MOBILE PHONE POLICY

Introduction

1 Mobile phone technology has advanced significantly over the last few years - and it continues to evolve. Wireless connections have extended the capabilities of mobile phones, enabling access to a wide range of new content and services globally. Many phones now offer Internet and email access, alongside the most often standard functions of messaging, camera, video and sound recording.

2 Mobile phones, alongside other forms of technology, are changing the way and speed in which we communicate. They can provide security and reassurance; however there are also associated risks.

Policy statement

3 It is recognised that it is the enhanced functions of many mobile phones that cause the most concern, and which are most susceptible to misuse. Misuse includes the taking and distribution of indecent images, exploitation and bullying.

4 It is also recognised that mobile phones can cause an unnecessary distraction during the working day and can be intrusive when used in the company of others. When mobile phones are misused it can impact on an individual’s dignity, privacy and right to confidentiality.

5 It is appreciated that it can be very difficult to detect when such devices are present or being used, particularly in relation to enhanced functions, such as cameras. The use of all mobile phones is therefore limited, regardless of their capabilities. The aim is to avoid distraction and disruption of the working day, and to minimise the opportunities for any individual to make any covert images or misuse functions in any other way.

Equalities

6 All employees and Elected Members of the Council are expected to treat each other and members of the public equally and with respect regardless of – Age; Disability; Gender Reassignment; Marriage & Civil Partnership; Pregnancy & Maternity; Race; Religion & Belief; Sex or Sexual Orientation.

7 Information will generally be provided by the Council in English only. Where we are required under other statute to provide certain information in other languages, this information will be translated. You can request an alternative format by contacting Great Aycliffe Town Council on 01325 300700.

Aim

8 The aim of the Mobile Phone Policy is to promote safe and appropriate practice through establishing clear, acceptable use guidelines.
Responsibilities

9 All employees are responsible for the safe use of mobile phones and the continued implementation of this policy.

10 Under no circumstances should any employee use a mobile phone whilst driving. This is an offence and you will be liable to a fine and points on your licence. If caught using a mobile phone, whilst undertaking official council duties, the Council’s disciplinary procedure will be invoked and may result in your dismissal. If a call is received while you are driving, do not answer it until you can park in a place where it is safe to do so. Alternatively allow a passenger to answer or make the call.

11 If you have been issued with a work mobile it is your responsibility to look after it properly and it must be returned immediately if you hand in your notice to cease employment with Great Aycliffe Town Council. The cost of mobile phones which are not returned promptly will be deducted from your final pay.

12 Non adherence or disregard to this policy will be seen as a breach of the policy and the disciplinary procedure will be invoked which could result in your dismissal.

Mobile phones and the Law

13 Driving when using a hand-held mobile phone is illegal and you may be fined and receive points on your licence.

14 Picking up or using any type of phone or similar device (whilst driving) that is, or must be, held to operate it would be breaking the law. You can also be prosecuted for using a hands-free mobile phone if you fail to have proper control of your vehicle.

15 The law requires a driver to have proper control of his or her vehicle at all times. Consequently, driving in a careless or dangerous manner whilst using a hand-held phone could result in prosecution, with penalties including an unlimited fine, disqualification and up to two years imprisonment.

Private Use

16 Mobile phones are issued to employees for the purpose of communication on work related business.

17 Mobile phones may be used for private calls but they must be identified and paid for.

18 The use of all mobile phones should be limited, regardless of their capabilities to avoid distraction and disruption of the working day. Excessive use of mobile phones during working hours may result in disciplinary action being taken.

19 The Oak Leaf Sports Complex and Pre-schools have additional guidance on the use of mobile phones.
Guidelines

20 Non adherence or disregard to any of the points set out within this document will be seen as a breach of this policy and the disciplinary procedure will be invoked which could result in your dismissal.

21 The following rules must be followed when using mobile phones for Council business. You should also refer to any specific manufactures safety information supplied with your phone.

22 Certain areas should be considered ‘mobile free’ areas. These areas are considered to be the most vulnerable and sensitive:
   ➢ changing areas
   ➢ toilets
   ➢ Pre-school settings

23 A zero-tolerance policy is in place with regards to the use of personal or work related mobiles by any individual in these areas.

24 Do not under any circumstances use a mobile phone whilst you are driving.

25 When you have to use a mobile phone, use it for a short duration only.

26 On a long journey take regular breaks to check for messages and to make any necessary calls. Always park in a suitable and safe location.

27 The use of personal mobiles should be kept to a minimum during normal working hours and should only be used to receive and pass on urgent messages. Personal mobile phones may be used during official breaks i.e. lunch. Excessive use of personal mobile phones will be seen as non-compliance with this policy.