



School Policy on Mobile Phones and Digital Media Revision 2 Sept 2015

Introduction and Rationale

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.

- I Pods, mobile phones, Game Boys, PSP's, MP3's etc. can be 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 campaign
- There are also privacy concerns mainly related to the ability of many phones to take photographs, make video recordings or record. In order to manage the issue of mobile phones this policy has been reviewed.

Relationship to Our School Ethos

The use of mobile phones and other electronic games contravenes the provision of a safe and secure school environment and is not conducive to learning - a provision which is central to the mission statement and ethos of St. Joseph's Primary School.

Aim of Policy

School Management is updating a policy which prohibits the use by students of mobile phones while on school premises or involved in school activities such as tours/ trips or extra-curricular activities in order to create a safer environment and to lessen intrusions on and distractions to children's learning.

School Procedures

- A child may bring a mobile phone to school if parents consider that it is absolutely essential that a child have access to that phone immediately after school.
- The use of mobile phones by children is not allowed while the children are in the care of the school staff, while at school or on trips from the school.
- The school accepts no responsibility for phones which are lost, broken or stolen on the premises or while travelling to or from school.
- It is strongly advised that pupils use passwords/ PIN numbers to protect unauthorised use of their phone by others.
- Mobile phones must be turned off **before** entering the school grounds.



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- Mobile phones may not be used **in school** or on the **school gate**.
- Each phone must be clearly labelled with the child's name.
- A child who brings a mobile phone to school must put it in a box in a central location at the start of the day **immediately** on entering the school. This box is locked away during the day.
- All phones will be returned to the children at home time.
- Children who attend after school clubs from 2.40 – 3.40, will have their phones returned before they leave the school.
- A child may **not** switch on his/her phone until he/she is **outside** the school gate.
- Rules for the use of mobile phones must be displayed in the relevant classrooms.
- Phones will be confiscated for the first instance of non-compliance; it will be returned to pupil before close of school with a note to parent/guardian that subsequent incidences will result in the confiscation of the phone for 3 school days.
- Mobile phones which are found in the school should be handed to the front office.

Inappropriate Conduct and Sanctions

1. Any student whose phone is seen or heard by a staff member, whether or not the phone is switched on, is liable to have their phone confiscated.
 - The phone should be given to the principal's office by the teacher and retained here for the times listed below. The matter will be treated as a Serious Misbehaviour.
 - First Offence (Minor Offence) the phone may be collected that evening day with a note stating what the consequences will be.
 - Second Offence: the phone will be confiscated for 3 days,
 - Third Offence the phone will be confiscated for 1 week.
 - Failure to hand up a phone for confiscation, when asked by a staff member to do so will be treated as a serious offence.
2. If a pupil takes a photo/video/audio recording in school without express permission this will be dealt with under the schools "Behaviour Policy" and sanctions may be imposed as deemed necessary.
 - Pupils using mobile phones during school or on school related activities to bully other pupils or send offensive messages/calls will face disciplinary actions as per the School Code of Behaviour.
 - If it is clear that these offences have taken place then the parents of the offending child are contacted to discuss the matter.



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3. If a child uses a phone or similar device to take pictures of a member of Staff without the staff members permission the child will be dealt with as per as per the School Code of Behaviour,

It should be noted that 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 Principal is deemed ineffective, the school may consider it appropriate to involve the Gardaí. Hence, students with mobile phones must not engage in personal attacks, harass another person, or post private information about another person, via SMS messages/chat rooms/social network sites, taking/sending/uploading photos, phone calls. Circulating objectionable images will also be treated as a serious disciplinary issue. Infringements under section 2 and 3 above may result in the matter being referred to the Gardaí. In such case the parent will be informed.

Responsibility:

It is the responsibility of Parents, Staff and Children to adhere to this policy. Any student who is feeling unwell at school and needs to go home, or who needs to contact their parents for any reason must arrange this through the front office.

Evaluation:

This policy is monitored on an ongoing basis and amendments added as new technology comes on stream or as necessary.

Implementation:

Approved by Board following consultation for implementation from January 2015 onwards.