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Mobile Devices, Smartwatches, Cameras and Social Media Policy

Date written: March 2024

Date of next review: March 2025

1. **Mobile devices, smartwatches and cameras**

**Statement**

Our aim is to have a clear policy on the acceptable use of mobile devices (including phones, iPads and smartwatches) and cameras that is understood and adhered to by all parties concerned without exception.

We welcome the use of mobile devices and cameras for educational purposes, the convenience they offer and recognise that learning to use digital technology is an important part of the ICT and wider curriculum. Equally, we have to ensure the safeguarding needs of the children are met and staff, parents and volunteers are not distracted from their care of children through the use of such devices.

Weald Community Primary School is committed to the well-being and safety of all our pupils. The use of cameras, mobile phones and other hand-held devices by employees, volunteers and visitors (including parents and professional photographers) while on the school premises or elsewhere on school business is restricted.

This policy applies to all parts and operations of the school, including the EYFS.

Weald CP School seeks to implement this policy through adherence to the procedures set out in the rest of this document.

All visitors (including, parents, volunteers, contractors and supply staff) are made aware of this policy and are required to give Weald CPS assurances that they will comply by switching off their mobile devices and cameras while they are in contact with pupils/children.

# Definitions

The term ‘mobile device’ in this policy refers to any device that can make and receive telephone calls by connecting to a cellular network provided by a mobile phone operator and/or devices which offer more general computing capabilities such as text messaging, MMS, email, internet access, short-range wireless communications (infrared, Bluetooth), gaming, filming and photography or any similar technology.

The term smartwatch is a device worn on the wrist where messages can be received and responded to, with additional functions of : accessing social media and the internet.

**Legislation**

Under the **Data Protection Act 2018** all images of children are considered as personal data. Parents and carers will only be permitted to make recordings or take photographs of any school event **for their own personal use**. The use of such images and recordings for any other purpose will be a breach of the Data Protection Act 2018. The Act will therefore not prevent parents from taking photographs or making video recordings of children during events such as plays, assemblies or concerts.

# Procedures

All employees, volunteers and visitors should be aware of and implement the permitted usage of mobile phones.

The use of pictures and film for teaching, learning and assessment, as well as publicising pupils’ achievements, is to be encouraged, but employees, volunteers and visitors must be aware of the risks and implications for safeguarding and for potential allegations against them of improper use.

Images of children in school and on educational visits should only be captured on school cameras allocated to each class. Children should only be photographed or filmed for the purpose of recording their development or participation in events organised by the school, and images or films should be uploaded to the school shared site or individual child’s online learning profile Tapestry (in the EYFS).

Parents sign a consent form on entry to the school and have access to records holding visual images of their child. All employees, volunteers and visitors must behave in such a way as to mitigate the risks to the pupils/children and themselves.

**Responsibilities**

Staff, volunteers or visitors must:

* Use personal devices in a way that does not impact negatively on the work or the activities of pupils
* Mobile phones should be kept on silent and in a pigeon-hole in the staff room away from children
* Smart watches can be worn. However, the ‘Wi-Fi’ setting should be turned off and aeroplane mode activated so that no calls or messages can be sent or received. Aeroplane mode may be turned off in the staff room or after school hours.
* Personal telephone calls, text messages or accessing social networking sites during lessons or whilst engaged in your duties is not permitted
* Personal mobile device should not be used in classroom areas during the day – these are permitted only during break and lunch times only and children must not be present
* Personal mobile devices should not be used to take photos or videos – only school cameras or iPads may be used for this purpose and the photos or videos must not be downloaded on to any personal computers
* Personal memory cards should not be used in school cameras
* School memory cards should never be put into personal cameras. School camera memory cards should be downloaded on to school computers only
* Cameras of any kind should not be taken into changing rooms or toilet areas
* Children should not be photographedwithout their knowledge – it is best practice to ensure that pupils are aware of what is being recorded and how it will be used
* Photos or film should not be uploaded to personal sites, e.g. Facebook, Instagram, YouTube etc
* Personal possessions should be kept secure at all times
* Any concerns regarding the use of mobile devices should be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Leads without hesitation

**Safeguarding and misuse**

In the event of allegations or misuse, breaches of these procedures may be referred to the police and/or child protection authorities for investigation and may be treated as professional misconduct.

Accessing, viewing, making, storing, possessing or disseminating indecent images of children on or off the internet, whether on or off work premises, is illegal.

If proven, this will lead to criminal proceedings, and the individual will be barred from working with children and young people. Sharing adult pornography with children is also illegal. Possessing or distributing indecent images of a person under 18 can include viewing such images online. This may also constitute possession, even if they are not saved.

1. **Social media**

**Objectives**

This policy sets out Weald CP’s policy on social networking. Social networking activities conducted online outside work, such as blogging, involvement in any social networking sites such as Facebook or Twitter and posting material, images or comments on sites such as You Tube can have a negative effect on an organisation’s reputation or image.

In addition, we have a firm commitment to safeguarding children in all aspects of its work.

This policy has been written to set out the key principles and code of conduct that we expect of all members of staff with respect to their responsibilities in connection with the use of social networking sites.

**Aims**

To set out the key principles and code of conduct expected of all members of staff, governors, Friends and volunteers at Weald CPS with respect to social networking to further safeguard and protect children and staff.

All adults working with children have a responsibility to maintain public confidence in their ability to safeguard the welfare and best interests of children. It is therefore expected that they will adopt high standards of personal conduct in order to maintain the confidence and respect of their colleagues, children, public in general and all those with whom they work.

Adults in contact with children should therefore understand and be aware that safe practice also involves using judgement and integrity about behaviours in places other than the work setting.

The guidance contained in this policy is an attempt to identify what behaviours are expected of schools’ staff who work with children.

Anyone whose practice deviates from this document and/or their professional or employment-related code of conduct may bring into question their suitability to work with children and young people and may result in disciplinary action being taken against them.

School staff should always maintain appropriate professional boundaries and avoid behaviour, during their use of the internet and other communication technologies, which might be misinterpreted by others. They should report and record any incident with this potential.

**Key Principles**

* Everyone at Weald CPS has a responsibility to ensure that they protect the reputation of the school, and to treat colleagues and members of the school with professionalism and respect
* It is important to protect everyone at Weald CPS from allegations and misinterpretations which can arise from the use of social networking sites.
* Safeguarding children is paramount and is a key responsibility of all members of staff and it is essential that everyone considers this and acts responsibly if they are using social networking sites out of school.
* Anyone working in the school either as a paid employee or volunteer must not communicate with children via social networking
* With safeguarding in mind, staff, parents and visitors are prohibited from using mobile phones in public areas around school (see above for further details)
* This policy relates to social networking outside work. Blogging and accessing social networking sites at work or at home using school equipment is not permitted, unless for professional purposes and authorised by the Headteacher
* It is completely unacceptable to communicate on social media about the school or any member of the school community in or out of work on personally owned equipment

**Safe Online Behaviour**

Some social networking sites and other web-based sites have fields in the user profile for job title etc. If you are an employee of a school and particularly if you are a teacher, you should not put any information onto the site that could identify either your profession or the school where you work. In some circumstances this could damage the reputation of the school, the profession or the local authority.

A breach of this policy will be considered to be a serious disciplinary offence which is also contrary to the school’s ethos and principles.

In their own interests, staff need to be aware of the dangers of putting personal information onto social networking sites, such as addresses, home and mobile phone numbers. This will avoid the potential for children or their families or friends having access to staff outside of the school environment. It also reduces the potential for identity theft by third parties. All staff, particularly new staff, should review their social networking sites when they join the school to ensure that information available publicly about them is accurate and appropriate. This includes any photographs that may cause embarrassment to themselves and the school if they are published outside of the site.

Employees need to ensure that when they are communicating about others, even outside of work, that they give due regard to the potential for defamation of character. Making allegations on social networking sites (even in their own time and in their own homes) about other employees, children or other individuals connected with the school could result in formal action being taken against them. This includes the uploading of photographs which might put the school into disrepute.

**Code of Conduct: Social Networking**  
Under no circumstances should staff make reference to any staff member, pupil, parent or school activity/event.

The following are also not considered acceptable at Weald CPS:

* The use of the school’s name, logo, or any other published material without written prior permission from the Headteacher. This applies to any published material including the internet or written documentation
* The posting of any communication or images which links the school to any form of illegal conduct or which may damage the reputation of the school. This includes defamatory comments
* The disclosure of confidential or business-sensitive information; or the disclosure of information or images that could compromise the security of the school
* The posting of any images of employees, children, governors or anyone directly connected with the school whilst engaged in school activities.

In addition to the above everyone at Weald CPS must ensure that they:

* Communicate with children and parents in an open and transparent way using the school phone number and individual work email addresses
* Never ‘friend’ a pupil at the school where they are working onto their social networking site
* Do not make any derogatory, defamatory, rude, threatening or inappropriate comments about the school, or anyone at or connected with the school
* Use social networking sites responsibly and ensure that neither their personal nor professional reputation, nor the school’s reputation is compromised by inappropriate postings
* Are aware of the potential of on-line identity fraud and to be cautious when giving out personal information about themselves which may compromise their personal safety and security
* Make sure that high levels of privacy are set if they choose to use social media.

**Breaches of the Code of Conduct**

In instances where there has been a breach of the above Code of Conduct, the following will apply:

* Any breaches of this policy will be fully investigated. Where it is found that there has been a breach of the policy this may result in disciplinary action
* The governing body will take appropriate action in order to protect the school’s reputation and that of its staff, parents, governors, children and anyone else directly linked to the school

Whilst every attempt has been made to cover a wide range of situations, it is recognised that this policy cannot cover all eventualities. There may be times when professional judgements are made in situations not covered by this document, or which directly contravene the standards outlined in this document. It is expected that in these circumstances staff will always advise the Headteacher of the justification for any such action already taken or proposed. The Headteacher will in turn seek advice from the local authority where appropriate.

This policy takes account of employment legislation and best practice guidelines in relation to social networking in addition to the legal obligations of governing bodies and the relevant legislation.

**Protection of Personal Information**

Staff should not give their personal e-mail addresses to children or parents. Where there is a need for communication to be sent electronically the school e-mail address should be used. Likewise staff should keep their personal phone numbers private and not use their own mobile phones to contact children or parents in a professional capacity. There will be occasions when there are social contacts between children and staff, where for example the parent and teacher are part of the same social circle or members of the same parish or community. These contacts however, will be easily recognised and openly acknowledged. Staff have a responsibility to make any such contact known to the senior leadership team.

Staff should never share their work log-ins or passwords with other people.  
Staff are advised to understand who is allowed to view the content on their pages of the sites they use and how to restrict access to certain groups of people.

**Link with Other Policies**

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following school policies:

Child Protection Policy

Online Safety and Remote Learning Policy

Whistleblowing Policy