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Head of School: Dr R Warrack  
Assistant Head: Miss M Sturch

Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> May 2023

Dear Parents/Carers,

### **MOBILE PHONES AND SMART WATCHES WITH CAMERA FUNCTIONS**

It has come to our attention today that some children in school have Smart Watches with camera functions. At Scotch Orchard, we already expect mobile phones (used as telephone communication tools) to be handed in by any child who has one at the start of the school day. These are stored in a locked box, which will now be held in the school office, and stored in a locked cupboard.

**Children are requested to enter school via the front office to hand their phones in as they enter the school site**, ensuring that they are stored in a low-traffic area. Children will collect their phones from the school office as they leave the building at the end of the school day. In addition to storing mobile phones in the locked box in the office, we would ask that **any Smart Watch with a camera function that is turned on, or which can make/receive phone calls or messages during the school day (08:45 to 15:20)** is also placed in the locked box in the school office, to ensure that everyone in school is safeguarded.

The government blog, 'Mobile phones in school' <https://educationhub.blog.gov.uk/2022/02/09/mobile-phones-in-schools/> provides the following information: *'Mobile phones can be immensely distracting in the classroom for both pupils and their teachers. We want to support schools to make sure mobile phones are never a barrier to learning or a cause of disruption.'*

*We consulted with schools to understand how they go about managing this balance and whether any additional support is required from Government. We've always been clear that we back any headteacher who wants to ban mobile phones during the school day.*

*The feedback we got showed that most schools have well developed plans in place for the management of mobile phones and that further intervention from Government isn't necessary. In most cases mobile phones are already banned for the majority of the school day with schools taking a range of measures to enforce that policy.*

*We're producing new guidance that will provide practical advice to schools about how to encourage good behaviour, respond effectively to incidents of misbehaviour both in and out of the classroom, and will support staff in tackling behavioural issues. The guidance makes clear that headteachers need to set out that if they allow pupils to access phones in the school day they need to have measures to mitigate the risk of distraction, disruption, bullying and abuse associated with mobile phones.'*



It is my understanding that Smart Watches can be controlled using an APP on a parent's electronic device, so that only specific functions can be used on the Smart Watch between set times (i.e. camera turned off, messaging turned off, phone calls turned off). **We are happy for children to wear non-cellular watches during the school day in this mode.** If you are in any doubt about your child's device, please speak to a member of the Senior Leadership Team for further guidance.

As is currently the case, school cannot be held responsible for any devices owned by children that are brought into school during the school day. In the meantime, if you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact us via the school office.

With my very best wishes,

*Rhian Warrack*

Dr Warrack

Head of Scotch Orchard Primary School

