



**MOBILE PHONE AND DIGITAL DEVICES:
ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY
“FROM GATE TO GATE”**

Date of policy implementation: 1st September 2024

Review Date: (bi-annual)

1. Introduction and aims

Croesyceiliog School recognises that communication through mobile technologies has become an accepted part of everyday life but such technologies need to be used responsibly. We recognise that mobile phones, particularly smart phones, are an important part of everyday life for our students, parents and staff, as well as the wider school community.

This policy outlines the acceptable use of mobile devices at Croesyceiliog School in the context of safeguarding, underpinned by our values learning, respect and ambition which permeates everything we do and say. At Croesyceiliog School students are prohibited from having mobile phones and digital devices in school for the reasons outlined below:

- They are the primary source of low-level disruption in lessons
- Students calling parents to pick them up, without any contact through wellbeing team or main office.
- Images and/or videos of staff and students being taken and used in social media presenting a safeguarding risk.
- Persistent safeguarding issues and concerns, including the use of phones to arrange 'meet ups' during lesson times.
- Increased case in cyber bullying and reckless use of mobile phones and devices.

At Croesyceiliog School we recognise the vulnerability of our students and the potential for exploitation and abuse through the inappropriate use of mobile phones and devices. We take steps to ensure that our safeguarding procedures are all-encompassing and robust.

The policy aims to:

- Ensure that there is a shared understanding of and adherence to the policy by all stakeholders and visitors (including contractors, kitchen staff, mid-day supervisors) and ensure increased vigilance.
- Raise awareness of all staff (including students on placement, volunteers and those from Supply Agencies) of their responsibility for safeguarding in all areas of school life.
- Secure an environment in which students and staff (and their families) are protected from the risk of images being recorded and used/stored for inappropriate purposes.
- Ensure that robust procedures are in place to ensure that the school and all students and staff are not at risk of threat during safeguarding incidents such as a lockdown situation (please see lockdown protocols).

2. Roles and responsibilities

2.1 Staff

All staff (including teachers, support staff, and supply staff) are responsible for enforcing this policy.

Volunteers, or anyone else otherwise engaged by the school, must alert a member of staff if they witness, or are aware of, a breach of this policy.

The Senior Leadership Team (SLT) are responsible for monitoring the policy every 2 years, reviewing it, and holding staff and children accountable for its implementation.

The school understand that students need access to timetables and organisational tools and will ensure all students are provided with these in the form of school planners.

2.2 Students

All students are responsible, as members of the Croesyceiliog School community to safeguard each other and improve educational experiences by adhering to this policy.

3. Use of mobile phones and digital devices by students

3.1 Student use

The school recognises that parents/carers in the community feel the need for their children to have access to a mobile phone for communication home. This helps with safeguarding and child protection especially in the long dark winter months. Croesyceiliog School supports this approach wholeheartedly. To that end, the school has adopted the following mobile phone best use policy:

- Students are allowed to bring mobile phones to and from school to ensure their personal safety on route to and from school;
- Students **must not use or be seen with** a mobile device (including headphones) anywhere in school during the school day. For the purposes of this policy, on school grounds happens as soon as students enter the school gates. Mobile phones will not be permitted to be used at any after school extracurricular clubs but can be used to arrange collection where needed.
- A smart watch may be used as watch but will be considered a digital device if used as anything other than this. A student found using a smart watch for purposes other than telling the time will be sanctioned as per the guidance for digital devices;
- If a student brings their phone to the school, then before arrival at the gates it should be switched off and kept out of sight, in a bag or preferably in a locker. It should not be seen or heard (including vibrate) throughout the school day;
- The phone can be switched back on once students have left the school site via the main gates. Not before and not during any period of social time (break or lunch);
- Devices such as headphones are never required in school time for the purpose of education. It is therefore strongly advised that students do not bring these items to school.

3.2 Designated areas and exemptions:

3.2.1 – For students with medical needs

The Headteacher reserves the right to allow phones and/or digital devices in selected areas given individual circumstances such as medical grounds. A letter with supporting medical evidence will need to be sent into the pastoral year team in order for arrangements to be made.

3.2.2 – For purpose of learning

On rare occasions students may require a digital device to support independent learning, particularly in examination classes. As a school we have purchased a wide range of digital equipment to avoid the need for personal devices to be used. However, notice will be given in advance of cases where digital devices will be needed. Breaches of policy beyond this remain subject to the sanctions outlined in this policy.

3.3 Contacting Students and Parents/Carers

Parents wishing to contact their child during the school day should ring the school. We have a well-established and efficient system for getting messages to children and pastoral support if it is needed. A member of senior team is on learning support every lesson and will help communication of urgent messages.

Students who need to contact parents during the course of the school day should speak to a member of their child's wellbeing team or their Head of Year.

3.4 Sanctions

If a phone is seen by a member of staff it will be confiscated by them. Schools are permitted to confiscate phones from children under sections 91 and 94 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006.

Students found with mobile devices:

- Students who infringe the rules set out by this document will face having their phones / devices confiscated. If the phone is being used inappropriately, this is under teacher discretion and must be given to the teacher when requested.
- For the **first** offence the mobile phone will be confiscated by the staff member and taken to a secure place within the school office. The student will then be able to collect their phone from reception after 3.05 pm and a record of the incident will be made.
- For the **second** infringement the phone will be confiscated by the staff member and taken to a secure place within the school office. This time the phone will only be able to be collected by the parent/carer of the student at the end of the school day.
- Persistent infringements of mobile phone and devices policy will result in further sanctions.

If we have reason to believe the phone contains pornographic images, or if it is being/has been used to commit an offence or cause personal injury, staff have the power to search children's phones, as set out in the Welsh Governments guidance on searching, screening and confiscation. This will always be done by a member of the SLT or pastoral team. Certain types of conduct, bullying or harassment can be classified as criminal conduct.

The school takes such conduct extremely seriously, and will involve the police or other agencies as appropriate. Such conduct includes, but is not limited to: Sexting Threats of violence or assault Abusive calls, emails, social media posts or texts directed at someone on the basis of someone's ethnicity, religious beliefs or sexual orientation

4. Use of mobile phones by staff

4.1 Personal mobile phones

Staff and visitors are not permitted to make or receive calls, or send texts, while children are present.

Use of personal mobile phones must be restricted to non-contact time, and to areas of the school where children are not present (such as departmental offices and the staff room).

There may be circumstances in which it is appropriate for a member of staff to have use of their phone during contact time. For instance:

- For emergency contact by their child, or their child's school
- In the case of acutely ill dependents or family members
- If the mobile phone is listed as a key contact method for the school (e.g PE staff teaching on fields a distance from the main building)

The Headteacher will decide on a case-by-basis whether to allow for special arrangements.

4.2 Safeguarding

Staff must refrain from giving their personal contact details to parents or children, including connecting through social media and messaging apps.

Staff must avoid publicising their contact details on any social media platform or website, to avoid unwanted contact by parents or children.

Similar details and guidance can be found in the E-Safety and ICT Acceptable Use Policy.

Staff must not use their mobile phones to take photographs or recordings of children, their work, or anything else which could identify a pupil. If it is necessary to take photos or recordings as part of a lesson/school trip/activity, this must be done using school equipment.

4.3 Work phones

Some members of staff are provided with a mobile phone by the school for work purposes.

Only authorised staff are permitted to use school phones, and access to the phone must not be provided to anyone without authorisation.

Staff must: Ensure that communication or conduct linked to the device is appropriate and professional at all times, in line with our Staff Code of Conduct.

4.4 Sanctions

Staff that fail to adhere to this policy may face disciplinary action. See the school's staff disciplinary policy for more information.

5. Use of mobile phones by parents, volunteers and visitors

Parents, visitors and volunteers (including governors and contractors) must adhere to this policy as it relates to staff if they are on the school site during the school day. This means:

- Not taking pictures or recordings of children;
- Using any photographs or recordings for personal use only, and not posting on social media without consent;
- Not using phones in lessons, or when working with children.

Parents, visitors and volunteers will be informed of the rules for mobile phone use when they sign in at reception or attend a public event at school.

Parents or volunteers supervising trips are also responsible for enforcing the school's policy for children using their phones, as set out in section 4 above.

Parents must use either reception as the first point of contact if they need to get in touch with their child during the school day. They must not try to contact their child on his/her personal mobile during the school day.

6. Loss, theft or damage

Students bringing phones to school must ensure that phones are stored securely and out of sight, preferably in lockers. Students must secure their phones as much as possible, including using passwords or pin codes to protect access to the phone's functions.

Staff must also secure their personal phones, as well as any work phone provided to them. Failure by staff to do so could result in GDPR breaches.

Where a mobile phone or digital device is brought into school, it is entirely at the child's and parents' own risk. The school accepts no responsibility for the loss, theft or damage of any phone or electronic device brought into school. (Ref: Section 94, Education and Inspections Act 2006 states that "where a teacher disciplines a pupil by confiscating an item, neither the teacher nor the school will be liable for any loss or damage to that item").

Equally, there is no statutory liability on schools for items that go missing in other ways. Confiscated phones will be stored in reception in a secure location and must be signed out by the child or parent/carer upon return. Lost phones should be returned to Reception. The school will then attempt to contact the owner.

Monitoring and review

The school is committed to ensuring that this policy has a positive impact on children's education, behaviour and welfare. When reviewing the policy, the school will taken into account relevant advice from the Welsh Government, the local authority or other relevant organisations.