Internet, Social Networking, Mobile Phone, and Other Electronic Devices Policy

Current version approved	**February 2025**
Current version reviewed and endorsed	**April 2026**
Review of policy	**As and when required, this policy will be reviewed and updated**

1. Telephone

Pavilion Day Nursery (the 'Nursery') recognises that all employees will make calls of a personal nature from time to time and considers the facility to do this to be the actions of an enlightened organisation.

Individuals are expected to pay for personal calls as a matter of course. However, if the individual anticipates a personal call will be expensive they must contact the Nursery Manager in advance, on a self-reporting basis to cost and then to pay the sum due.

Excessive cumulative time on incoming or outgoing personal calls is disruptive to the business, a misuse of paid time and is not acceptable behavior. The individual is expected to exercise responsibility in the timing of occasional outgoing calls to avoid peak work times, preferably making such a call outside of 'working time' i.e. on a lunch break. The definition of 'excessive' is a matter of judgment for the individual concerned and their Nursery Manager.

All staff need to recognise the cost and disruption caused by abuse of the telephone system. Where an individual or Nursery believes that a colleague is breaching the trust placed in them, they are encouraged to invoke the Nursery's Whistleblowing Policy.

Where Management has good reason to suspect an individual is breaching this policy they may invoke the Nursery's Disciplinary Policy at the appropriate level. If a breach of the policy is proven the Nursery will take steps to recover any amount owed through the abuse of the telephone system.

During Nursery hours there are times that the landline may not be supervised and staff in charge of children may answer the telephone, however the needs of the children must be met at all times and if by answering the telephone you will breach this then do not answer the phone.

2. Internet and Email

Internet and email has become increasingly popular and is now a very valuable resource within the organisation. These facilities will enhance our service delivery and make us more effective but all staff must be aware of the potential for misuse.

However, misuse of the internet and email is against the Law and any cases of misuse of pornographic, offensive or libellous material will be regarded as a Disciplinary offence and will be investigated and sanctioned through the Disciplinary Policy.

Electronic mail should not be used as a replacement for other forms of more appropriate communication. It has a place and is often suitable e.g. for reaching a large number of people quite quickly or 'dropping a note' to somebody not available at the time. It should not be used to impersonally manage, harass people, embarrass or discredit others. The use of blind copies is discouraged where their use is to discredit a colleague.

The following policy and procedure for use of email and internet covers the following:

- Security
- Surfing the net
- Internet as a Resource
- Personal use of emails & internet
- Professional Conduct
- Printing
- Downloading files
- E-mail protocol

Security

Security is of prime importance when using the internet. Internet email is not secure and can ultimately be read by unintended viewers. Recipients can also easily forward messages on to unintended readers. It is therefore imperative that the same consideration with regard to security is given to email as to any other communication. Sending personal information via the internet is in breach of the Data Protection Act.

Company Credit Cards should only be used to purchase items from secure Web pages.

Surfing the net

There are two costs involved in using the net and sending emails:

1. Actual cost of the telephone call
2. The individual's time

Internet as a Resource

You should only use email and the internet for corporate purposes during working time. There is no time limit for corporate use of either email or the internet. However, common sense will dictate that if a specific item on the internet is proving difficult to find, assistance should be sought from St Paul's Catholic College (the 'College'). The best way to access any site is to obtain the actual address first.

Personal Use of emails and the internet

The sending and receiving of personal emails is not prohibited but should be kept to a reasonable level and should only be done during "lunch hours" or out of working hours. Breaches of the Code of Practice will result in disciplinary proceedings which in the case of gross misconduct will result in dismissal.

Professional Conduct

Some sites will have their access barred automatically by the system. If you accidentally access these sites please inform your Line Manager as all accesses will be reported through from the IT department. All emails must be decent and not abusive e.g. racist, sexist, disruptive chain letters or defamatory. Emails and web sites accessed must not be offensive e.g. containing sexual images or comments, or language which discriminates against others in respect of race, national origin or disability. If you receive such a communication, notify the HR department or your Line Manager immediately, please remember that an email sent from a Nursery email address will be representative of the Nursery and should not contain any unprofessional remarks.

Staff are reminded that abuse of the internet is a disciplinary matter. Staff are referred to the standards set down in Nursery's Professional code of conduct.

The Nursery expects all employees to contribute to an environment where we are all treated with dignity and respect. Harassment of colleagues or persons outside the Nursery through email or the internet is expressly forbidden.

Abuse of the Internet or email in any form is subject to disciplinary proceedings and could lead to dismissal. As it will be considered to be gross misconduct.

Printing

Printing articles from the internet for work purposes is acceptable however printing inappropriate articles could lead to dismissal e.g. racist, sexist, pornographic or defamatory.

Downloading Files

Downloading files from the internet is permissible because the Nursery has a "Fire Wall" which will stop any file that has a virus entering the system. Some files, for example, video and audio files should not be downloaded because their size will result in the system slowing significantly. All email accounts will have a limit on the space available for storage so care will need to be taken when downloading large files.

Downloaded software or programs (i.e. music) should not be installed on any computer system without the approval of the College Support department.

Email Protocol

- Email should be treated as a formal method of communication. The same consideration should be given to email as is given to letters or telephone conversations.
- Capital letters should only be used for specific emphasis or in grammatically correct positions. Convention dictates that it is rude to write a complete email in capital letters.
- Email messages must not contain any libellous material, be defamatory, hateful; offensive, abusive, discriminatory or obscene.
- Email is commonly used as a method of propagating computer viruses. Do not **open any emails** if you cannot identify the sender. This is especially important if they have an attachment. If in doubt consult the College IT section.
- Ensure that you only send a copy of emails to people who need to read them, it is time consuming and impolite to copy emails to staff more widely than necessary.
- Think about how you address people formality versus informality.
- Be careful about sensitive material, marking it private and using the 'confidential' and 'high priority' options appropriately.
- Be aware that email may be seen by people other than the person to whom it is sent.
- Think about ownership in relation to internet and email. Copyright and other property laws exist in the same way as they do on paper.
- Do not download material that may be considered unlawful, this includes material that is defamatory, hateful, offensive, abusive discriminatory or obscene.

Use of the internet is not private

The College keeps a log of internet and email usage which may be checked at any time. This is not to infringe on staff privacy, but the internet is a very public way of communicating and like all companies, management reserves the right to ensure that the name of the Nursery is not brought into disrepute.

Staff should be aware that every time you view a page on the internet, it is possible to trace your visit back to the Nursery.

You should report all incidents of accidental access to inappropriate or illegal sites to your Nursery Manager.

Children are encouraged to use the internet if appropriate but must be supervised at all times.

3. Social Networking

Staff must be aware of their responsibilities to the Nursery when using social networking sites such as Facebook. Our Confidentiality Policy must be adhered to at all times, even outside of working hours. It is important to maintain your status as a professional childcare practitioner and therefore staff are not permitted to "friend" parents on Facebook. Disciplinary action could result if the Nursery is brought into disrepute.

Staff must not post anything onto social networking sites that would offend any other member of staff or parent using the Nursery.

4. Mobile Phone Usage

Mobile phones may **ONLY** be used for private purposes during working hours in the case of an emergency and when on a lunch break.

Mobile phones are not permitted in any room where children are present. Mobile phones belonging to staff **MUST** be handed and signed in to the Nursery office before the beginning of each working day. Staff are permitted to access their phones during their lunch break, however, all phones must be returned to the Nursery office by their owners at the end of their break. It is imperative they are signed in and out at all times. Staff who do not bring their mobile phone on site still **MUST** sign to clarify that the mobile phone is not on the premises.

Mobile phones that are not signed in or management are not aware are on site, are not permitted to use them on the Nursery premises at any time. Staff seen to be using a mobile telephone in this instance will be subject to a disciplinary investigation and/or action.

Cameras, Facebook and/or Snapchat on mobile phones are not permitted for use within the Nursery premises. Staff seen to be using a mobile telephone without authorisation during working hours, will be subject to a disciplinary investigation and/or action.

If a staff member is found to have a mobile phone in a room where children are normally present; this is a **serious breach of the Nursery's Safeguarding Policy** and will be considered **gross misconduct** and the Disciplinary & Capability Policy will be followed. Please refer to this policy for further information.

One mobile phone is permitted during Nursery outings to ensure the children are safe from harm and for use in an emergency or to keep in contact with the setting. Staff going on the outing must complete the Outing Book recording details of contact telephone number.

Visitors and parents **MUST** be informed that they are **NOT** permitted to use their mobile phones on site. This must be enforced by **ALL** staff. Visitors **MUST** be told upon signing in and never left unsupervised in a room with children present.

Tribal Inspectors can be asked for their mobile phones to be signed in, however Ofsted inspectors cannot but phones should be left in the office with the Nursery Manager.

5. Smart/Apple Watches

The Nursery recognises there are many health benefits for the use of smart watches such as counting steps and heart rate. To ensure the safe wearing of Smart/Apple watches:

- The watch has to be worn in 'flight mode' or bluetooth is disconnected, this will ensure there is no internet connectivity to access notifications or Wi-Fi.
- Staff understand they may not use their watch to receive calls or check messages whilst in the playrooms as this creates distraction and potential dangers.
- Staff have to be vigilant of others checking their watches and remind them of the Nursery policy and procedures of the safe wearing of a smart watch.
- Photographs can only be processed from a Smart/Apple watch with a mobile device in close proximity; staff are reminded that the mobile phone is signed into the Nursery office.
- Staff should not use their Smart/Apple watch to access photos or images whilst on Nursery premises (indoors or outdoors) and whilst on local trips/outings.

Where ongoing technology advances, the Nursery reserves the right to request the removal of a Smart/Apple watch if the safety of a child[ren] is at risk.