

BELLAGHY PRIMARY SCHOOL

POLICY FOR USE OF MOBILE DEVICES AND

USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA FOR MEMBERS OF STAFF, PARENTS AND CHILDREN

SCHOOL ETHOS AND MISSION STATEMENT

Bellaghy Primary School strives to provide, in partnership with parents, a broad quality education so that all the pupils can reach their full potential within a caring, secure environment promoting self-discipline, motivation and individuality.

RATIONALE

We live in a moving technological age and we recognise that every member of staff, parent and many children will have a mobile phone, ipad, Apple Watch, Fitbit etc. This policy addresses when and how mobile phones and other electronic devices are to be used in school.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media – interacting with other people online to exchange comments, ideas and innovations – is becoming an increasingly prevalent part of everyone’s social life. We at Bellaghy Primary School recognise that engaging with social media can be a very educational tool. However, a problem arises when boundaries between professional and personal on-line behaviour becomes blurred. This policy will help all members of staff to determine what is and is not acceptable.

STAFF MEMBERS’ USE OF MOBILE PHONE OR ELECTRONIC DEVICE

- Staff members should keep their phone on silent during the school day.
- Mobile phones may be used for personal calls, texts etc during break times (provided staff member is not on supervision duty.)
- Each staff member has an ipad which is the property of school. Staff may use this device to take photos for online platforms eg school Facebook page, school website, Twitter, Seesaw and for other school related purposes. This device must be password protected. Staff may upload photos and posts to these online platforms during the school day. Staff may take this device home in the understanding that it will not be left in the car.
- The Principal receives school emails on her personal mobile phone for her own convenience.

SAFE USAGE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

All members of staff need to ensure, both for the school's safety and their own, that any activity on social networking sites:

- does not bring the school into disrepute,
- does not bring them into disrepute,
- does not expose the school to legal liability,
- reflects 'safe internet' practices,
- reflects the school's standard of behaviour and staff code of conduct.

There are steps teachers can take to safeguard themselves from false allegations of misconduct. Both Twitter and Facebook keep logs of every instance of online activity – every post, message, interaction, like, friend, comment etc. If there's anything inappropriate, it will have been recorded and logged. But as well as clearly demonstrating what a user has done, the logs will clearly indicate and prove what has not been done online.

ACT RESPONSIBLY

At all times, members of staff should follow these guidelines:

- Be professional on the internet - including Facebook, Twitter and any other social media networks.
- Ensure profile is private.
- Don't post anything inappropriate, including comments or photos which might embarrass oneself or the school.
- Be careful what you 'like' or 'share.'
- Avoid interacting with, initiating contact with or 'friending' pupils (both current and past) using personal profile.
- Avoid interacting with, initiating contact with or 'friending' parents of current pupils using personal profile.
- Keep all school-related conversations focused on school, teaching and learning.
- Remember, there is potential for anything that is posted online to be copied and distributed. Bear this in mind every time a post is made.
- If you are tagged into something which you consider inappropriate, contact the media provider immediately.

PARENTS' USE OF MOBILE PHONE OR ANY OTHER PERSONAL ELECTRONIC DEVICE

(Please also refer to Code of Conduct for parents/Carers)

PHOTOS / RECORDING AT SCHOOL EVENTS

For the safety of all our children, parents are not allowed to use their personal device to photograph, record or video any child at a school event or activity eg Sports Day, Concert etc. At events like these, photographs and video recordings may be taken by an official photographer/videographer.

USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

The school Facebook page is a platform where we as staff members can share significant snapshots of our school day with our school family. The posts vary from photos of children engaged in their learning to the school weekly newsletter, advertising of events and monthly menu.

Parents are reminded that this platform is to be used for the purpose of celebrating what we do in school and keeping parents and other family members abreast of current activities and events including learning experiences. Parents are reminded to use this page in a respectful manner which will uphold the good name of our school.

If a complaint is to be made, this must be done in accordance with the Complaints' Policy.

Parents are reminded that staff are not allowed to accept friend requests or send friend requests to parents while they have children at the school.

PUPIL USE OF MOBILE PHONE OR ANY OTHER ELECTRONIC DEVICE

The use of mobile phones and electronic equipment (particularly with the invention of increasingly sophisticated equipment and integrated cameras) presents a number of problems in school, including:

- Mobile phones and electronic equipment can be valuable items and might be vulnerable to damage, loss or theft.
- Mobile phones and electronic equipment can pose problems in school with regard to discipline and potential bullying and cyber bullying.
- Even when apparently silent, the use of mobile phones for texting purposes could be distracting in terms of classroom discipline.
- Use of the newer phones and games consoles with built - in cameras could lead to child protection and data protection issues with regard to inappropriate photographs or distribution of images.

It is therefore school policy to prohibit the unauthorised use by pupils of mobile phones or other electronic/ communication devices while on our school premises, grounds or on trips or activities.

We at Bellaghy Primary School discourage and advise all parents to discourage pupils from bringing mobile phones and other electronic equipment to school on the grounds that they are valuable and may be damaged, lost or stolen. School staff cannot accept responsibility for equipment which is lost, damaged or stolen in school whilst in the possession of any pupil.

1. Where a pupil does bring a mobile phone or other electronic device to school, the device must remain switched off during the school day and may not be used, for any purpose, on school premises, grounds or activities (such as after school events or sports activities). Any mobile phone brought to school must be given to the class teacher in the morning where it will be kept locked securely in the office. The school will take responsibility for a phone or other electronic equipment if handed to the class teacher/ principal for safe keeping. It is the child's responsibility to ask for it at the end of the day.

2. If a pupil is found to be using a mobile phone or other electronic equipment for any purpose, the device will be confiscated from the pupil and returned only to the parent, guardian or carer at the end of the school day.
3. If photographs/ moving images have been taken on the camera device or phone these will be deleted immediately.
4. Inappropriate use of mobile phones or other electronic equipment will be regarded as a breach of discipline and will invoke the School's Behaviour Procedures.
5. Pupils and parents are reminded that in cases of an emergency, the school landline telephone number (02879386419) remains the appropriate point of contact.

CONSULTATION OF POLICY

This policy will be shared with all members of staff and a summary copy will be placed on the Staff Notice Board. The Policy will be placed within the Safeguarding Folder and on the school website. The Policy will be presented to the Board of Governors annually.

Policy Reviewed – October 2024

Review Due – October 2025