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## Mobile phone and Devices Policy

### Introduction

The school accepts that it is not realistic to have a policy which prohibits pupils from taking phones to school. We understand that a number of parents would be concerned for health and safety reasons if their child were not allowed to carry a phone at all (and might therefore be unable to contact their parents in respect of any situation that might arise for those pupils who travel to & from school by themselves.)

The possession and use of mobile phones, tablets and other devices by school pupils is now extensive, even in the primary school sector. Use of mobile devices present a number of challenges, including:

1. Mobile Devices can be valuable items and might render a pupil vulnerable to theft
2. The use of mobiles devices could be potentially undermining of classroom management, e.g. videoing staff or pupils etc.
3. Use of devices with integrated cameras could lead to cyberbullying, child protection and data protection issues with regard to inappropriate capture, use or distribution of content

The aim of this policy is to:

- Take a sensible approach to address the outlined challenges to ensure that all children, staff and families using the school are kept happy and safe.
- inform all members of our school community about the appropriate use of electronic devices and mobile phones at our school

## Guidelines for Pupils

- Pupils are discouraged from bringing mobile devices to school. Where a pupil does bring a mobile device to school, it must remain switched off during the school day and may not be used, for any purpose, on school premises, grounds or during off-site school activities (such as school swimming or sports activities.)
- Parents are reminded that in cases of emergency, the school office remains the first point of contact and can ensure your child is reached quickly, and helped in any appropriate way.
- While we would discourage pupils from bringing devices to school where possible, if they are brought in, mobile devices should be handed up to the teacher at the beginning of the school day where all devices will be kept in a box/folder until the end of the school day.
- For off-site school related activities, such as GAA matches, athletics events or school tours, where pupils will not be returning before the end of the school day, mobile devices should be collected from the class teacher by the pupil and handed to the teacher managing the off-site activity. It will be returned at the end of the event.
- If a pupil is found to have an unauthorised device or is using a device at an inappropriate time, the device will be confiscated and returned only to a parent/guardian at the end of the school day. Permission to have the device in school may also be withdrawn.
- Taking photographs or video footage with a mobile phone or electronic device of either other pupils or teachers, or sharing inappropriate messages is unacceptable. Any footage that is taken must be surrendered on request and the footage will be deleted. Sanctions will apply according to the school's Code of Behaviour Policy.
- Where pupils have smart watches, we encourage them to turn off notifications during the school day, as they can be disruptive to learning. Smart watches should not be used to access mobile devices (messages etc) at any point during the school day. Under no circumstances should smart watches be used to record/video during the school day.

- Kindles, tablets, iPads and other such electronic devices should not be brought to school. We would encourage pupils to borrow a book from our school library as an alternative, to read in school.

## Guidelines for Staff

- Mindful of the duties and responsibilities assigned to staff in working with children, it is vital that staff be engaged with children at all working times. Staff are trusted to use their phones/electronic devices accordingly.
- Mobile Phone / Electronic Device use during pupil contact time should be for school purposes only, e.g. Aladdin, internal school communication etc.
- Staff members do not give out their phone number or that of any other staff member to pupils or parents/guardians.
- Calls for school business e.g. checking a booking for school tour, making arrangements for sporting events etc. should be done on the school phone.
- During teaching time, while on playground duty and during meetings, mobile phones/electronic devices should be switched off or put on 'silent' or 'discreet' mode, with 'vibrate' off
- When leaving the classroom (PE, nature walk, fire drill) take an electronic / mobile phone device with you.
- If taking photos of pupils/school related events on your mobile phone/electronic device, staff are trusted that they will use these recordings responsibly for school-related activities and delete them immediately from their device once they have been used for purpose.
- Staff must also be vigilant in terms of child protection with regards to recording children in the school. Staff members must ensure that they never share any media of children in school on their own social media profiles. Photos of children will not be shared on the school's social media and/or website unless parental consent is given.
- Under no circumstances should mobile phone devices belonging to staff members be given to pupils to use.

*\*\*\*The guidelines above also apply to any school visitors.*

## 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 where possible outside teaching time on the school phone. Where this is not possible, the principal should be consulted & classroom supervision will be arranged where appropriate.

## Parents & Guardians

- The Staff and BOM recognise the parents as the child's primary educator and believe that parents have an important role to play in ensuring their child's appropriate and safe use of electronic devices
- Parents and guardians are encouraged to regularly check their child's online activity / digital footprint. Parents are encouraged to check social media apps (e.g. *Instagram, Snapchat, Tik Tok, Facebook, Whatsapp* etc) on mobile phones and electronic devices to ensure they are aware of their child's online interaction with others and approve of same.
- Parents/guardians are encouraged to talk with their child regularly about their use of electronic devices and discuss who their child is interacting with and the content of such interactions.
- If purchasing phones for child/ren, parents are strongly encouraged to consider opting for mobile phones that can only access phone calls and SMS/text messages as an alternative to a Smartphone.

Ratified by the Board of Management on:

Signed: Catherine Clune Mulvaney  
Chairperson of Board of Management

Signed: R. Lorton  
Principal

Date: 18/10/2023

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