MOBILE & SMART TECHNOLOY POLICY

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MOBILE AND SMART TECHNOLOGY POLICY

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Terminology: Please note that the terms "our teams" and "team member/s" include everyone working with the people in Outcomes First Group's services in a paid or unpaid capacity, including employees, volunteers, consultants, agency staff and contractors.

1.0 POLICY STATEMENT

Outcomes First Group places the safety of young people as its highest priority, including safeguarding children and young people when using mobile devices and smart technology at school/college. The use of such devices must be managed effectively in the learning environment. Pupils will be educated to take a responsible approach in the use of technology, inside and outside of school/college, to help them recognise and understand the risks and build their digital awareness and resilience (Please see the *Staying Safe Online Policy*).

The purpose of this policy is to safeguard and promote the welfare of all members of the school/college community with regard to the use of mobile devices and smart technology in the school/college environment and is fully endorsed by the school's/college's governing body.

This policy applies to pupils, visitors, team members, and other individuals who provide services on behalf of the school/college. It applies to all mobile devices and smart technology on site, including but not limited to, mobile phones and personal devices, such as tablets, e-readers, games consoles and wearable technology, such as smart watches and fitness trackers, which facilitate communication or have the capability to record sound or images.

1.1 Policy Framework

The 2023 UNESCO report on Global Education Monitoring Report 2023 found that the use of mobile devices in school/college can be harmful to children and young people's mental and physical wellbeing causing distraction from learning, risks to pupil privacy and cyber-bullying. Following these findings DFE has issued Mobile phones in schools: guidance and the use of **personal mobile devices will not be allowed** in the our schools during the school day.

This policy has also been developed in line with DfE's guidance: Keeping children safe in education (KCSiE) 2024; Working Together to Safeguard Children; Searching, Screening and Confiscation and the Scottish Government's Guidance: Developing Policies to Promote Safe Responsible Use Mobile Technology in Schools

This policy should read alongside:

Outcomes First Group's:
- Mobile Device Policy (IT policy for team members)
- Data Protection policy
- Staying Safe Online
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Code of Conduct & Ethics (CoCE)
- Photography of Injuries and Medical Conditions
- Serious Incident Notification Policy

The school's/colleges:
- Safeguarding Policy
- Anti-bullying Policy
- Child-on-child abuse policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Web Filtering policy

DFE Guidance:
- Teaching Online Safety in Schools
- How to respond to an incident of nude/ semi-nude images being shared
- Searching, Screening and Confiscation

2.0 SAFE USE OF MOBILE AND SMART TECHNOLOGY EXPECTATIONS

2.1 We recognise that use of mobile and smart technologies is part of everyday life for pupils, team members and parents/carers. As part of the introduction and induction to the school the headteacher will explain this policy to the pupil and their parents/carers, and that it has been developed in best interests of pupils to create a safe and positive learning environment.

2.2 All members of the school/college community are advised to ensure that their mobile phones and personal devices do not contain any content which may be offensive, derogatory or illegal, or which would otherwise contravene our behaviour or safeguarding policies.

2.3 The sending of abusive or inappropriate messages or content via mobile phones or personal devices is forbidden by any member of the school//college community. Any breaches will be dealt with in line with the school's anti-bullying, behaviour and safeguarding policies.

2.4 All members of the school community are advised to use passwords/PIN numbers to ensure that unauthorised access, calls or actions cannot be made on their phones or devices.

3.0 PUPILS USE OF MOBILE AND SMART TECHNOLOGY

3.1 Personal electronic devices, including phones, smart watches and iPads, brought onto site by pupils must be handed in at the school/college reception. They will be put into a pouch or box that blocks signals. Pupils are asked to switch the device off or put it into aeroplane mode before it is placed in the pouch or box. The devices will be stored safely in a locked cupboard until the end of the school/college day when pupils can collect them form the school/college office.

The school/college will provide devices required for learning.

Exceptional Circumstances - If a pupil requires access to a personal device in exceptional circumstances, such as for medical assistance and monitoring, this will be discussed with the headteacher prior to use being permitted. The headteacher will seek advice from the Clinical Team

on this matter. Any arrangements regarding access to personal devices in exceptional circumstances will be documented and recorded by the school/college. Specific agreements and expectations (including sanctions for misuse) will be provided in writing and agreed by the pupil and/or their parents/carers before use is permitted.

Post 16 and Further Education provisions have the opportunity to be more flexible with students who are over 16 years of age, who may be able to have access to their mobile phones, for example when on off site visits and travelling. **If the provision intends to allow such flexibilities, they must set out their bespoke approach as an attachment to this policy and have it signed off by the Regional Director.**

3.2 If parents/carers need to contact the pupil during school/college hours, they should contact the school/college office on the telephone number on the school's/college's website. If a pupil needs to contact their parents/carers whilst on site, they will be allowed to use a school/college phone.

3.3 Pupils will be educated regarding the safe and appropriate use of mobile and smart technology, including mobile phones and personal devices, and will be made aware of behaviour expectations and consequences for policy breaches. Safe and appropriate use of mobile and smart technology will be taught as part of an embedded and progressive safeguarding education approach, using age-appropriate sites and resources.

3.4 Mobile phones and personal devices must not be taken into examinations or tests. Pupils found in possession of a mobile phone or personal device which facilitates communication or internet access during an exam will be reported to the appropriate examining body. This may result in the withdrawal from either that examination or all examinations.

3.5 Where a pupils' mobile phones or personal devices are used when learning at home, this will be in accordance with the Outcomes First Group's Mobile Device Policy and should be supervised by the parent or carer.

3.6 Any concerns regarding a pupil's use of mobile technology or policy breaches will be dealt with in accordance with our existing policies.

3.7 This policy applies when pupils take part in off-site activities and trips during the school/college day. The pupil's personal device should be kept at the school/college and collected at the end of the school day as usual. If a pupil may require a mobile phone for safety reasons, the school/college will provide a basic mobile phone for the pupil.

On occasions where a pupil is travelling directly to an external provider's site and not coming into school/college first, they must comply with the provider's arrangements regarding personal devices.

4.0 SEARCHES, SCREENING AND CONFISCATION

4.1 Any screening, searching and confiscation that is required in the school/college will be carried out in accordance with the DFE's **Searching, Screening and Confiscation** guidance.

4.1 Schools/colleges may use screening devices to check that pupils do not have devices or other prohibited items on them in line with this policy and other school/college policies. The use of any screening devices in the school/college must be approved by the headteacher and the Regional Director must be informed that the device/s is being used in the school/college.

4.2 Only the headteacher or a team member authorised by the headteacher can carry out a search. The headteacher can authorise individual team members to search for specific items. The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) (or deputy) should be informed of any searching incidents, and they should

consider the circumstances of the pupil who has been searched to assess the incident against wider safeguarding concerns.

4.3 Pupils' mobile phones or devices may be searched by a member of Senior Leadership Team, with the consent of the pupil or a parent/carer. If any content is found that contravenes any of the school/college or Group policies, it will be dealt with appropriately in line with these policies.

If team members find any images data or files on an electronic device that they reasonably suspect are likely to put a person at risk, they must consider the appropriate safeguarding response.

If there is suspicion that material on a pupil's personal device or mobile phone may be illegal, or may provide evidence relating to a criminal offence, the device will be handed over to the police for further investigation. The Director of Safeguarding/ Safeguarding Adviser must be informed immediately safeguarding@ofgl.co.uk

Only in exceptional circumstances should a team member ever consider disposing of the image or data and must only do so with the permission of the headteacher and in discussion with DSL. The circumstances where this may be considered are:

- If the data or files **are not** suspected to be evidence in relation to an offence, **and**
- the continued existence of the data or file is likely to continue to cause harm to another person, **and**
- the pupil and/or the parent/carer/person with parental responsibility refuses to delete the data or files themselves.

Where it is necessary for a team member to dispose of an image, this must be done so in line with paragraph 77-79 of DFE's Searching, Screening and Confiscation Advice it is advisable to ask another team member to witness the removal of the image. The disposal of the image must be recorded in writing and reported to the DSL. Full details of the incident must also be recorded on the pupil's record.

4.4 Where there is a concern that a child is at risk of harm, the school will respond in line with the School's Safeguarding Policy. **If a child, young person or anyone else is at risk of immediate harm, the team member must inform the police straight away**.

4.5 Concerns regarding policy breaches by pupils will be shared with parents/carers as appropriate unless this creates a risk to the child. Appropriate action, which may include sanctions and pastoral/welfare support, will be implemented in line with the school/college and Group policies.

5.0 TEAM MEMBERS USE OF MOBILE AND SMART TECHNOLOGY

5.1 During school/college hours, team members will only use mobile and smart technology devices provided by the school/college that have been purchased via the IT Service Desk. The school/college must ensure there is a sufficient supply of company mobile devices available for team members to use on site and take with them on school/college visits and journeys off site.

Team member's personal devices, including mobile phones, must be locked away and turned off or put on aeroplane mode whilst on site. If team members need to provide daytime contact details for emergency purposes, they should provide the school/college office number.

Team members that need to use their personal mobile phone to access Outcomes First Group's IT systems e.g. for two factor authentication, can do so in a room not accessed by pupil's e.g. the school/college office or staffroom. Their personal mobile phone should only be used for this purpose and must then be turned off or put on aeroplane mode and locked away after use.

Exceptional Circumstances - If a team member requires access to a personal device in exceptional circumstances, such as for medical assistance and monitoring, they will inform the headteacher/ regional director. Any arrangements regarding access to personal devices in exceptional circumstances must be documented and recorded by the school/college.

5.2 Team members will use mobile and smart technology in accordance with the law, DFE guidance and the relevant Outcomes First Group and school/college policies, such as Safeguarding, Data Protection and confidentiality and the Code of Conduct & Ethics (CoCE) and Mobile Device Policy.

6.0 MOBILE PHONES AND DEVICES PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL/COLLEGE

6.1 Devices and equipment required for teaching, learning, contacting parents/carers, or for safety reasons, will be provided by the school/college and must be used in accordance with Outcomes First Group's Mobile Device Policy and other relevant policies.

6.2 Team members providing formal remote learning will do so using school/college provided equipment in accordance with Outcomes First Group's Mobile Device Policy and Code of Conduct & Ethics Policy.

6.3 School/college mobile phones and devices will be suitably protected via a passcode/password/PIN and must only be accessed or used by team members and/or pupils with prior permission.

6.4 Where team members and/or pupils are using school/college provided mobile phones and/or devices, they will be informed prior to use via the Mobile Device Policy and user agreements that activity may be monitored for safeguarding reasons and to ensure policy compliance.

6.5 Team members will only use equipment provided by the school/college (not personal devices):
- to take photos or videos of learners in line with our image use policy.
- to work directly with learners during lessons/educational activities.
- to communicate with parents/carers.

6.6 Team members are advised to:
- Ensure that any content brought onto site via personal mobile phones and devices is compatible with their professional role and our behaviour expectations.
- Be aware that they are not permitted to use their own personal phones or devices for contacting learners or parents and carers at any time. Any pre-existing relationships or circumstance, which could compromise a team members ability to comply with this will be discussed with the DSL and the headteacher.
- If a team member is thought to have illegal content saved or stored on a mobile phone or personal device or to have committed a criminal offence using a personal device or mobile phone, the police will be contacted, and the Local Authority Designated Officer or equivalent will be informed in line with the Managing Allegations Policy.

If a team member breaches this policy, action will be taken in line with the Code of Conduct & Ethics and Managing Allegations Policy.

7.0 VISITORS' USE OF MOBILE AND SMART TECHNOLOGY

- Parents/carers and visitors, including volunteers and contractors, are asked not to use their mobile phones or smart devices whilst on the school/college premises. They should be stored securely when not being used and locked with appropriate security settings (e.g.

passcode/passwords/pin numbers). They should be switched off, or put on aeroplane mode, when at the school/college. Each setting will display a clear signage in reception asking all visitors to comply with these arrangements.

- **Under no circumstances should a visitor allow a pupil to use their mobile device. All devices must be passcode\password\PIN protected and "locked" if left unattended.**

- Appropriate signage and information is in place to inform visitors of our expectations for safe and appropriate use of personal devices and mobile phones.

- Visitors, including volunteers and contractors, who are on site for regular or extended periods of time are expected to use mobile and smart technology in accordance with the Mobile Device policy and other associated policies, including Safeguarding.

- If visitors require access to mobile and smart technology, for example when working with pupils as part of multi-agency activity, this will be discussed with the headteacher prior to use being permitted. Any arrangements regarding agreed visitor access to mobile/smart technology will be documented and recorded by the school/college. This may include undertaking appropriate risk assessments if necessary.

- Team members are expected to challenge visitors if they have concerns about their use of mobile and smart technology and inform the DSL or headteacher of any breaches of the policy.

8.0 POLICY MONITORING AND REVIEW

- Technology evolves and changes rapidly. This policy will be reviewed at least annually. The policy will be revised following any national or local policy updates, any local concerns and/or any changes to our technical infrastructure.

- We will regularly monitor internet use taking place via our provided devices and systems and evaluate online safety mechanisms to ensure that this policy is consistently applied. (Please see *Web Filtering Policy*) Any issues identified will be incorporated into our action planning.

9.0 RESPONDING TO POLICY BREACHES

- All team members are informed of the need to report policy breaches or concerns in line with existing policies and procedures as part of their induction and training.

- Should any mobile/smart device related incidents occur, team members must prioritise the pupil's immediate safety. They must remain professional and adhere to all safeguarding and confidentiality procedures.

- The DSL or deputy must be informed immediately. This must be done verbally and then followed up **on the same day** and documented on the school's electronic recording system and the Director of Safeguarding/Safeguarding Adviser notified via email: safeguarding@ofgl.co.uk

- On receipt of the information, the DSL must consider all information and then, in cases of serious concern, report this within **one working day** to the host authority, placing authority, Regional Director, and where relevant, the Local Authority Designated Officer or local equivalent.

- **If there is suspicion that pupil's personal device or mobile phone contains or may provide evidence relating to a criminal offence, the device must be confiscated and handed over to the police for further investigation. (Please also see 4.3)**

- After any investigations are completed, leadership team members will debrief, identify lessons learnt and implement any policy or curriculum changes, as required.

- Team members, parents/carers and pupils are required to work in partnership with us to resolve issues.

- All members of the community will respect confidentiality and the need to follow the official procedures for reporting concerns.

- Pupils, parents/carers and team members will be informed of our complaints procedure and team members will be made aware of the Whistleblowing Policy.

- If the school/college is unsure how to proceed with an incident or concern, the DSL/Deputy or headteacher will seek advice from the Regional Director.