



St Brigid's GNS Killester

Mobile Phone Policy

The spirit of this policy is that pupils should not bring mobile phones to school or to school related off site activities. Pupils who ignore the spirit of this policy and bring a mobile to school, whether they use it or not, will be required to hand over their phone to a member of staff and parents will be asked to collect it from the school office. This policy outlines the appropriate use of mobile phones and electronic devices in our school.

Rationale

The possession and use of mobile 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 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 increasingly sophisticated equipment and camera phones) presents a number of problems, including:
 1. Mobile phones can be valuable items and might render a pupil vulnerable to theft
 2. 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
 3. Even when apparently silent, the use of mobiles phones for texting purposes could be potentially undermining of classroom discipline
 4. 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
 5. Many of the above issues also pertain to smart watches, I-Pods, Game Boys, PSPs, etc. They can be very intrusive, distracting and antisocial 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), 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, 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 the 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:
 1. Parents must send the Board of Management a letter requesting that their child be permitted to bring his/her mobile phone to school.
 2. One letter per school term.
 3. The letter should be addressed to the chairperson of the board and may be handed into the school secretary.
 4. This letter, if approved, will be kept on file.
 5. All phones brought to school must have a sticky label on the back with the child's name and class.
 6. The phones must be turned off and handed to the class teacher or in some circumstances, into the school secretary's office at the start of the school day.
 7. The class teacher will keep the phones in a drawer until the end of school day.
 8. The school, class teacher or school secretary will not be liable for the replacement of lost, stolen or damaged devices.
 9. Any child found to intentionally have a phone in school without a parental letter or without having handed it to the class teacher in the morning will have the phone confiscated.
 10. 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 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 Code of Behaviour.
- 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.

School Trips and Outings

- Children are not permitted to bring mobile phones with them on school trips and 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, with the permission of the principal, have their phones on for a period. An explanation should be given to the class in this case.
- In terms of data, staff are also advised to use any mobile devices responsibly. Staff may use their devices to record any school-related work if they wish. However, the school cannot take any responsibility for these recordings. Staff are trusted that they will use these recordings responsibly for school-related activities.
- Staff should also note that no unauthorised recordings of school business must take place. This includes all meetings and events. If a meeting needs to be recorded for any reason, all participants must agree to the recording before it can take place. Any unauthorised recordings of meetings will be dealt with as a breach of disciplinary procedures.

Parents, Guardians, Visitors and Others Adults

- Adults must ensure that all content that they access is appropriate and in line with the ethos of our school. All internet data is logged and, if necessary, it may be used to report to relevant authorities.

- Adults are also reminded that they must not use devices to record audio, images or video unless specifically permitted by the school. Any meetings with staff should not be recorded without the permission of the staff member. Visitors must also be vigilant in terms of child protection with regards to recording children in the school. Visitors must ensure that they never share any media of children in school online, including their own social media profiles unless expressly permitted by the school and anyone appearing in the media.
- Newspapers and media organisations are permitted to take photographs, audio and video of children for their respective organisations. However, if there are children opted out from appearing in the media (see Internet AUP) they cannot be recorded.

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management On 3rd October 2023 and will be reviewed as necessary as the need arises.