

Model Policy on the Use of Mobile Devices (including phones)

While mobile devices are commonly in use in today's society, it is recognised that such devices have the potential to be used inappropriately. Safeguarding of children within service activities is paramount and therefore it is necessary to implement the following policy in order to protect them and staff.

Mobile devices when used should not cause unnecessary disruptions and distractions within the workplace, and ensure effective safeguarding practice is promoted to protect against potential misuse.

Many devices offer Internet and email access, alongside functions such as messaging, camera, video and sound recording. These might be useful as part of the process of learning and documentation but there are associated risks that have to be managed.

Guidance for service staff and external contractors

The following information is current service policy on the management of the use of mobile devices in our activities and is expected to be adopted by our partners and any external contractors unless agreed otherwise in advance.

Permitted use of devices in activity situations

As a peripatetic profession that uses IT resources made available by the service and others for its work, there is a benefit in being able to make use of these resources in our professional role. To manage the risks involved the following must be followed:

1. In all cases the use of mobile devices for any aspect of professional activity must be made known to the host organisation (e.g. the school) first. If they have any concerns these must be resolved prior to any usage.
2. Unless it is impossible/impractical to do so staff must use devices owned and provided by the service or the host organisation for any learning activities. Therefore staff should plan their needs for playback or recording or other similar requirements where storage of audio or visual information is needed in advance and liaise with the organisation to ensure equipment is available. The service stresses that where audio or visual recording is a desirable learning process this should not be done with personal mobile devices. If, after agreement with line manager and school, own devices are used to access specific applications relevant to the lesson, this must be logged in the plan and noted in the lesson note book. Such examples would be tuning apps, garage band, aural test apps and accompaniments; not easily accessible elsewhere.

The expectation is that the data in a recording made on service or organisation equipment will be sent to the family/child and host organisation or service and deleted from the device, ideally witnessed by a colleague in the organisation or service, on the same day.

The only exception to this is the ability for staff to enter attendance or other service operational information using their own devices. Ideally this should be at the end of a session or class when the students have left/about to arrive or in a break time away from students. This should not intrude on or disrupt the provision of others.

3. If use of organisation devices is impossible or impractical then usage under point 3 must be agreed by:
 - The host organisation – this will be covered within the partnership agreement between the school and service but it is considered a good idea to inform the school.
 - The member of staff's line manager – you should let your line manager know that you need to make use of your own mobile device before you use it.
 - The child and family – this is covered in directly charged activity through the parent account where they can give permission in the account settings. Therefore staff should contact the parent by email or phone if the permission has not been given in order to request this. If the family permission is not obtained, either via consent form, account settings or some other appropriate formal process usage cannot take place.

If agreement is obtained then the member of staff may use their mobile device for learning purposes under these conditions:

- The usage is appropriate, time-limited and for a learning resource purpose or demonstration. It is recommended where possible that usage is during a group session rather than a 1:1 situation.
- Resources used should be age appropriate and should contain no material that could be misinterpreted or considered inappropriate. If in doubt, agree usage with school or service managers in advance.
- The usage is planned and parents and school and service know in advance the purpose and how any data will be handled.
- This usage is most likely beneficial when peripatetic staff wish to show specific learning resources available to them, e.g. technique demonstration or playing of a piece of music for learning, aural training or repertoire knowledge or use of music games and exercises available as resources.

Student Placements (e.g. Music Therapy – NB not work experience students)

Students who are working with the service as part of their course of study are bound by the same expectations with regard to use of devices. If they need to use a device other than one provided by their institution, the host organisation or the service then this must be agreed in advance in writing using the appropriate consent forms.

The student's institution must provide information to the service and the host organisation about their policy for handling consent, capture, storage and disposal prior to any usage of devices.

Non-tuition situations

In non-tuition situations staff may wish to have their personal mobile devices at work for use in case of emergencies, however there is a clear expectation that all personal use is limited to areas and times when there are no children present, or likely to be present. The service expects staff to lead by example:

- Other than in agreed exceptional circumstances or for the professional usage indicated above, mobile devices should be switched off or on silent and left in a safe place during the provision of activities.
- Staff members should never phone or text pupils or parents from their personal mobile devices, or give their personal mobile phone number to pupils or parents. If a member of staff needs to make telephone contact with a family, a service telephone or mobile should be used. Pupils should not be provided with service mobile numbers except for agreed touring emergency requirements but parents and carers and organisations can be provided with this.
- Staff should never send to, or accept from, colleagues or pupils, texts or images that could be viewed as inappropriate.
- Staff are not permitted to take photos or videos of pupils. If photos or videos are being taken as part of the service activities in a professional capacity, service or school equipment should be used for this. Staff should not allow themselves to be photographed by a pupil(s)
- This guidance should be seen as a safeguard for members of staff and the school. Any breach of school policy may result in disciplinary action against that member of staff.

Parent, visitors and contractors are respectfully requested not to use their mobile phones in any area where children/young people are present. Should phone calls and/or texts need to be taken or made, use is restricted to those areas not accessed by children to avoid any unnecessary disturbance or disruption to others.

Any individual bringing a personal device into the school must ensure that it contains no inappropriate or illegal content.

Related Policies and guidance:

Model Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

Guidance for Safer Working Practice for Adults who work with Children and Young People in Education Settings (March 2009, DCSF)