

# Our Lady Star of the Sea Catholic Nursery Mobile Phone Policy

## Mission Statement

*"You are precious in my eyes" - Isaiah 43*

- *Our Lady Star of the Sea Catholic Nursery is committed to the widest and fullest education of all pupils in a partnership between home, nursery, parish and community.*
- *Our nursery aims to create a happy, ordered environment where all members feel secure, valued and respect each other.*
- *Our nursery aims to be a positive force within the Catholic Church inspired by the life of Christ in the Gospels*

## Introduction

Mobile phone technology has become increasingly more sophisticated over recent years and will continue to evolve into the future; wireless connections in particular extend the capabilities of mobile phones further allowing access to new content and services, such as the internet, social networking sites and instant messaging. In addition, many mobile phones offer camera, video and audio recording as standard. Because of advanced technologies, there inevitably comes associated risks. Children must be encouraged to understand these risks to enable them to develop strategies which can keep them safe.

As with online safety issues generally, risks to children should be broadly categorised under the headings of:

- content
- contact
- conduct
- commerce

These issues are managed by reducing, restricting access and increasing resilience. This philosophy is applied to the use of mobile phones through this Mobile Phone Policy. Acceptable use and management of mobile phones must be agreed by all service users. There is a clear expectation that the personal use of mobile phones is to be limited to specific times and uses, to be agreed with the Senior Designated Person for Safeguarding (**B. Draper**), Deputy Senior Designated Person for Safeguarding (**M. Wood**). Any authorised use of mobile phones is monitored and recorded. Safe and secure storage facilities are made available as necessary. Under no circumstances are images, video or audio recordings to be taken without prior explicit written consent by the parents and the Senior Designated Person.

## Aim

The aim of this Mobile Phone Policy is to protect the children from harm, by ensuring the appropriate management and use of mobile phones by all individuals who come into contact with children/setting.

Children are also to be empowered with the skills to manage changes in technology in a safe and appropriate way; and to be alert to the potential risks of such use. This is achieved through balancing protection and potential misuse. However, it is also recognised that alongside the potential risks, mobile phones continue to be effective communication tool.

# Our Lady Star of the Sea Catholic Nursery

## Mobile Phone Policy

### Scope

This policy applies to all individuals who have access to and/ or be users of personal and/or work-related mobile phones within the broadest context of the setting's environment. This will include parents, carers, staff, volunteers, students, committee members, visitors, contractors and community users. This list is not to be considered exhaustive.

### Policy statement

It is recognised that the enhanced functions of many mobile phones give the most cause for concern, and therefore is the most susceptible to potential misuse. Examples of misuse include the taking and distribution of indecent images, exploitation and bullying.

Mobile phones which are misused have a negative impact upon an individual's safety, dignity, privacy and right to confidentiality. Such concerns not considered exclusive to children, the needs and vulnerabilities of all must be respected and protected.

Mobile phones can also cause unnecessary distractions during the working day and are often considered intrusive when used in the company of others.

It can be very difficult to detect when mobile phones are present or being used. Therefore, the nursery environment is a '**mobile free zone**'. Under no circumstances are staff permitted to use their mobile phones in nursery during opening hours.

### Code of conduct

This code of conduct is promoted with the aim of creating informed staff, who work together to safeguard and promote positive outcomes for the children.

All practitioners need to be:

- aware of the need to protect children from harm.
- have a clear understanding of what constitutes misuse.
- know how to minimise risk.
- vigilant and alert to potential warning signs of misuse.
- avoid putting themselves into compromising situations, which could be misinterpreted and lead to potential allegations.
- understand the need for professional boundaries and clear guidance regarding acceptable use.
- responsible for the self-moderation of their behaviour.
- aware of the importance of reporting concerns immediately.

### Procedures

Clearly defined policies and procedures ensure effective safeguarding practices are in place to protect children from harm and exposure to behaviours associated with misuse. There is also the additional

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need to ensure mobile phones do not cause unnecessary and/or unsafe disruptions and distractions in the workplace. There is a clear expectation, for example, that all personal use of mobile phones is to be limited to allocated lunch and/or tea breaks (in staff room), unless it is to be otherwise agreed by the Senior Designated Person for Safeguarding. Safe and secure storage facilities made available to store personal belongings as necessary.

The recording, taking and sharing of images, video and audio on any mobile phone is not permitted. All mobile phone use is to be open to scrutiny by the Senior Designated Person for Safeguarding. The SDP will have the authority to withdraw or restrict authorisation for use at any time.

Practitioners are not to use their own personal mobile phones for contacting children, parents and carers. If it is to be deemed necessary, it must be with the explicit written consent from both the Senior Designated Person for Safeguarding and the parent or carer.

All service users, including parents, carers, visitors and contractors should be respectfully advised that their mobile phones are **not** to be used.

Should it be considered necessary for mobile phone calls and/or texts to be taken or made, every effort should be made to avoid any unnecessary disturbance or disruption to children/setting.

No images, video or audio recordings are to be made without prior explicit written consent by the Senior Designated Person for Safeguarding.

All individuals who are to bring personal devices into the nursery must ensure that they hold no inappropriate or illegal content.

### **Safe storage**

A designated safe and secure area is available for the storage of personal belongings during the working day. Practitioners should recognise that they leave any belongings in such storage areas at their own risk. No liability for loss and/or damage will be accepted.

It is recommended that should mobile phones be security marked, password protected and insured.

### **Emergency contact**

It is recognised that mobile phones provide direct contact to others and often provides necessary reassurances due to their ease of access, particularly at difficult times. Therefore, the agreed acceptable use of mobile phones is accepted. This is to afford practitioners peace of mind, reduce stress and worry, and to allow them to concentrate more fully on their work. Usage is however subject to management, monitoring and review.

The landline telephone remains connected and operational at all times, except in circumstances beyond reasonable control. This means that it is available for emergency/urgent contact/usage at all times.

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The reliance of an answer phone is to be avoided unless the nursery should be closed or where children are to be taken off the premises for a trip or outing. The answer phone is to be checked promptly on opening or return.

**Designated person responsible:** B. Draper

**Date:** 6.2.24