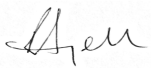


# R Mobile Phone



## Version control

Agreed at Meeting on	Attended by	Final Approval by	Date Approved	Next Review Date
5.6.2014	R. Angell J. Malins		5.6.2014	5.6.2015

## Policy

Otters Nursery Schools accept that mobile phones are a part of everyday life for parents, carers and for staff. This policy is part of the companies wider commitment to safeguarding the welfare of children and vulnerable adults. This policy is linked to Otters Nursery School Policies on Safeguarding, Photography and Use of Photographic Images and Whistleblowing.

Mobile phone technology has become more sophisticated over recent years and will continue to evolve. Wireless connections in particular are to extend the capabilities of mobile phones further; which will allow access to new content and services, such as the internet, social networking sites and instant messaging. Many mobile phones offer camera, video and audio recording as standard.

Mobile phones, alongside other technologies aim to change the way we communicate. This speed of communication will often provide security and reassurance; however, as with any other form of technology there are to be associated risks. Children and young people must be encouraged to understand such risks to enable them to develop the appropriate strategies which will keep them safe.

As with online safety issues generally, risks to children and young people should be broadly categorised under the headings of: • content• contact• conduct• commerce. These issues are to be managed by reducing availability, restricting access and increasing resilience. This philosophy is to be applied to the use of mobile phones through the Mobile Phone Policy.

Acceptable use and management of mobile phones is therefore to be agreed by all service users. There is to be a clear expectation that the personal use of mobile phones is to be limited to specific times and uses as to be agreed with the designated Company Director R Angell Designated Person for Safeguarding. Any authorised use of mobile phones is to be monitored and recorded. Safe and secure storage facilities are to be made available to store personal belongings as necessary.

Under no circumstances are images, video or audio recordings to be made without prior explicit written consent by the designated Company Director R Angell Designated Person for Safeguarding.

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

Children and young people are also to be empowered with the skills to manage the changes in technology in a safe and appropriate way; and to be alert to the potential risks of such use. This is to be achieved through balancing protection and potential misuse. It is therefore to be recognised that alongside the potential risks, mobile phones continue to be effective communication tools. This in turn is to contribute to safeguarding practice and protection.

The Mobile Phone Policy will apply to all individuals who are to have access to and/or be users of personal and/or work-related mobile phones within the broadest context of the setting environment. This will include children and young people, parents and carers, early years practitioners and their managers, volunteers, students, Company Directors, visitors, contractors and community users. This list is not to be considered exhaustive.

It is to be recognised that it is the enhanced functions of many mobile phones that will give the most cause for concern; and which should be considered the most susceptible to potential misuse. Examples of misuse are to include the taking and distribution of indecent images, exploitation and bullying.

It must be understood that should mobile phones be misused, there will be a negative impact on an individual's safety, dignity, privacy and right to confidentiality. Such concerns are not to be considered exclusive to children and young people, so the needs and vulnerabilities of all must be respected and protected.

Mobile phones will also cause an unnecessary distraction during the working day and are often to be considered intrusive when used in the company of others.

It will often be very difficult to detect when mobile phones are present or being used.

The use of all mobile phones needs to be effectively managed to ensure the potential for misuse is to be minimised.

A code of conduct is to be promoted with the aim of creating an informed workforce, who will work together to safeguard and promote positive outcomes for the children and young people in their care.

All practitioners and their managers will:

- be aware of the need to protect children from harm.
- have a clear understanding of what constitutes misuse.
- know how to minimise risk.
- be 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.
- be responsible for the self-moderation of their own behaviours.

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- be aware of the importance of reporting concerns immediately.

It is to be recognised that studies consistently indicate that imposing rigid regulations and/or 'bans' on the actions of others are counterproductive and should be avoided. Such imposition will lead to a culture of suspicion, uncertainty and secrecy. An agreement of trust is therefore to be promoted regarding the carrying and use of mobile phones in the nursery. This is to be agreed by all service users, including all children, young people and adults who are to come into contact with the early years setting.

Clearly defined policies and procedures will aim to ensure effective safeguarding practices are in place to protect children from harm and exposure to behaviours associated with misuse. The need to ensure mobile phones will not cause unnecessary and/or unsafe disruptions and distractions in the workplace are also to be considered.

Acceptable use and management of mobile phones is to be agreed by all service users. There is to be a clear expectation, for example, that all personal use of mobile phones is to be limited to allocated lunch and/or tea breaks, unless it is to be otherwise agreed by the designated Company Director R Angell Designated Person for Safeguarding. Such authorised use is to be monitored and recorded. Safe and secure storage facilities are to be made available to store personal belongings as necessary.

The recording, taking and sharing of images, video and audio on any mobile phone is to be avoided; except where it is to be explicitly agreed otherwise by the designated Company Director R Angell Designated Person for Safeguarding. Such authorised use is to be monitored and recorded. All mobile phone use is to be open to scrutiny and the Senior Designated Person for Safeguarding is to be able to withdraw or restrict authorisation for use at any time if it is to be deemed necessary.

Practitioners and their managers are to be encouraged not to use their own personal mobile phones for contacting children and young people, parents and carers. If it is to be deemed necessary, it must be with the explicit written consent of both the designated Company Director R Angell Designated Person for Safeguarding and the parent or carer; unless it is to be considered an emergency. Care is to be taken to ensure that work mobiles are not to be exploited in a similar way.

All service users, including parents, carers, visitors and contractors should be respectfully advised that their mobile phones are not to be used in designated mobile use free areas. Should it be considered necessary for mobile phone calls and/ or texts to be taken or made, efforts should be made to avoid any unnecessary disturbance or disruption to children and young people. No images, video or audio recordings are to be made without prior explicit written consent by the designated Company Director R Angell Designated Person for Safeguarding.

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

### The nursery mobile phone

The use of a designated work mobile is to be used as it is considered to be:

- an effective communication tool, enabling text, and calls to be made and received.
- an essential part of the emergency toolkit which is to be taken on short trips and outings and used in the case of emergency evacuation.

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- a back-up facility should landline facilities be unavailable – or where contact needs to be made outside of operational hours.

Effective security procedures ensure that authorised individuals are to have access to the work mobile, which is to be password protected, and to be stored securely when not in use. All use is to be recorded and monitored by the Senior Designated Person for Safeguarding.

Personal calls are not to be made on the work mobile phone, other than in circumstances to be agreed. Personal contact will be permitted to be made via the work mobile in the event of an emergency. All such communications are to be logged.

The work mobile phone is clearly labelled as such.

### Use of mobile phones in a vehicle

Practitioners and their managers who will be required to drive on behalf of the Nursery must ensure any work and/or personal mobile phones are to be switched off whilst driving.

Under no circumstances, when driving on behalf of the organisation, should practitioners and their managers make or take a phone call, text or use the enhanced functions of a mobile phone. This is also to apply to the use of hands- free and wireless connections, which are to be considered a distraction rather than a safer alternative.

### Staff members' personal mobile phones

A designated safe and secure area is to be made available to practitioners and their managers for the storage of personal belongings during the working day.

Practitioners and their managers should recognise that they are to leave any belongings in such storage areas at their own risk. It is recommended that should mobile phones be stored, they are to be security marked, password protected and insured. No liability for loss and/or damage is to be accepted.

It is to be recognised that mobile phones provide direct contact to others, and will often provide necessary reassurances due to their ease of access, particularly at difficult times. Agreed acceptable use of mobile phones is to therefore be promoted. This is to afford practitioners and their managers peace of mind, by reducing stress and worry and is therefore to allow them to concentrate more fully on their work. Such use must be subject to management, monitoring and review.

### Use of the landline

It is to be ensured that the landline telephone remains connected and operational at all times, except in circumstances beyond reasonable control. This means that the landline is to be available for emergency/ urgent contact at all times.

The reliance on an answer phone is to be avoided unless the early years setting should be closed or where children are to be taken off the premises for a trip or outing. It must always be ensured that the answer phone is to be checked promptly on opening or return.

All staff, paid & unpaid, volunteers, students, parents and persons attending the Nursery must follow the procedure :



## Procedure

These procedures are to be adopted in order to allay concerns which are mainly based around these issues: - Staff being distracted from their work with children - The use of mobile phones around children- The inappropriate use of mobile phones

### Ensuring the Safe and Appropriate Use of Mobile Phones by members of staff

Otters Nursery School allows staff to bring in mobile phones for their own personal use. However, they must be kept in their lockers at all times and are not allowed to be used in any part of the nursery premises at anytime, except in the Managers office during an official break, and with the permission of the Manager. If staff fail to follow this guidance, disciplinary action will be taken in accordance to the Otters Nursery staff contract. If staff need to make an emergency call, they must do so in the managers office. Staff must ensure that there is no inappropriate or illegal content on the device.

Mobile phone technology may not be used to take photographs anywhere within the nursery premises including the grounds. There are digital cameras available within the nursery and only these should be used to record visual information within the consent criteria guidelines of the local authority and the nursery.

Members of staff may only contact a parent/carer on the nursery landline or in the case of emergency the nursery mobile phone. When children undertake a school trip or journey, mobile phone use by staff should be limited to contact with the nursery setting or senior management of the company or venues being visited, except in emergencies and then only by use of the nursery mobile phone provided.

### Use of Mobile Phones for Volunteers, Visitors, Students and persons attending the Nursery:

- Upon their initial visit volunteers and visitors are given information informing them they are not permitted to use mobile phones on the premises. If they wish to make or take an emergency call they may use the office.
- Volunteers and visitors are not permitted to take photographs or recordings of the children without the permission of the designated Company Director R Angell Designated Person for Safeguarding.