



Use of Mobile Telephones and Electronic Devices

This policy outlines the appropriate use of mobile phones and electronic devices in our school.

Rationale

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 to school by students.

The school is prepared to allow mobile phones on the premises but only within the parameters of the policy as stated below.

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

Mobile phones can be valuable items and might render a pupil vulnerable to theft

Mobile 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

Even when apparently silent, the use of mobile phones for texting purposes could be potentially undermining of classroom discipline

Use of the newer 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 electronic gaming devices . These 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 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 (when the latest phones are so slim that they could be hidden easily).

We acknowledge also, that a number of parents wish their child to carry a mobile phone health and safety reasons.

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, as follows:

Guidelines for Children

The Board discourages (and asks all parents to discourage) pupils from bringing mobile phones to schools on the grounds that they are valuable and may be lost or stolen.

Where a pupil does bring a mobile phone 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.

Where a parent feels that their child having a phone in school is essential the following will apply:

Parents must send the teacher a letter requesting that their child be permitted to bring his/her mobile phone to school. One letter per year.

The letter should be addressed to the teacher and may be handed into the school secretary. This letter, if approved, will be kept on file by the class teacher.

A central list of who has permission will be on Aladdin.

All phones brought to school must have a sticky label on the back with the child's name and classroom number.

The phones must be turned off and handed up to the class teacher at the start of the school day. The teacher will keep the phones safely until the end of the school day.

Any child found to have a phone in school without parental letter or without having handed it to the teacher in the morning will have the phone confiscated. The phone will not be returned until a parent collects it.

Similarly, 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 or other electronic device as above, for any purpose, the phone 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 or showing photographs or video footage with a mobile 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 of other pupils or teachers have been taken, the phone will not be returned to the pupil until the images have been removed by the pupil in the presence of a teacher and parent.

School Trips and Outings

Children are not permitted to bring mobile phones with them on school trips and tours. A contact number will be provided for parents which may be used by them to contact the teacher on the trip.

Children may bring cameras with them on school tours.

Guidelines for Staff

During teaching time, while on playground duty and during meetings, mobile phones will be switched off or put on 'silent' or 'discreet mode'.

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 (e.g. a car has broken down en route to school and a mechanic has been called) the teacher may have their phones on for a period. An explanation should be given to the class in this case.

This policy was ratified by the board of management.

Ratification Date: December 2014

Signed: _____

Paul O' Hare , Chairperson BoM

Date for Review: 2015