



## Mobile Phone & Electronic Devices Policy

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### Pembridge Hall School

Date of adoption of this policy	September 2021
Date of last review of this policy	September 2021
Date for next review of this policy	June 2022
Primary person responsible for this policy	Seema Manji [Head of Digital Learning]

**Circulation:** This policy has been adopted by the governors and is available to parents on request. It is addressed to all members of staff and volunteers and applies wherever they are working with children.

'Parents' refers to parents, guardians and carers.



## **Contents**

1. Scope of this policy
2. General rules for children
3. Searching, screening and confiscation
4. General rules for staff and visitors
5. Use of cameras
6. EYFS settings
7. Contact with parents/carers
8. Security
9. Health & safety considerations
10. Alpha Plus phones and devices



## 1. Scope of this policy

The purpose of this policy is to set out general rules about mobile devices and personal electronic devices, and to give staff guidelines regarding the appropriate use of such devices in the course of carrying out their duties.

The responsible, considerate and safe use of mobile phones and portable electronic devices is part of the multi-dimensional, social and behavioural goals which are embedded within our educational and management processes. This policy is part of our strategy for safeguarding children within our care. It complies with *Keeping Children Safe in Education 2021* and should be read in conjunction with our other policies, notably:

- Safeguarding and child protection
- Online safety
- Anti-Bullying
- ICT Usage
- PSHEE and RSE
- Photos and Images
- Social Media
- Data Protection

## 2. General rule for children

Children are prohibited from bringing mobile and personal electronic devices to school. The exception to this is where a Year 6 child has been granted parental permission to walk home alone and they are, therefore required to bring a mobile phone to school – these devices are handed to their class teacher who will store the phone in a locked location in the child’s classroom.

Our staff are authorised to search for<sup>1</sup> and to confiscate any device. They can also search the device and (if appropriate) delete content if they consider that it has been, or could be used to cause harm, to disrupt teaching or break the school rules. Inappropriate usage will be dealt with consistent with our policies on discipline, behaviour, sanctions and exclusions. If a member of staff has reasonable grounds to suspect that a device contains evidence in relation to an offence, they must give it to police as soon as is reasonably practicable. Any evidence of an offence or material that contains a pornographic image of a child should not be deleted prior to giving the device to the police.

## 3. Searching, screening and confiscation

Staff authorised by the Head have the right to search for, examine and confiscate any device where they reasonably suspect that the data or file on the device in question has been, or could be, used to cause harm, to disrupt teaching or break the school rules. This will be done in accordance with the Department for Education’s guidance: [Searching, screening and confiscation](#) (2018). Inappropriate usage will be dealt with consistent with our policies on discipline, behaviour, sanctions and exclusions. Following an examination of an electronic device, the member of staff has the right to erase any data or files, if they think there is a good reason to do so. However, care should be taken

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<sup>1</sup> If in doubt, staff should consult their Head/Principal and the Department for Education guidance: [Searching, screening and confiscation](#) (2018).



not to delete material that might be required in a potential criminal investigation. If a member of staff has reasonable grounds to suspect that a device contains evidence in relation to an offence, they must alert the Head and the DSL [or the Deputy DSL, when the DSL is not available] and, where there are safeguarding concerns, the Designated Safeguarding Lead [Nicola Mooney: [nicola.mooney@pembrokehall.co.uk](mailto:nicola.mooney@pembrokehall.co.uk)]. The device should then be given to police as soon as is reasonably practicable. Any incidents will be recorded in the online safety log.

#### 4. General rule for staff and visitors

The use of personal electronic devices by staff or visitors for any purpose when in the company of children is prohibited<sup>2</sup>. This applies to situations both on-site and off-site (e.g. on trips). When in the presence of children, personal electronic devices should be kept out of sight of pupils (e.g. in a draw, bag or jacket pocket and set to silent. In an emergency, personal calls can be directed to the school's landline number so that a message can be relayed to the member of staff.

Personal electronic devices may be used when not in the company of pupils. Where they are used, staff should be respectful and considerate towards colleagues and others, and should be mindful of setting an example, e.g. by not being unnecessarily distracted by electronic communications.

Staff must ensure that there is no inappropriate or illegal content on their personal devices. The Head reserves the right to check the contents of a staff-member's devices should there be any cause for concern relating to our responsibilities for the safeguarding of children.

#### 5. Use of cameras

An increasing number of electronic devices now have built-in cameras and have the capability to capture copy and transmit images and other recordings through a range of technologies and formats. Staff must not take or transmit any recording of pupils on any personal device. Only school hardware must be used for this purpose.

No parent or visitor is permitted to use a camera (including a mobile phone's camera facility) whilst on school premises, except for some<sup>3</sup> specific events such as plays, recitals, concerts, sporting events, open days or other promotional events. We strongly advise parents against the publication of any such photographs on the internet (e.g. on social media), and will request parents to remove any such material if we deem it illegal, harmful or inappropriate in any way.

Where appropriate, our policy regarding this matter should be explained clearly to parents by a member of staff before difficult situations arise.

Staff should also be aware that taking photographs of colleagues using personal devices should only happen with the permission of that member of staff.

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<sup>2</sup> A pragmatic and common sense approach must be taken to the interpretation of this rule in the context of evolving technologies. For example, the **Apple Watch** and other wearable devices would technically be in breach of this rule. If staff choose to wear such devices, they must be especially mindful that their professional behaviour is not compromised, either in the quality of their vigilance and supervision of children, or in the example they set to children by avoiding being, or being seen to be, distracted or addicted to message and alert-checking.

<sup>3</sup> We reserve the right to prohibit the use of cameras for some events if deemed inappropriate by staff.



See our *Photos and Images Policy* and *Social Media Policy* for further information on these matters.

## **6. EYFS settings**

Given the more vulnerable nature of children within the EYFS setting, extra care should be given to the use of devices in these year groups. All existing regulations regarding the use of devices apply to the EYFS. The following regulations are expected to be of particular note to the EYFS setting:

- Mobile phones must not be used in any teaching area or within the bathroom area.
- All mobile phones and similar devices must be stored securely away from pupils during contact time with children. This includes staff, visitors, parents, volunteers and students.
- Only school devices should be used to take photographs.

## **7. Contact with parents/carers**

All contact with Parents/Carers must be made through the Alpha Plus Group network: emails must be from a Group account and telephone calls made on a Group phone. Personal phones or other personal contact details should only be used with parents in an emergency.

## **8. Security**

Staff must ensure that personal electronic devices are PIN protected to ensure their own privacy and security. This also applies to the use of e.g. personal webmail accounts through school devices, which should also be password protected and not set to automatically log in.

## **9. Health and safety considerations**

In circumstances where staff are lone-working in remote areas of the school, or out of hours, a work mobile or two-way radio should be provided if there is no land-line in the room. Staff are reminded that using hand-held mobile phones whilst driving is a criminal offence.

## **10. Alpha Plus phones and devices**

Any staff member who has been provided with a Group mobile phone or device must comply with Group policies, which are available on the [Group Portal](#). These phones must be PIN protected at all times. Mobile phone usage data and associated phone bills are checked on a regular basis.