils travelling to school by themselves.
- Young carers who need to be contactable.

- Pupils with diabetes who use their phones to monitor their blood sugar.

The school may permit pupils to use a mobile phone in school, due to exceptional circumstances. This will be considered on a case-by-case basis. To request such permission, pupils or parents/carers should contact the Headteacher by putting a request through the office: info@sirjohnheron.newham.sch.uk / 020 8514 9860 (Appendix 2 Form can be used).

Any pupils who are given permission must then adhere to the school's code of conduct for mobile phone use (see appendix 1).

5.3 Sanctions

If a pupil is found in breach of this policy, the Behaviour Policy will be followed with sanctions applied for serious offenses.

Other sanctions may include:

- Confiscation of mobile phones by the Headteacher (Schools are permitted to confiscate phones from pupils under sections 91 and 94 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006. Headteachers can confiscate mobile phones and similar devices for the length of time they deem proportionate, according to the DfE's guidance on mobile phones in schools.)

In each case, the sanction given must be reasonable and proportionate. The school will also consider whether:

- There are any relevant special circumstances (for example, age, religious requirements, special educational needs, disability)
- The pupil's behaviour may indicate they may be suffering, or at risk of, harm. If this is suspected, staff will follow the appropriate procedure set out in Part 1 of Keeping Children Safe in Education

Certain types of conduct, bullying or harassment can be classified as criminal conduct. The school takes such conduct extremely seriously and will involve the police or other agencies as appropriate.

Such conduct includes, but is not limited to:

- Sexting (consensual and non-consensual sharing nude or semi-nude images or videos)
- Upskirting
- Threats of violence or assault
- Abusive calls, emails, social media posts or texts directed at someone on the basis of someone's ethnicity, religious beliefs or sexual orientation

Staff have the power to search pupils' phones in specific circumstances, as set out in the DfE's guidance on searching, screening and confiscation. The DfE guidance allows staff to search a pupil's phone if there is a good reason to do so (such as having reason to believe the phone contains pornographic images, or if it is being/has been used to commit an offence or cause harm to another person).

6. Use of mobile phones by parents/carers, volunteers and visitors

Parents/carers, visitors and volunteers (including governors and contractors) must adhere to this policy as it relates to staff if they are on the school site during the school day.

Our school grounds are a mobile-free zone, and we ask for Parents/carers, visitors and volunteers (including governors and contractors) to avoid use of mobile phones for any reason, except under emergency circumstances.

This means:

- Not taking personal calls or answering text messages whilst inside the school building, except in an emergency.
- Not taking pictures or recordings of pupils, unless it's at a public event (such as a school fair), or of their own child.
- Using any photographs or recordings for personal use only, and not posting on social media without consent.
- Not using phones in lessons, or when working with pupils.

Parents/carers, visitors and volunteers will be informed of the rules for mobile phone use when they sign in at reception or attend a public event at school.

Parents/carers or volunteers supervising school trips or residential visits must not:

- Use their phone to make contact with other parents/carers.
- Take photos or recordings of pupils, their work, or anything else that could identify a pupil.

Parents/carers or volunteers supervising trips are also responsible for enforcing the school's policy for pupils using their phones, as set out in section 5 above, but must refer any sanctions to a member of staff, as they do not have the power to search or confiscate devices.

Parents/carers must use the school office as the first point of contact if they need to get in touch with their child during the school day. They must not try to contact their child on their personal mobile during the school day.

7. Loss, theft or damage

Pupils bringing mobile phones to school must ensure that the phones are appropriately labelled and are stored securely when not in use (by providing them to the main office during the day).

Pupils should label their phone, for example, by labelling with a post-it note, to ensure staff are aware who the phone belongs to.

Pupils must secure their mobile phones as much as possible, including using passwords or pin codes to protect access to the phone's functions. Staff must also secure their personal phones, as well as any work phone provided to them. Failure by staff to do so could result in data breaches.

The school accepts no responsibility for mobile phones that are lost, damaged or stolen on school premises or transport, during school visits or trips, or while pupils are travelling to and from school. A disclaimer informing pupils/parents/carers of the above will be on display in the main school office.

Confiscated phones will be stored in the school office in the secure front office.

Lost phones should be returned to the main office. The school will then attempt to contact the owner.

8. Monitoring and review

The school is committed to ensuring that this policy has a positive impact on pupils' education, behaviour and welfare. When reviewing the policy, the school will take into account:

- Feedback from parents/carers and pupils.
- Feedback from staff.
- Records of behaviour and safeguarding incidents.
- Relevant advice from the Department for Education, the local authority and any other relevant organisations.

If there are any concerns regarding this policy, these should be brought to the attention of the Headteacher in a timely manner.

Governors will review and approve this policy every two years, or earlier where changes are necessary.

9. Appendix 1: Code of conduct for pupils allowed to bring their phones to school due to exceptional circumstances

Code of conduct for pupils with mobile phones

You must obey the following rules if you bring your mobile phone to school:

1. You must store your mobile phone at the main school office during the school day. It must be dropped off on arrival and collected after school.
2. Phones must be switched off (not just put on 'silent').
3. You may not use your mobile phone during lessons.
4. You may not use your mobile phone in the toilets or changing rooms. This is to protect the privacy and welfare of other pupils.
5. You cannot take photos or recordings (either video or audio) of school staff or other pupils without their consent.
6. Avoid sharing your contact details with people you don't know, and don't share other people's contact details without their consent.
7. Don't share your phone's password(s) or access code(s) with anyone else.
8. Don't use your mobile phone to bully, intimidate or harass anyone. This includes bullying, harassing or intimidating pupils or staff via:
    a. Email
    b. Text/messaging app
    c. Social media
9. Don't use your phone to send or receive anything that may be criminal.
10. Rules on bullying, harassment and intimidation apply to how you use your mobile phone even when you aren't in school.
11. Don't use vulgar, obscene or derogatory language while on the phone or when using social media. This language is not permitted under the school's behaviour policy.
12. Don't use your phone to view or share pornography or other harmful content.
13. You must comply with a request by a member of staff to switch off, or hand over, a phone. Refusal to comply is a breach of the school's behaviour policy and will be dealt with accordingly.
14. Mobile phones are not permitted in any internal or external exam or test environment. If you have a mobile phone, you will be asked to store it appropriately, or turn it over to an exam invigilator, before entering the test room. Bringing a phone into the test room can result in your exam being declared invalid.

10. Appendix 2: Permission form allowing a pupil to bring their phone to school

Pupil details	
Pupil name:	
Year group/class:	
Parent/carer(s) name(s):	

The school has agreed to allow the above named pupil to bring their mobile phone to school because they (please tick):

- ☐ Travel to and from school alone
- ☐ Are a young carer
- ☐ Need the phone to support their medical needs
- ☐ Are attending a school trip or residential where use of mobile phones will be allowed
- ☐ Attend a before- or after-school activity where a mobile phone is required for the activity, or to contact parents/carers

Pupils who bring a mobile phone to school must abide by the school's policy on the use of mobile phones, and its code of conduct (see Appendix 1 of the Mobile Phone Policy).

The school reserves the right to revoke permission if a pupil does not abide by the policy.

Parent/carer signature: _____

Pupil signature (where appropriate): _____

For school use only	
Authorised by:	
Date:	

11. Appendix 3: Template mobile phone information slip for visitors

A copy of this slip should be given to visitors when they arrive at school.

Use of mobile phones and similar devices in our school

- Please do not use your phone whilst inside the school building, including taking personal calls, answering text messages, or using the internet, except in an emergency. If you must use your phone, you may exit via the front office, or volunteers/contractors may use the staff room.
- Please keep your mobile phone on silent/vibrate while on the school grounds.
- Please do not take any pictures or recordings of staff, or of pupils unless it's at a public event (such as a school fair), or of your own child (staff will advise you in this instance). Any photos/recordings permitted by the school must be kept for personal use only and not posted to social media without consent.
- Do not use your phone in lessons, or when working with pupils

The school accepts no responsibility for phones that are lost, damaged or stolen while you are on the school grounds.

A full copy of our mobile phone policy is available from the school office.

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