

## **Use of Mobile Telephones and Electronic Devices**

This Policy applies to all the school's "Devices", which means all computers, iPads, laptops, smart phones, smart watches, and other IT resources that may connect to the school's network or a mobile phone network. This policy outlines the appropriate use of such devices in our school.

### **Rationale**

The possession and use of mobile phones/smart phones by school pupils is now extensive, even in the primary school sector. Our core business of teaching and learning needs to be conducted in an environment free from unnecessary distractions or disruptions. Therefore the school strongly discourages the bringing of mobile phones/smart phones to school by students. The school is prepared to allow mobile phones/smart phones on the premises but only within the parameters of the policy as stated below.

Use of mobile phones/smart phones (particularly with the advent of increasingly sophisticated equipment and camera phones) presents a number of problems, including:

- Mobile phones/smart phones can be valuable items and might render a pupil vulnerable to theft
- Mobile phones/smart phones (and their cost and level of sophistication - or otherwise) can make pupils objects of envy or disparagement and could have implications with regard to discipline and potential bullying
- Use of the newer phones/smart phones with integrated cameras could lead to child protection and data protection issues with regard to inappropriate capture, use or distribution of images
- Many of the above issues also pertain to I-Pods, Game Boys, PSPs, etc. They can be very intrusive, distracting, and anti-social in a school environment.

### **Aims**

To inform all members of our school community about the appropriate use of mobile phones/smart phones at our school.

To outline the procedures and processes of this policy.

The school's Board of Management accepts that it is not realistic to have a policy which prohibits pupils from taking phones to school. Not only would it be impractical to forbid pupils from carrying them, but it is believed 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.)

However, it is the Board's policy to prohibit the unauthorised use by pupils of mobile phones while on school premises/grounds or off site activities e.g. school swimming, etc

## **Guidelines for Children**

- The Board discourages (and asks all parents to discourage) pupils from bringing mobile phones/smart phones to schools on the grounds that they are valuable and may be lost or stolen. Where a pupil does bring a mobile phone/smart phones to school, the phone 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.
- The use of electronic games, personal stereos, etc is not permitted during the school day (including arrival, class time, breaks and dismissal.)
- Where a pupil is found by a member of staff to be using a mobile phone/smart phones or other electronic device, as above, for any purpose, the phone /smart phones will be confiscated from the pupil and returned only to the parent, guardian or carer.
- The school will not be liable for the replacement of lost, stolen or damaged devices. The school incorporates this policy into the Code of Behaviour and will treat breaches as they would treat any other breach of the Code.
- If a pupil is found taking photographs or video footage with a mobile phone/smart phone of either other pupils or teachers or sharing inappropriate messages via bluetooth this will be regarded as a serious offence and disciplinary action will be taken according to the school's Discipline Policy. If images have been taken during school time, the phone /smart phones will not be returned to the pupil until the images have been removed by the pupil in the presence of a teacher and/or parent.

## **School Trips and Outings.**

- Children are not permitted to bring mobile phones/smart phones with them on school trips and tours. •Children may bring cameras with them on school tours.

## **Guidelines for Staff**

- During teaching time, while on playground duty and during meetings, mobile phones/smart phones will be switched off or put on 'silent' or 'discreet' mode.
- Phones /smart phones will not be used in sight of children except in the case of emergency. 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.
- In very exceptional circumstances (eg a car has broken down en route to school and a mechanic has been called) the teacher may, with the permission of the principal, have their phones on for a period. An explanation should be given to the class in this case.

- Teachers are reminded to be careful when using their personal mobile phones to contact parents. There have been occasions where teachers who have used their phones in this way in good faith have subsequently received crank calls.