

MOBILE PHONES, CAMERA & ELECTRONIC DEVICE POLICY

POLICY STATEMENT

At St. Eval Preschool, we recognise that mobile phones, cameras, tablets and other electronic devices can support the effective delivery of children's learning, assessment and communication with parents and carers. However, the use of such devices must always be appropriate, proportionate and in accordance with our safeguarding and child protection responsibilities.

The safety, privacy and welfare of the children in our care is paramount. This policy sets out clear expectations for the use of mobile phones, cameras and other electronic devices within the preschool.

This policy should be read alongside our Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, Online Safety Policy, Confidentiality and Information Sharing Policy, Data Protection Policy and Staff Code of Conduct.

Preschool-owned devices

St. Eval Preschool provides and uses preschool-owned mobile devices for specific professional purposes. These devices may be used by authorised members of staff to:

- Take photographs of children as part of their learning and development.
- Record observations and evidence of children's learning.
- Upload photographs and observations securely to the preschool's Tapestry account.
- Communicate appropriately with parents and carers through approved preschool systems.
- Support the safe and effective running of the preschool where necessary.

Photographs taken for children's observations are used to support assessment and demonstrate children's learning and development. Staff will ensure that photography is proportionate and that only the minimum number of photographs necessary are taken.

The use of digital devices must never replace meaningful interaction, supervision or engagement with children.

Tapestry

St. Eval Preschool uses Tapestry as its secure online learning journal and parent communication platform. Photographs taken on preschool-owned devices for the purpose of recording children's learning will be uploaded to the appropriate child's Tapestry account in accordance with the preschool's procedures.

Photographs must only be uploaded to approved preschool systems and must not be shared through personal social media, personal messaging applications, personal email accounts or any other unauthorised platform.

Once photographs have been uploaded, staff must follow the preschool's procedures for securely managing and deleting photographs from the device where appropriate.

Personal mobile phones

Staff, volunteers, students, visitors and other adults working within the preschool must not use personal mobile phones to photograph or record children.

Personal mobile phones must not be used to:

- Take photographs or videos of children.
- Record children's voices or conversations.
- Store images or recordings of children.
- Upload or share images or recordings of children.
- Communicate with children or their families using personal contact details or personal messaging/social media accounts.

Personal mobile phones must be kept away from children and should not be used while staff are caring for or supervising children, except where there is an urgent or legitimate reason.

Staff may access their personal phone during an appropriate break and away from the children.

Emergency use of personal phones

We recognise that there may occasionally be circumstances where a personal mobile phone needs to be used for an emergency.

For example, if the preschool's usual telephone or communication system is unavailable and immediate contact with emergency services or another appropriate agency is required, a personal phone may be used where necessary.

Any such use must be limited to the emergency situation and reported to the Manager/DSL as soon as reasonably practicable.

Personal phones must never be used to photograph or record children, even during an emergency, unless this is specifically required as part of an immediate safeguarding response and there is no safer alternative. Any such incident must be reported immediately to the DSL/Manager and managed in accordance with safeguarding and data protection procedures.

Taking photographs of children

Photographs must only be taken for a legitimate preschool purpose.

Staff must:

- Use a preschool-owned device.
- Take photographs for the purpose of supporting learning, development, assessment and observations, or another clearly identified professional purpose.
- Take only photographs that are necessary and proportionate.
- Ensure children are appropriately dressed and that photographs are suitable and respectful.
- Avoid taking unnecessary photographs.
- Remain aware of the surroundings and other children who may unintentionally be included in an image.
- Ensure photographs are uploaded to the appropriate secure preschool system as soon as reasonably practicable.
- Follow the preschool's procedures for the secure deletion or retention of images.

Photographs must never be taken for a member of staff's personal interest or use.

Children's dignity and privacy

Children must always be treated with dignity and respect when photographs or recordings are taken.

Staff must not photograph children:

- In situations where their dignity or privacy could be compromised.
- While changing, using the toilet or receiving personal care, except where a specific safeguarding or care record requires an image and this has been authorised through appropriate procedures.
- In any situation that could reasonably cause embarrassment, distress or humiliation.

Staff should consider whether taking a photograph is genuinely necessary before doing so.

Consent and parental wishes

Parents and carers are informed about the preschool's use of photographs and digital devices as part of our registration and information-sharing arrangements.

The preschool will respect any recorded parental restrictions relating to photography and the sharing of children's images.

Where a child or parent/carers has not given permission for photographs to be used for a particular purpose, staff must follow the recorded restriction.

Children's individual circumstances and any safeguarding concerns must also be considered when deciding whether an image should be taken or shared.

Sharing photographs

Photographs of children must only be shared through approved, secure preschool systems and for legitimate professional purposes.

Photographs must not be:

- Posted on staff members' personal social media accounts.
- Sent through personal WhatsApp, Messenger or similar applications.
- Sent to personal email accounts.
- Stored in personal cloud storage.
- Transferred to personal devices.
- Shared with friends, relatives or other individuals who do not have a legitimate professional reason to receive them.

Photographs must not be copied or retained unnecessarily.

Staff use of devices during working hours

Staff must ensure that their use of electronic devices does not distract them from their responsibilities towards children.

The primary responsibility of staff is to supervise, interact with and support the children.

Personal phone use must never interfere with:

- Active supervision.
- Children's learning and development.
- Communication and interaction with children.
- Safeguarding responsibilities.
- Team communication.
- Responding to children's needs.

Visitors, students, volunteers and contractors

Visitors, students, volunteers and contractors must not use personal mobile phones or cameras to photograph or record children.

Where photography is required for an authorised professional purpose, this must be discussed with the Manager/DSL beforehand and an appropriate preschool-owned device must be used.

Staff photographs and information

Staff must not photograph or record other members of staff, children or families without a legitimate professional reason and appropriate permission.

Information, photographs or recordings relating to children, families or staff must not be shared outside authorised preschool systems.

Lost, stolen or compromised devices

Any loss, theft or suspected compromise of a preschool-owned device must be reported immediately to the Manager/DSL.

If a device containing photographs or other personal information is lost, stolen or believed to have been accessed by an unauthorised person, this must be treated as a potential data protection and safeguarding incident.

The Manager/DSL will take appropriate action, including considering whether the incident needs to be reported to the Data Protection Officer, Information Commissioner's Office (ICO), Ofsted or another relevant agency.

Safeguarding concerns or misuse

Any concern that a member of staff, volunteer, student, visitor or other adult has misused a mobile phone, camera or electronic device must be reported immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or Deputy DSL.

Examples include:

- Taking photographs of children using a personal device.



- Keeping unauthorised photographs of children.
- Sharing photographs outside approved systems.
- Using a device inappropriately around children.
- Accessing inappropriate content while working with children.
- Attempting to conceal the use of a device.
- Using technology in a way that creates a safeguarding or confidentiality concern.

Concerns relating to the conduct of a member of staff will be managed in accordance with the 'Allegations/Concerns Regarding a Member of Staff' section of the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

Monitoring and review

The Manager and DSL will monitor compliance with this policy.

Staff will be made aware of the policy during induction and reminded of their responsibilities as necessary.

Any breach of this policy will be taken seriously and may result in disciplinary action, safeguarding procedures and/or referral to the appropriate external agency, depending on the nature of the concern.

This policy will be reviewed regularly and whenever there are significant changes to legislation, statutory guidance, technology or the preschool's procedures.