

Larkrise Primary School



Guidance on use of mobile phones

2022 - 2023

This information covers the use of mobile phones at Larkrise Primary School.

For Pupils

For many young people the ownership of a mobile phone is considered a necessity and a vital part of their social life. There are a growing number of primary age pupils who have personal ownership of a mobile phone. Most mobile phones nowadays fall into the 'smartphone' category and have additional functions such as an integrated and often high-quality camera, video recording capability, and immediate access to the internet and a wealth of other apps, including social networking sites. Although there are a good many positive reasons for owning a mobile phone, without the correct understanding of the responsibility attached to owning one, they can become an instrument of bullying or harassment against other pupils or staff.

At Larkrise Primary we discourage pupils bringing mobile phones to school. We know that a ban would be difficult to enforce and would not be consistent with our aims of developing a culture of responsible use of mobile phones and other digital devices by pupils. However, concerns around mobile phones stem from the potential issues outlined below:

1. Bullying by text, image and email.
2. Making disrespectful comments, misrepresenting events or making defamatory remarks about teachers or other pupils.
3. Pupils posting material on social network sites with no thought to the risks to their personal reputation and sometimes with deliberate intention of causing upset to others.
4. General disruption to learning caused by pupils accessing phones in lessons.
5. The deliberate engineering of situations where people's reactions are filmed or photographed in order to humiliate, embarrass and intimidate by publishing them to a wider audience.
6. Publishing photographs of vulnerable pupils, where this may put them at additional risk.
7. Use of mobile phones for 'sexting' (the deliberate taking and sending of provocative images or text messages).

In preparation for secondary school, some of our year 5 and year 6 pupils walk to and from school unaccompanied. We understand that parents may feel more secure knowing that their child can contact them, if they need to, on that journey. For this reason, pupils are allowed to bring phones to school. If they do so, it is on the understanding that they agree to the following limitations of its use while on the school premises.

1. School accepts no liability for the loss or damage to mobile phones which are brought into school or on the school grounds.
2. Mobile phones must be given to the class teacher upon arrival and collected from teachers as pupils depart from the premises, this may be at the end of the school day, or later if your child is part of an extra-curricular activity. (Y6 and Y5 classrooms have lockable cupboards for this purpose)
3. Mobile phones will not be permitted on school trips.

Should you wish to contact your child during the day please do so via the school office, equally children should visit the office if they need to contact home during the day.

Misuse of mobile phones

Mobile phones found during the day will be taken from the child and locked in a cupboard. Phones that are not handed in after this will be confiscated by the senior leadership team and parents informed. The phone can then be collected from the office by a parent or carer.

Serious misuse may lead to the imposition of other sanctions, in line with the school behaviour policy, up to and including exclusion from school. In some instances, an offence may have to be reported to the police.

The school will consider any of the following to breach the school's behaviour policy resulting in sanctions being taken:

1. Photographing or filming staff or other pupils without their knowledge or permission.
2. Photographing or filming in toilets, swimming pools and changing rooms and similar areas.
3. Bullying, harassing or intimidating staff or pupils by the use of text, email or multimedia messaging, sending inappropriate messages or posts to social media sites.
4. Refusing to switch a phone off or hand over a phone at the request of a member of staff.

Where it is deemed necessary to examine the contents of a mobile phone this will be done by the Designated Safeguarding Lead and witnessed by another member of staff. The action will be recorded in the school behaviour log, including the time, date, who was present and what was found.

For Staff

Mobile phones should be switched off during lessons and any contact time with pupils.

Staff use of mobile phones during their working day should be discreet and appropriate, in keeping with their professional responsibilities and expectations. eg: not in the presence of pupils – using the staffroom or office to make calls is appropriate; using your phone in the classroom during lesson time is not appropriate.

Special arrangements can be made with the senior leadership team for members of staff with concerns and who wish to keep their mobile phone on in silent mode during the school day, for any expected emergency calls. Staff are welcome to share the school office telephone number for emergencies for dependents and family members.

Staff should always avoid contacting pupils or parents from their personal mobile phone and should not willingly give their mobile phone number to pupils or parents. If a member of staff needs to make telephone contact with a pupil, they should, wherever possible, 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.

Staff are permitted to photograph pupils during the school day using their personal mobile phone for social media purposes. Once the photographs have been used, they should be deleted from the phone and then deleted from the 'bin' section of the phone.

The school accepts no responsibility for the loss or damage to personal phones while on the school premises.

Staff should refer to the school code of conduct and whistleblowing policies for further guidance if needed.

For visitors

Professional visitors to the school should refer to the above information for staff and behave in accordance with them.

Parents and other visitors should switch mobile phones to silent and keep them out of sight while in areas where there might be children. The taking of photographs on personal devices is prohibited unless specific permission is given, e.g. at public events such as sports day or concerts. We ask that on those occasions any photographs taken are not published online or on social media, as this could compromise the safety of our children in school.

This document supports the Health and Safety, Anti-bullying, Child Protection, Safeguarding and Internet safety policies in our school.

