

Mobile Phone and Social Networking

Staff and volunteers at Storyy Group will take all reasonable steps to safeguard themselves and the children/ young people in the setting through a variety of methods including the appropriate use of modern technology.

Purpose:

The purpose of this policy is to provide information to all pupils, parents and staff about the use of mobile phones and digital devices whilst in provision.

This policy has been updated to take account of the 'DFE Guidance for schools on prohibiting the use of mobile phones throughout the school day', published in February 2024.

This guidance states that education settings '*should develop and implement a policy that creates a mobile phone free environment by prohibiting the use of mobile phones and other smart technology with similar functionality to mobile phones throughout the day.*'

Storyy Group understand that the majority of our secondary aged young people will own a mobile phone and that some may find separating themselves from their devices very difficult. As such, in accordance with the new guidance, we are choosing to undertake a policy where mobile phones are 'Never Seen, Heard or Used'.

Aim

- To establish and maintain a safe environment free of distractions.
- To raise awareness amongst employees, visitors and children of good practice regarding modern technology.
- To ensure the health and wellbeing of all students, staff and visitors
- To outline responses to those who do not adhere to the policy
- To take all reasonable precautions to protect colleagues, visitors and children by reducing risks.

Staff Guidance:

Storyy Group staff are role models to our children and young people and, as such, are not permitted to use their personal mobile phones whilst on site with children. Staff must follow the current guidance and mobile phones or other similar technology must not be seen, heard or used whilst staff are on site. Any member of staff who needs to be contactable in an emergency can share their settings mobile and/or landline numbers. Personal mobile phones should never be used to take photographs or videos of children and young people. The provisions have their own technology which can be used for this purpose. Parent or Carer consent should always be sought and given before taking any photographs. At Storyy this is sought through the induction packs where parents and carers can give or refuse permission for images to be taken.

Staff should never comment on any work-related matters on a social networking site (such as Facebook/X/Instagram). They should also maintain professional boundaries by not accepting or initiating friend requests from children or young people who attend or have attended Storyy Group Provisions or their family members. All Storyy Group Staff are required to have high levels of security on their personal social media accounts and are not permitted to have public profiles.

Staff are not permitted to share their personal mobile phone numbers or social media handles with young people or their parents. Work phone contact details and emails maybe shared where

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appropriate. The same boundaries also apply to other online platforms e.g. Twitter, YouTube Snapchat, TikTok etc.

If staff are seen to breach this guidance they will be subject to disciplinary procedures as outlined in their employee handbook. Staff who have concerns about their colleagues mobile phone or social media use are encouraged to report this to their line manager, ensuring that safety of staff and protection of children is maintained at all times.

Student Guidance:

Storyy Group recognises children and young people that bring in their personal devices may have unlimited and unrestricted access to the internet via mobile phone networks (i.e. 3G, 4G and 5G). These networks will not have the filtering and monitoring systems in place that the provision internet has. This access means some children, whilst in provision may be able to harass, bully, and control others via their mobile and smart technology, share indecent images consensually and non-consensually and view and share harmful content.

This risk is reduced as far as possible through any mobile phone or other technology being allowed to be carried by children and young people on the proviso that they are never used, heard or seen on site.

If staff become aware of students using mobile phones, they should immediately report this to their manager and they will follow processes which may include confiscation of the phone and contact with home and referring agencies. Staff can use the powers within the search and confiscation guidance to confiscate mobile devices. Students who continually breach the policy may be subject to a technology ban and not permitted to bring their mobile phones or other technology on site. At all times, when mobile phones or other technology is confiscated from students, this will be returned at the end of the session. Ongoing liaison with the child's named school will take place when sanctions are implemented by staff and if any changes to a child's provision need to be discussed in light of continued breaches of this policy.

The introduction of this policy compliments and supports policies that are in place in maintained and non-maintained, mainstream and specialist, schools, colleges and academies and as such supports the children by offering consistency across all settings.

Extenuating circumstances:

At Storyy Group we understand that all children have unique and individual needs or characteristics which may affect their capacity to adhere to this policy. In exceptional circumstances and in consultation with external agencies and parents, children may be permitted access to personal technology devices, such as mobile phones, for physical or mental health needs. This will be considered on a case by case basis and any permitted use will be monitored by a named staff member. If a parent, carer or other supportive professional feels that their child should be considered for these exceptions they must speak to a member of management or Senior Leadership to ensure a robust support plan is put into place.

Contact Details:

Each site has a designated mobile phone for communication and can be used by staff, students, parents and professionals. Certain members of staff have assigned work mobile phones which can be contacted by staff, students, parents and professionals. These phones will be switched on during the working day but may not be available outside of working hours. These devices are the property of Storyy Group.

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During the working day, staff must communicate with each other only via work mobile phones as personal phones are not permitted to be seen, heard or used whilst on site.

Birch Hill Site: 07951 285326

Storyybrook Site: 07391 070484

Finchampstead Site: 07594 415560

Head Office: 01344 987877

Reviewed by Natalie Lee - 03/04/2024

Next review – 04/04/2025