

Mobile phone and Screen Policy 2020

The Link Academy Trust is a company limited by guarantee and an exempt charity, regulated by the Education & Skills Funding Agency (ESFA). All Members of the Board of Trustees of the exempt charity are also Directors of the company; the term 'Trustee' used in this Policy also means Director. This Policy applies to all academies within the Link Academy Trust.

Introduction and Aims

The safety, welfare and well-being of our pupils is paramount. The aim of the Mobile Phone and Screen Policy is to allow users to benefit from modern communication technologies, whilst promoting safe and appropriate practice through establishing clear and robust acceptable mobile user guidelines. This is achieved through balancing protection against potential misuse with the recognition that mobile phone and screens are effective communication tools. It is recognised that it is the enhanced functions of many mobile phones and screens that cause the most concern, offering distractions and disruption to the working day, and which are most susceptible to misuse – including the taking and distribution of indecent images, exploitation and bullying. However, as it is difficult to detect specific usage, this policy refers to ALL mobile communication devices.

Scope

This policy applies to all individuals who have access to personal mobile phone and screens on site. This includes staff, volunteers, governors, children, young people, parents, carers, visitors and contractors. This list is not exhaustive.

This policy should also be read in relation to the following documentation:

- Safeguarding Children Policy
- Behaviour and Anti-bullying Policies
- Online Safety Policy
- Guidance from the NSPCC: [Photography and Filming Policy Statement](#)
- Data Management & ICT Security Policy and Procedures 2018
- DfE Laptops for Disadvantaged Children Programme agreement

It is fully recognised that imposing rigid regulations on the actions of others can be counterproductive. An agreement of trust is therefore promoted regarding the carrying and use of mobile phone and screens within the setting, which is agreed to by all users.

Personal Mobiles – Staff

- Staff are not permitted to make/receive calls/texts during contact time with children. Emergency contact should be made via the school office
- During the school day, staff should leave their phones in the school's designated place (e.g. admin office or staff room).
- Mobile phones should not be stored or used in a space where children are present (e.g. classroom, playground).
- Use of phones (including receiving/sending texts and emails) should be limited to non-contact time when no children are present e.g. designated areas of admin office or staff room.
- It is also advised that staff securely protect access to functions of their phone

- Should there be exceptional circumstances (e.g acutely sick relative), then staff should make the Academy Head and office staff aware of this so that messages can be relayed promptly
- Except with the permission of the Executive/Academy Head, staff are not at any time permitted to use recording equipment on their mobile phone and screens, for example: to take recordings of children, or sharing images. Legitimate recordings and photographs **may only be** captured using school equipment such as cameras and iPads.
- Staff should report any usage of mobile devices that cause them concern to the Executive/Academy Head.

Mobile phone and screens for work related purposes

We recognise that mobile phone and screens provide a useful means of communication on off-site activities. However, staff should ensure that:-

- Mobile use on these occasions is appropriate and professional (and will never include taking photographs of children)
- Personal mobile phones and screens should not be used to make contact with parents during school trips – all relevant communications should be made via the school's mobile phone or the School Office.
- Where parents are accompanying trips, they are informed not to make contact with other parents (via calls, text, email or social networking) during the trip or use their phone to take photographs of children.
- In exceptional circumstances, and with the permission of the Executive/Academy Head, personal mobile devices can be used to call parents, however Caller ID must be switched off.

Personal Mobiles – Pupils

We recognise that mobile phones and screens are part of everyday life for many children and that they can play an important role in helping pupils to feel safe and secure. However, we also recognise that they can prove a distraction in school and can provide a means of bullying or intimidating others. Therefore:-

- Pupils are not permitted to have mobile phones and screens at school or on trips.
- If in the rare event of a parent wishing for his/her child to bring a mobile phone and screen to school to contact the parent before/after school:-
 1. The parent must discuss the issue first with the Executive/Academy Head
 2. If agreed the phone must be handed into the School Office, switched off first thing in the morning and collected from the office by the child at home time (the phone is left at the owner's own risk).
- Mobile phones and screens brought to school without permission will be confiscated and returned at the end of the day.

Where mobile phones and screens are used in or out of school to bully or intimidate others then the Executive/Academy Head does have the power to intervene 'to such an extent as it is reasonable to regulate the behaviour of pupils when they are off the school site'.

Volunteers, Visitors, Governors, Trustees and Contractors

All Volunteers, Visitors, Governors, Trustees and Contractors are expected to follow our mobile phone and screen policy as it relates to staff whilst on the premises.

Contractors who use their mobile phone cameras to take photos, need to be accompanied and must not take photos in places where children are present.

On arrival, such visitors will be informed of our expectations around the use of mobile phone and screens.

Parents

While we would prefer parents not to use their mobile phones and screens while on school premises, we recognise that this would be impossible to regulate and that many parents see their phones as essential means of communication at all times. We, therefore, ask that parents' usage of mobile phone and screens, whilst on the school site is courteous and appropriate to the school environment.

Photography and Filming

We recognise that:

- sharing photographs and films of our activities can help us celebrate the successes and achievements of our children and young people, provide a record of our activities and raise awareness of our organisation
- the welfare of the children and young people taking part in our activities is paramount
- children, their parents and carers have a right to decide whether their images are taken and how these may be used, regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation
- consent to take images of children is only meaningful when children, their parents and carers understand how the images will be used and stored, and are fully aware of the potential risks associated with the use and distribution of these images
- there are potential risks associated with sharing images of children online.

We will seek to keep children and young people safe by:

- always asking for written consent from a child and their parents or carers before taking and using a child's image
- always explaining what images will be used for, how they will be stored and what potential risks are associated with sharing images of children
- making it clear that if a child or their family withdraw consent for an image to be shared, it may not be possible to delete images that have already been shared or published
- changing the names of children whose images are being used in our published material whenever possible (and only using first names if we do need to identify them)
- never publishing personal information about individual children
- making sure children, their parents and carers understand how images of children will be securely stored and for how long (including how we will control access to the images and their associated information)
- reducing the risk of images being copied and used inappropriately by:
 - only using images of children in appropriate clothing (including safety wear if necessary)
 - avoiding full face and body shots of children taking part in activities such as swimming where there may be a heightened risk of images being misused
- using images that positively reflect young people's involvement in the activity.

We will also develop a procedure for reporting the abuse or misuse of images of children as part of our child protection procedures. We will ensure everyone involved in our organisation knows the procedures to follow to keep children safe.

Photography and/or filming for school use

We recognise that our group leaders may use photography and filming as an aid in activities such as music, drama or off-site activities. However, this should only be done with the Link Academy Trust's permission and using our equipment.

Children, young people, parents and carers must also be made aware that photography and filming is part of the programme and give written consent.

If we hire a photographer for one of our events, we will seek to keep children and young people safe by:

- providing the photographer with a clear brief about appropriate content and behaviour
- ensuring the photographer wears identification at all times
- informing children, their parents and carers that a photographer will be at the event and ensuring they give written consent to images which feature their child being taken and shared
- not allowing the photographer to have unsupervised access to children
- not allowing the photographer to carry out sessions outside the event or at a child's home
- reporting concerns regarding inappropriate or intrusive photography following our child protection procedures

Photography and/or filming for personal use

When children themselves, parents, carers or spectators are taking photographs or filming at our events and the images are for personal use, we will publish guidance about image sharing in the event programmes and/or announce details of our photography policy before the start of the event. This includes:

- asking for photos taken during the event not to be shared on social media and asking people to gain permission from children, their parents and carers before sharing photographs and videos that include them
- recommending that people check the privacy settings of their social media account to understand who else will be able to view any images they share
- reminding children, parents and carers who they can talk to if they have any concerns about images being shared.

Photography and/or filming for wider use

If people such as local journalists, professional photographers (not hired by the Link Academy Trust) or students wish to record one of our events and share the images professionally or in the wider world, they should seek permission in advance.

They should provide:

- the name and address of the person using the camera
- the names of children they wish to take images of (if possible)
- the reason for taking the images and/or what the images will be used for
- a signed declaration that the information provided is valid and that the images will only be used for the reasons given.

The Link Academy Trust will verify these details and decide whether to grant permission for photographs/films to be taken. We will seek consent from the children who are the intended subjects of the images and their parents and inform the photographer of anyone who does not give consent.

At the event we will inform children, parents and carers that an external photographer is present and ensure they are easily identifiable, for example by using them with a coloured identification badge.

If the Link Academy Trust is concerned that someone unknown to us is using their sessions for photography or filming purposes, we will ask them to leave and (depending on the nature of the concerns) follow our child protection procedures.

Storing images

We will store photographs and videos of children securely, in accordance with our safeguarding policy and data protection law.

We will keep hard copies of images in a locked drawer and electronic images in a protected folder with restricted access. Images will be stored for a period of _____ (number of months/years).

We will never store images of children on unencrypted portable equipment such as memory sticks and mobile phones.

The Link Academy Trust does not permit staff and volunteers to using any personal equipment to take photos and recordings of children. Only cameras or devices belonging to the school should be used.

Dissemination

The mobile phone and screen policy will be shared with staff and volunteers as part of their induction. It will also be available to parents/carers via the school office and website. The impact of this policy on staff workload has been considered.

This Policy is reviewed on a three year cycle by the Standards & Curriculum Committee.

Approved by the Board of Trustees: 7 December 2020