

Phone Policy for Staff & Pupils



Introductory Statement:

This policy was drawn up in response to technological advances, which have seen a significant increase in hand held electronic 'gadgets' amongst the school population over recent years.

Rationale:

- Personal devices such as tablets, mobile phones, smart watches, etc. are intrusive and distracting in a school environment
- Strategies must be put in place to reduce the intrusiveness of unauthorised technology in a school situation
- Some electronic devices may be harmful due to frequent use
- Mobile phones may be used to conduct bullying campaigns

Educational Context:

This policy operates in conjunction with the school's **Acceptable Use Policy (AUP)**. The school teaches **Digital Citizenship and Online Safety** through the SPHE curriculum (e.g., Stay Safe/Weaving Wellbeing) to educate students on the responsible and ethical use of technology, even when devices are prohibited on school grounds.

Children's Phones

- Generally, children in the primary school environment have no need of a mobile device and are discouraged from bringing mobile phones to school. If, at the written request of parents, a child takes a mobile phone to school, it must be switched off and handed up to the teacher as soon as the child enters the classroom and they are stored in the lock-up.
- The teacher returns the mobile phone to the child at home time
- Pupils who are obliged to carry a mobile phone must switch it off before entering the school grounds in the morning
- Pupils are forbidden to switch their phone back on until they leave the school grounds after school
- Pupils who ignore this policy and are found with their phones switched on will be dealt with according to the Code of Behaviour
- Where unsuitable material is suspected, the following protocol will be followed: **The Principal or Deputy Principal** (or designated staff member) will attempt to examine the content of the mobile phone **only in the presence of a second staff member and/or the student's parent** to confirm the nature of the unsuitable material. The student's parents will be informed that if a parent is

unavailable, the phone may be examined by the Principal/Deputy in the presence of a second staff member, and the results will be reported to the parent. In all cases, the decision to involve the Gardaí will be made by the Principal in consultation with the Board of Management, based on the severity of the content.

- The school accepts no responsibility for replacing lost, stolen or damaged mobile phones
- Pupils should mark their phones clearly with their name
- Mobile phones which are found in the school without a name must be handed to a member of staff immediately
- It is strongly advised that pupils have passwords/pin numbers to ensure that unauthorised phone calls cannot be made from their phones. These pins and passwords must be kept confidential
- Pupils who use mobile phones to bully other pupils or to send offensive messages or to make offensive calls will face disciplinary actions as per the school's Code of Behaviour
- The same applies to pupils who take unauthorised photos or recordings of other students or staff members
- **Smart Watches and other Wearable Technology** (e.g., fitness trackers with communication features) must also be handed up, switched off, and stored in the lock-up.
- It is a criminal offence to use a mobile phone to menace, harass or offend another person. As such, if action as sanctioned by the school in this regard is ineffective, as with all incidents, the school may consider it necessary to involve the Gardaí.

Work Calls

- Calls to parents/guardians should be kept as short as possible. Where a lengthy conversation with parents/guardians is required, appointments should be made to meet parents
- Calls to other professionals and organisations should be made in consultation with the Principal and classroom supervision will be arranged where appropriate

Personal Calls

- In general, personal calls should be carried out during break time
- In cases of urgency, a staff member should use discretion in making calls
- Incoming personal calls should be reserved for urgent matters

Mobile Phones

- Staff mobile phones can remain on silent or vibrate in case of an emergency from home etc.
- In case of urgency, staff should use discretion in making calls
- Texting should follow the rules in relation to calls

Roles and Responsibilities:

All staffs share in the co-ordination and implementation of this policy.

Evaluation:

This policy will be formally reviewed by the Board of Management and staff regularly or as new technology comes on stream, with amendments added as necessary

