



SAFE START SCHOOL

WILLPOWER-INITIATIVE-SUCCESS-EMPATHY-RESPECT

Two-way Radio Policy

Policy Created: September 2022

Reviewed by: Grace Speakman

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Next review: October 2027

Approved by: Rachel Pilling

Purpose and scope

Two-way radios provide rapid communication between staff to support pupil safety, supervision and coordinated responses to incidents. They are an additional communication tool, not a substitute for appropriate staffing, direct supervision, safeguarding reporting, first aid or the school's emergency procedures.

This policy applies to staff, temporary staff and other authorised adults issued with or permitted to use school radios, both on site and during off-site activities where radios are provided.

Appropriate use

- Requesting immediate assistance with a pupil incident, absconding risk or unsafe situation.
- Alerting colleagues to a medical emergency, first-aid requirement or manual-handling assistance.
- Coordinating fire evacuation, lockdown or other emergency response in accordance with the relevant emergency plan.
- Supporting safe supervision, arrival and departure, movement around the site and school trips where appropriate.
- Brief operational messages between staff when radio communication is necessary.
- Radios must not be used for casual conversation, inappropriate remarks, discussing confidential case details or replacing required face-to-face professional communication.

Responsibilities

Headteacher/designated manager: ensures appropriate radio availability, staff instruction, site coverage checks and review of incidents or communication failures.

All radio users: carry and use radios responsibly, protect confidentiality, check function and battery level, and report faults promptly.

Incident lead/DSL/first aider: coordinates the relevant response within their role and ensures that required safeguarding, medical and incident records are completed through the correct systems.

Radio communication protocol

Keep radios accessible while on duty, with volume at an audible but discreet level. Use the designated channel and follow local arrangements for emergency priority.

Before speaking, pause briefly after pressing the transmit button; use a calm, clear voice and short factual messages.

Identify the staff member or location being called and state the assistance needed. Repeat essential information if reception is poor.

Keep the channel clear during an emergency; acknowledge important instructions and confirm when help has arrived.

Avoid discussing incidents within pupils' hearing where possible. Do not make speculative, blaming or emotionally charged statements over the radio.

Staff must avoid transmitting pupils' names, diagnoses, personal histories or other identifiable or sensitive information over radio channels. Locations or agreed neutral identifiers should be used wherever possible. Where disclosure is necessary to respond to an immediate risk to safety, staff must share only the minimum information required.

Where more detail is required, move to a secure method of communication or speak privately to the relevant member of staff.

Emergency response and safeguarding

If urgent help is needed, the member of staff should clearly identify the location, nature of assistance required and any immediate safety risk without disclosing unnecessary personal information. Staff must follow the school's behaviour, positive handling, first aid, missing pupil, fire, lockdown and safeguarding procedures as applicable. An emergency call over the radio does not replace contacting 999 when required.

For pupils who are distressed or dysregulated, radio messages should be discreet and neutral. Staff must avoid language that escalates a situation, labels a pupil or undermines their dignity. Only trained and authorised staff should carry out physical interventions, in accordance with the school's policy and individual risk assessments.

Safeguarding concerns must be passed to the DSL through the school's agreed confidential reporting route and recorded on the appropriate system. Do not broadcast safeguarding disclosures or detailed personal information over radios.

Confidentiality and data protection

Radio transmissions may be overheard by pupils, visitors or third parties, particularly where licence-exempt PMR446 radios are used. Staff must treat radio communications as potentially non-private. Radios must not be used to share medical information, safeguarding disclosures, contact details or other sensitive pupil or staff data unless an immediate risk requires the minimum information necessary for safety.

Equipment, charging and security

Check the radio at the start of use for battery, sound, channel and apparent functionality. Report poor coverage or faults to the designated manager.

Keep radios out of pupils' reach and do not allow pupils to access or operate them. Do not leave radios unattended in classrooms or public areas.

Return radios to their designated storage/charging point at the end of the day; charge in accordance with manufacturer instructions and site fire-safety arrangements.

Do not use damaged radios, batteries or chargers. Report missing equipment immediately.
Staff must not change programmed channels or settings without authorisation.

Off-site activities and communication failure

Where radios are used on trips or off-site activities, the trip leader must check coverage, battery life, allocation and an alternative communication method before departure. Radios have limited range and may not work in buildings or remote areas. If a radio fails during an incident, staff must use the agreed backup method and follow the relevant emergency or trip procedures.

Backup communication arrangements may include school telephones, authorised mobile phones or direct communication with another member of staff. Staff must be informed of the agreed arrangements during induction and whenever procedures change.

Training, monitoring and review

Staff authorised to use radios will be briefed on channels, emergency calls, safeguarding confidentiality, equipment security, battery charging and reporting faults. New and temporary staff will receive appropriate instructions before use. Radio-related communication failures or confidentiality breaches must be reported and reviewed to improve practice.

The Headteacher will review this policy annually and after a significant incident or material change to equipment or site arrangements.

Related policies

Safeguarding and Child Protection; Behaviour and Positive Handling; Health and Safety; First Aid; Fire and Emergency Evacuation; Lockdown; Educational Visits; Data Protection; Missing Pupil/Absconding procedures.

Appendix A – Quick reference for staff

Emergency: state location, assistance required and immediate risk; keep messages short. If assistance is not acknowledged, repeat the call and use the agreed alternative communication method. Contact emergency services directly where required.

Confidentiality: no pupil names, diagnoses, safeguarding details or sensitive information.

Response: acknowledge calls, keep the channel clear and follow the relevant incident procedure.

Equipment: check at start of use, secure from pupils, report faults and charge safely.