



# Hamilton Primary School



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

Headteacher: Mr G Aldous

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## MOBILE PHONE STATEMENT

Hamilton Primary does not want children to bring mobile phones to school.

If you feel that it is an emergency and your child does need their phone, please see the Mobile Phone Policy.

- Mobile phones can have cameras, video messaging and mobile access to the internet and as with any technology there are associated safety risks to children.
- Mobile phones are such personal and private devices it is difficult for parents to supervise access and contacts in the same way as they would a computer at home.
- Mobile phones are typically always on and hence a child is always contactable and, potentially, always vulnerable.
- Location-tracking services may mean that it is possible to pinpoint the exact location of a mobile phone. While this may be welcomed by parents keen to know where their child is at all times, it is not difficult to see how the technology can be misused.
- Children using mobile internet services may be exposed to material that is inappropriate, hateful or violent in nature or encourages activities that are dangerous or illegal. Most network operators now offer filtering and blocking services.
- Mobile phones are also used as a tool by bullies, using text messages as a way of tormenting their victims. The capability of camera phones has raised particular problems, with many reported instances of people being photographed without their consent or knowledge, possibly in an inappropriate situation. This is an invasion of privacy and can be extremely distressing for the subject of the photograph. Acts of 'happy slapping' - an inappropriate term to describe a violent and disturbing form of bullying - have been well reported in the Press. This ease with which photographs or videos can be distributed is of particular concern. Once released in this way, it is impossible to track down and permanently delete the images or files. Photographs could include clues to the location of the child, such as the school name in the background, which if distributed inappropriately, could lead to the risk of contact by strangers. There are also concerns that such technology could be misused by paedophiles.
- The increasingly desirable nature of mobile phones means that young people owning them may become targets for theft. Having spoken to the police on this matter I have been advised that there have been eight cases of robbery of personal property in Priory Road and Priory Avenue alone in the last year. Although details cannot be divulged on these robberies it highlights the possibility that could arise from 'advertising' a mobile phone on the journey to and from school. Data from the British Crime Survey for 2005/6 - a survey asking 45,000 people about their experience of crime - suggests a 22% rise in robberies to 311,000, its highest level for four years. This is largely driven by a rise in the numbers of young people carrying expensive goods, such as mobile phones and MP3 players. Nearly half of the victims were under 18. A third of the thieves were aged 14 to 16.

Parents may believe that a child carrying a mobile phone to school helps to keep them safe. I feel that as a school, we have a responsibility to keep pupils safe. I would strongly advocate that if it is absolutely necessary for your child to bring a mobile phone to school it is kept out of sight on the journey unless an emergency does occur.

G Aldous  
Headteacher