

Gilthill Primary School – Mobile devices and wearable technology policy



This policy provides clear guidance on the use of mobile phones in school by both staff and pupils.

Introduction

Gilthill Primary School has a clear policy on allowing pupils to bring mobile phones, devices and smart phones into school and this policy makes explicit reference to camera mobile phones, devices and smart phones. Where mobile phones are referenced, it is used to include other devices such as iPads/tablets or wearable technology such as smart watches.

Camera Mobile Phones and Wearable Technology such as Smart Phones

Camera mobile phones are becoming increasingly popular and a built-in digital camera enables users to take high resolution pictures. These can be sent instantly to other mobile phone users or email addresses. They can also be posted on the internet or in chat rooms. There is a potential for camera mobile phones to be misused in schools. They can become an instrument of bullying or harassment directed against pupils or/and teachers. The use of Smart Watches is not appropriate in school due to risks of loss and damage and of misuse in the same way as mobile phones or tablets.

Staff policy

Staff use of mobile phones during their working day should be discreet and appropriate e.g.: not in the presence of pupils. Use is limited to break and lunchtimes only.

Mobile phones, devices or wearable technology such as Smart Phones should be switched to silent and left in a safe place during lesson times. The school cannot take responsibility for items that are lost or stolen. Staff should never contact pupils or parents from their personal mobile phone or give their mobile phone number to pupils or parents. If a member of staff needs to make telephone contact with a pupil, they should use the school telephone in the office. Staff should never send to, or accept from, colleagues or pupils, texts or images that could be viewed as inappropriate. With regard to camera phones, a member of staff should never use their phone to photograph a pupil(s) or allow themselves to be photographed by pupils. This guidance should be seen as a safeguard for members of staff, the school and the Local Authority. Staff should understand that failure to comply with the policy is likely to result in the enforcement of the Whistleblowing policy and associated procedures.

Parent, Visitors or Volunteers In School Policy

At events such as performances, parents are not permitted to take photographs or films of children who are not their own. There will be certain events where it is not possible to take photographs or films of just their own children without capturing others. When this occurs, a member of staff will state this clearly before the event begins. Adults either in school or accompanying children on school trips should not use their cameras or mobile phone cameras to take pictures of or film pupils. If parents who accompany children on a school trip are asked by the teacher to take photos as a record of the educational visit, they will be issued with a school camera. Adults, visitors or volunteers in school should only use their mobile phone within the confines of the school office or staff room. Personal cameras and mobile phone cameras should not be used to take pictures or films of children or information about children.

Pupil Policy

We fully acknowledge a parent's right to allow their child to bring a mobile phone or Smart Watch or other types of wearable technology to school if they walk to and from school without adult supervision. They must not however be used in any capacity within the hours of the school day. When a child needs to bring a phone into school, they must seek permission from their class teacher who will securely store them at the start of the day and then return them to the child at the end of the day.

Devices should be turned off before handing them in. Parents are advised that Gilt Hill accepts no liability for the loss or damage to mobile phones and other smart devices which are brought into school or school grounds.

The school has the right to confiscate or search a device if it is believed to have violated safeguarding protocols. In the unlikely event of needing to do this, we will endeavour to contact a parent or carer. As part of this agreement, your child should agree to turn on and unlock the device if required by a member of staff.

Where a pupil is found by a member of staff to be using a personal smart device such as a mobile phone, it will be confiscated from the pupil, handed to the class teacher or a member of SLT. The pupil may collect the phone at the end of the school day. A letter will be sent home to parents informing them of this policy. If this practice continues more than three times, then the school will confiscate the device until an appropriate adult collects the device from the head teacher.

If a pupil is found taking photographs or video footage with a mobile phone, tablet or smart watch of either other pupils or teachers, the device will be confiscated and this will be dealt with in line with the school's Behaviour Policy. If images of other pupils or teacher have been taken, the device will not be returned to the pupil until the images have been removed by the pupil in the presence of either the deputy or the head teacher.

Should a pupil be found to be using their phone or devices inappropriately, the school reserves the right to withdraw this privilege and they will no longer be able to bring a phone into school. We ask that parents should talk to their children about the appropriate use of text messages and images as they can often be used to bully pupils. Should parents need to contact pupils or vice versa during the school day, this should be done via the usual school procedure of contacting the school office via phone or email. Parents do not have the authorisation to overrule this.

This policy will be monitored and reviewed as required but at least every three years. Parents may want to look at the advice on www.internetmatters.org which explains how to add some parental controls to the phone and gives advice on how to keep children safe.

Policy date September 2023

Review date September 2026