





Dingle Community Primary School

Empty Pockets Policy

Date adopted:	3 rd November 2016
Date reviewed:	15 th October 2019
	3 rd November 2022
Next review due:	Autumn 2025
Reviewed by:	Safeguarding Committee
Signed:	 (Headteacher)
Signed:	 (Chair of Safeguarding Committee)
Date:	3 rd November 2022

Aims

At Dingle Community Primary School the welfare and well-being of our pupils is paramount. The aim of this policy is to allow users of mobile technology 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 phones are effective communication tools. It is recognised that it is the enhanced functions of many mobile phones 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.

Our aim is that all staff:

- have a clear understanding of what constitutes misuse;
- know how to minimise risk;
- avoid putting themselves into compromising situations which could be misinterpreted and lead to possible allegations;
- understand the need for professional boundaries and clear guidance regarding acceptable use;
- are responsible for self-moderation of their own behaviours;
- are aware of the importance of reporting concerns promptly;

In order to safeguard children in our care, there is a requirement for **all** staff and volunteers on arrival at Dingle Community Primary School to place electronic devices which can capture or store images, e.g. mobile phones, cameras, games consoles, in a secure area in the office, staffroom lockers or in their classroom desk.

Staff mobile phones

- Staff are not permitted to make/receive calls/texts during contact time with children. Emergency contact should be made via the school office.
- Staff should have their phones on silent or switched off and out of sight during class time.
- Mobile phones should not be 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. in office areas, staffroom, empty classrooms).
- Staff should security protect access to functions of their phone.
- Should there be exceptional circumstances (e.g. an acutely sick relative), then staff should make the Headteacher aware of this and can have their phone in the main office, in case of having to receive an emergency call- the office team will alert the staff member immediately.
- Staff are not at any time permitted to use recording equipment on their mobile phones, for example to take recordings of children, or sharing images.
- In line with 'Keeping Children safe in Education', Bluetooth connectivity must be turned off at all times when in school.
- Legitimate recordings and photographs should be captured using school equipment such as cameras.
- Staff should report any usage of mobile devices that causes them concern to the Headteacher.

Pupils' mobile phones

We recognise that mobile phones 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 at school (unless there are special circumstances and authorisation has been given by the Headteacher) or on educational visits.
- If in the rare event of a parent wishing for his/her child to bring a mobile phone to school to contact the parent after school:
 - the parent must complete a request form, available from the school office;
 - the phone must be handed in, switched off, to the class teacher on arrival at school and collected from them by the child at the end of the school day;
 - the phone is left at the owner's own risk.
- Mobile phones brought to school without permission will be confiscated and returned at the end of the school day.

Volunteers, Visitors, Governors and Contractors

All volunteers, visitors, governors and contractors are expected to follow this school policy as it relates to staff whilst on the premises. On arrival, such visitors will be informed of our expectations around the use of mobile phones.

Parents' mobile phones

While we would prefer parents not to use their mobile phones while at school, 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 phones, whilst on the school site is courteous and appropriate to the school environment.

Parents are permitted to photograph or film school events such as shows or sports day using their mobile phones or cameras, but they are informed that they must not publish images (e.g. on social networking sites) that include any children other than their own. Parents will be asked to turn off Bluetooth and WiFi connectivity when on school premises, in order to reduce the risk of sharing of images and videos.

When accompanying educational visits parents are informed that they should not make contact with other parents (via calls, text, email or social networking) during the visit or use their phone to take photographs of children.