

Camphill Primary School



Mobile Phones and Other Similar Devices Policy

January 2025

The Department of Education (DENI) has provided Guidance for Schools on Pupil's Personal Use of Mobile Phones and other Similar Devices During the School Day.

DENI state that there are increasing concerns regarding the impact of mobile phones on children and young people's development, including their mental health and wellbeing, with key issues including sleep deprivation, attention fragmentation and addiction.

Research has found correlations between mobile phone restriction in schools and a range of positive outcomes, including reduced bullying, an overall reduction in social media usage, increased healthy play, reduced distraction and improved academic achievement.

DENI recommends that in light of the evidence, schools should take steps to restrict the use of mobile phones and other similar devices for pupil's personal use at school.

DENI endorses a ban on the use of mobile phones in Primary Schools.

No pupil's personal mobile devices on the school premises is the approach DENI recommends as most appropriate for Primary Schools.

Camphill Primary School has therefore established the following Policy for Mobile Phones and Other Similar Devices. The policy provides teachers, pupils, parents/guardians with guidelines and instructions for their appropriate use during school hours.

This policy also applies to students during school excursions and extra-curricular activities.

In line with DENI, pupils at Camphill Primary School should not bring mobile phones or other similar devices to school.

Should parents need to contact pupils during the school day, or vice versa, this should be done following the usual school procedures - via the school office.

The school takes no responsibility for mobile phones or other similar devices.

If a pupil is found by a member of staff to be using a mobile phone or similar device during the school day, in breach of this policy, the mobile phone or device will be taken from the pupil and handed to a member of the school's Senior Management Team (SMT). The mobile phone or device will be stored in the school office and the child's parent/guardian will be contacted to collect it from the office.

If a pupil uses a mobile phone or similar device (eg. Phone calls on school premises, to send texts or to take photographs/video footage of either other pupils or staff), this will be regarded as a serious offence and the Principal will decide on appropriate disciplinary action in line with the school's Positive Behaviour Policy.

If a pupil repeatedly misuses their mobile phone or similar device on school premises they will be required to leave the phone or device at the school office during the school day.

The pupil would collect the mobile phone or device before leaving the premises at the end of the school day.

It should be noted that it is a **criminal offence** to use a mobile phone to menace, harass or offend another person. The Principal or a member of the school's SMT may consider it appropriate to refer any such matter to the PSNI.

If images (photographic/video/audio) of other pupils or staff members have been taken, the phone will not be returned to the pupil until the pupil, in the presence of a member of the SMT and the child's parent/guardian has removed the data.

In exceptional circumstances a mobile phone may be retained until further advice has been sought.

A member of the school's SMT will contact parents/guardians in all cases where inappropriate photographs/video/audio footage has been found and the PSNI may also be contacted.

Phones or devices must **NEVER** be used to photograph or record within the school grounds, as we may have children in school where parental consent has not been given. *(The Principal may make exceptions to this rule on certain occasions - noted later in this policy)*

Other Similar Devices

The procedures applying to the inappropriate use of mobile phones, apply equally to the inappropriate use of other devices with similar capabilities, eg, messaging, recording (audio & video), photography etc.

Exemptions

Exemptions of this policy can only be approved by the Principal and then only in exceptional circumstances, such as for a medical condition such as Diabetes where the device will monitor glucose levels.

Public use of technology at school

When on the school grounds or at school events, all members of the public must adhere to the following:

- Mobile phones or devices must **not be used** to take photographs, video or audio recordings in the school building, anywhere on the school grounds or at school events held 'off-site'. Exceptions may be made at the Principal's discretion e.g. during a school event.
- On 'Special Occasions' such as Christmas, School events etc. the Principal may

permit photographs / videos to be taken. However, such materials must not be published on social media without the permission of everyone included.

EMERGENCY COMMUNICATION:

- In the event of an unplanned school closure (eg. snow closure or a heating failure) the school will send each family a message using the ParentMail system informing them of the change of circumstances. It is therefore imperative that parents supply school with at least one up-to-date mobile number to be able to use the ParentMail System.
- The school website www.camphilps.co.uk will also have up-to-date emergency information displayed on the 'Ticker Tape' at the top of the 'Home' screen.

Related Policies:

- E-Safety
- Acceptable Use of the Internet and Digital Technologies
- Safeguarding
- Positive Behaviour
- Educational Visits