



**British International School and Montessori Education**

## **MOBILE PHONE POLICY**

## Statement of Intent

At the British International School and Montessori Education, we are committed to ensuring the safety of children in our care. We recognise that mobile phones in the school have a role to play for the purpose of communication, but we are aware that casual or inappropriate use of mobile phones could pose a risk to children and adults.

The enhanced functions of many mobile phones are of most concern and are most susceptible to misuse. Misuse includes the taking and distribution of indecent images, exploitation and bullying. Mobile phones can cause an unnecessary distraction during the working day and can be intrusive when used in the company of others.

When mobile phones are misused, it can impact on an individual's dignity, privacy and right to confidentiality. Such concerns are not just exclusive to children and young people; hence there is a duty to protect the needs and vulnerabilities of everyone.

It can be difficult to detect when such devices are present or being used, particularly in relation to enhanced functions, such as cameras. The use of all mobile phones is, therefore, limited, regardless of their capabilities.

The aim is to avoid distraction and disruption of the working day, and to minimise the opportunities for any individual to make any covert images or misuse functions in any other way.

This policy applies to all staff, volunteers, parents and visitors.

**Please note that for the purposes of this policy, the term 'mobile phone' also covers any electronic device with the capacity to be used as a form of communication, either through the device itself or any applications stored on the device.**

## Staff Personal Mobile Phones

- Staff must not carry personal mobile phones while working. This protects staff from being distracted from their work and from allegations of inappropriate use. Phones must be safely stored in a staff's bag or locked cupboard.
- If staff have a break time during their working hours, they may use their mobile phones during these times in the staff room or an office where children are not present.
- In an emergency, staff needing to make a personal call during a lesson or whilst on duty should first obtain agreement from their line manager, ensure that adequate cover has been put in place and make the call in an area not used by children.
- Staff must give the school's telephone number to their next of kin in case it is necessary for the staff member to be contacted in an emergency, during working hours.
- A personal mobile phone may be taken on school trips in accordance with guidance – see 'The Use of Mobile Phones on Trips' section below.

- Camera or video functions on personal mobile phones must not be used by staff to take images of children under any circumstances unless otherwise communicated by management or permission has been given.
- Staff are not required to make work related calls on their own phones or school's mobile however, in exceptional circumstances, if this should be necessary then they are advised to seek permission from their lines manager.
- Staff must never store parents', guardians', carers' (nannies and drivers) or children's telephone numbers on their mobile phones and staff must never give their private mobile number to parents, guardians, carers or children.
- Failure by staff to comply with the mobile phone policy guidelines could result in disciplinary action (See disciplinary policy).

## **Learners**

- Learners who walk to and from school without an accompanying adult or those chauffeured may carry a mobile phone for safety. In these cases, learners may bring a mobile phone to school but must deposit it with the school office at the start of the day and collect it from the office at the end of the day.
- Parents, guardians, and carers need to be aware that whilst there are obvious benefits to pupils having a mobile phone in terms of personal safety there are also some associated risks such as potential for theft, bullying and inappropriate contact, including grooming by unsuitable persons.
- We would also like to alert parents, guardians and carers to the risks that using a mobile phone has while walking to and from school. learners who are concentrating on using their phone can have reduced general safety awareness which may result in road accidents and/or injury if a child is not paying attention to their surroundings.
- Mobile phones deposited in the office by learners will be kept safely in a locked cupboard. Whilst the school will take every reasonable care, it accepts no responsibility whatsoever for theft, loss, damage or health effects (potential or actual) relating to mobile phones. It is the responsibility of parents, guardians and carers to ensure mobile phones are properly insured. It is recommended that learners' phones are security marked and password protected.
- Learners are not allowed to bring mobile phones into any other areas of the school.
- Any mobile phones discovered to have been brought into the school and not handed in to the office will be confiscated immediately. Parents or carers will be asked to collect the mobile phone from the school office.
- Learners are not allowed to carry mobile phones on any school trips.
- If a member of the staff has any suspicion that a mobile phone brought into school by a learner has unsuitable material stored on it, the learner will be required to hand over the phone immediately to a member of staff and parents or carers will be asked to collect it from a member of the senior leadership team. In circumstances where there is a suspicion that the material on the mobile phone may provide evidence relating to a criminal offence the phone will be handed over to the school's

safeguarding lead or to the principal for further investigation and the parent or carer asked to collect it from them.

### **Visitors, Parents and Carers**

- Notices are displayed in the Early Years Building advising visitors, parents, guardians and carers that mobile phones are not to be used.
- We ask all parents not to use mobile phones in the school from 9am until 3.20pm. This includes all uses including, texting and photographing.
- Visitors, drivers, nannies and contractors are not allowed to use mobile phones on the school premises and phones must be kept in their bags.
- If a visitor, parent or carer is seen using their mobile phone, they will be asked politely to turn it off/desist from using it/remove it from children's view.
- It is recognised that many parents, guardians and carers use their mobile phone as a camera/video device to record their child at special performances e.g. class assemblies, concerts, etc. On these occasions the use of a phone is permitted for photographing/videoing only; images should only be taken by parents, guardians and carers if they include their own child and that the use of these images is for their own personal use and must not be uploaded for any internet use including Facebook or any other social networking sites or used in any form of publication unless they are solely of their own child.
- The school recognises that learners/children may inadvertently be included in photographs by another parent; the school and centre, therefore, are obliged to warn parents and carers of the legal and safeguarding risks of publishing such photographs on any platform. The placing of any photographs of children on social media is dangerous and parents may be in breach of the Data Protection Act if they upload photos of other children without the explicit consent of that child's parents.

### **School Mobile Phone**

The school has a mobile phone that is issued to the admin for carrying out specific functions for the school. This phone will only be used for school-related communication and work.

### **The Use of Mobile Phones on School Trips**

Carrying mobile phones on trips can help to ensure safety for all members of the school or centre party. However, it is important that the following guidance is adhered to in order to keep children safe and protect staff and volunteers from accusations of inappropriate use:

- The field trip leader (FTL) should carry the office mobile phone for use in contacting other staff members or volunteers on the trip, contacting the school or contacting the emergency services. If the office mobile phone is unavailable (e.g. if another trip is on the same day) then the FTL should follow the advice below for staff use of personal mobile phones.
- Members of staff and volunteers may carry their own, personal mobile phones within them following guidelines:

- Personal phones should only be used to contact staff members or volunteers on the trip, the school or emergency services. If possible, these calls should be made away from learners.
- Personal phones should not be used for any purpose other than school business for the duration of a trip. This means that personal calls or texts should not be made or accepted. On residential trips this will apply while the member of staff or volunteer is on duty. Staff and volunteers should ensure that next of kin are provided with the school's number so that in an emergency the school is contacted and will make contact with the relevant person through the FTL.
- If it becomes necessary for a member of staff or volunteer to make a personal call or text, then the FTL or another member of staff should be informed and take responsibility for the learners in the group while the call or text is made away from sight and sound of any learner.
- Personal mobile phones must not be used under any circumstances to take photographs or videos of learners. Volunteers are acting role models for the duration of the trip and therefore must not take photos or videos of any learners, including their own child, using a mobile phone or any other mobile device, e.g. camera or tablet, without the express permission of the FTL. Volunteers may be asked to take photographs of their group using a school or centre device – this must be passed back to the party leader at the end of the trip.
- The party leader may ask volunteers to provide them with their mobile phone number for the duration of the trip so that they can be contacted in case of emergency. The party leader undertakes to ensure that these numbers or not held on any mobile device or in any written form after the end of the trip.
- It is advised that if the FTL is using his or her own mobile phone, then if they need to contact the school first or make their number private.

### **Effective / Review Dates**

This policy is effective from: 1st September 2020

This policy is due for review and republication on; 1st September 2024.