

River Valley Community National School



Draft Digital Device Policy

Introduction

The possession and use of electronic devices and mobile phones by school pupils is now extensive. River Valley CNS supports the development of technology skills and recognises the educational value digital devices can have. At the same time, the school recognises potential problems associated with electronic devices and mobile phones, some of which are listed below:

- Smartphones can be valuable items and might render a pupil vulnerable to theft.
- The use of mobile phones for texting purposes during school time could be potentially undermining of classroom discipline.
- Use of phones with integrated cameras could lead to child protection and data protection issues with regard to inappropriate capture, use or distribution of images, sound and videos.
- Many of the above issues also pertain to I-pods, tablets, portable gaming devices, smart watches and other electronic devices. They can be very intrusive, distracting and anti-social in a school environment.

Aims of this Digital Device Policy

- Ensure that pupils will benefit from learning opportunities offered by electronic resources in a safe and effective manner.
- Inform all members of our school community about the appropriate use of electronic devices and mobile phones at our school

Personal Devices:

Personal devices will not be used by children under any circumstances for school based activities. School owned devices (cameras, tablets, laptops etc) will be the only devices used during school hours or school related activities. This does not apply to devices that are granted under assistive technology.

Smart Watches:

Children are not permitted to have smart watches/technology on their person or in their possession. A smart watch is defined as a watch with the ability to make/receive calls, text messages photographs and/or video content. A simple wrist watch or fitness trackers (that do not include any of the above technologies) are allowed.

Mobile Phones

- Children must leave mobile phones at home as they are valuable and may be lost or stolen.
- Children will not be allowed access any personal device; phones (including smart phones), tablets, smart watches, gaming devices or any other personal digital device during school hours or activities.
- Parents are reminded that in cases of emergency, the school phone or Aladdin remains the first point of contact and can ensure your child is reached quickly, and helped in any appropriate way.

- The school accepts no responsibility for replacement or repair of lost, stolen or damaged mobile phones that is brought to school.
- If a teacher has reason to believe that a child has a mobile phone or digital device it will be confiscated and dropped to the office. Parents/guardians will be informed of this. They will be asked to collect it from the school.
- Children are not permitted to bring mobile phones / electronic devices with them on school trips and tours. Where children are found to be using digital devices or have them on their person it will be regarded as serious misbehaviour and sanctions will apply according to the school's Code of Positive Behaviour Policy and/or Anti-Bullying policy.

Digital Devices & Anti Bullying

Parents should note that our Anti Bullying Policy currently states: "In the context of this policy, placing a once-off offensive or hurtful public message, image or statement on a social network site or other public forum where that message, image or statement can be viewed and/or repeated by other people will be regarded as bullying behaviour."

Guidelines for Staff

- During teaching time, while on playground duty and during meetings, mobile phones will be switched off or put on 'silent' or 'discreet' mode, with 'vibrate' off.
- Staff are asked to use only school devices when taking school related photographs.
- Mobile phones will not be used for texting or phone calls within teaching / pupil contact time except in the case of emergency.
- Calls for school business e.g. checking a booking for school tour, making arrangements for sporting events etc. should be done on the school phone.
- If a situation arises whereby a staff member needs to be contactable please speak to the Principal or necessary arrangements will be put in place. Also ensure you provide persons with the school landline, in case they are unable to contact you.
- School phone / school approved applications should be used to contact parents.
- All staff to keep their personal mobile number and social networking sites private.

Guidelines for Teachers re. confiscation

- A device may be confiscated if it is brought to school.
- If a device is confiscated parents should be notified by phone or email to inform them of breach of policy and organise return of the device.
- Where a device remains in school overnight, the Principal or Deputy Principal should be notified and the device stored as much as possible in a safe place e.g. locked drawer, filing cabinet etc.

Guidelines for Parents

- The Staff and BOM recognise the parents as the child's primary educator and believe that parents have an important role to play in ensuring their child's appropriate and safe use of electronic devices
- Parents and guardians are encouraged to regularly check their child's online activity / digital footprint. Parents are encouraged to check apps on devices to ensure they are aware of their child's online interaction with others and approve of same.
- Parents/guardians are encouraged to talk with their child regularly about their use of electronic devices and discuss who their child is interacting with and the content of such interactions.

The school also reserves the right to report any illegal activities to the appropriate authorities.