



Mobile Phone & Electronic Device Policy



Introduction

This policy was drawn up in response to technological advances, which have seen a significant increase in mobile phone and hand held electronic devices amongst the school population over recent years.

Rationale

The following procedures have been put in place to ensure minimal and safe usage of mobile phones and electronic devices in our school, due to the facts that

- Mobile phones, Smart watches, Tablets (iPads etc.), Game Boys/PSPs, MP3s/iPods etc. are intrusive and distracting in a school environment and can reduce constructive socialisation during break times.
- Strategies must be put in place to reduce the intrusiveness of unauthorised technology in a school situation.

Aims:

It is our aim to:

- To lessen intrusions on and distractions to children's learning during the school day.
- To ensure children have maximum opportunities to socialise positively during break times.
- To ensure that electronic devices in and owned by the school (iPads, computers etc.) are used under the instruction and supervision of staff only, and are used for educational and learning purposes.

Relationship to School Ethos

The use of mobile phones and other electronic devices contravenes the provision of a caring and happy environment, which is central to the mission statement and ethos of Scoil Mhuire na nGrás.

Guidelines and Procedures for Children

The following are the guidelines for mobile phone/electronic devices usage in the school;

- Children are not allowed to use mobile phones or their own personal electronic games, smart watches or devices during school hours or during after school clubs/activities.
- Pupils are not allowed to bring mobile phones or electronic devices on school tours or trips.
- Children who need to contact home during school hours may do so through the school secretary or class teacher (using the school landline phone).
- In exceptional circumstances, when a mobile/device is required after school by pupils in 5th and 6th class, parents should contact the school Principal for such authorisation. If the pupil is authorised by the Principal to have the phone for exceptional reasons, they should hand their mobile and/or device to the class teacher for safe keeping. It will be kept in a locked drawer/ filing cabinet throughout the school day. The device should be powered off and may be collected at the end of the school day. The pupil may only begin to use the device once they have left the school grounds.
- Liability for any loss, damage or theft of any device is NOT under any circumstance the responsibility of the staff or Board of Management.
- Any pupil who brings a mobile phone or electronic device to school, and does not hand it to the teacher/school principals risks having it confiscated and not returned until a Parent/Guardian collects it.
- The use of School owned electronic devices (iPads/ laptops etc.) is strictly under the supervision of staff and in line with our Acceptable Usage Policy.
- Additionally, the school staff and Board of Management will ensure regular relevant information for pupils, parents and staff to endeavour to keep pupils and parents educated on any risks associated with mobile phones, tablets or internet enabled devices – such as cyber bullying, social media security and content.

Guidelines and procedures for Staff

- Classroom supervision is usually organised if a class teacher has to contact other professionals or outside agencies in relation to a particular child. This contact is then made using the school landline or on the staff member's mobile.
- The organisation of school events such as sporting games, events etc. should be organised on the school landline but calls relating to such school business may also be received and made on teachers' personal phones during the school day.
- The Principal may have his/her mobile phone turned on at all times when in classrooms, so that they are contactable by the office / staff (in case of emergency) at all times.

- Staff personal mobiles may also be used to contact the Principal/Office in the case of an emergency in the classroom/yard, etc.
- Staff personal calls and texts are ordinarily confined to break times (but not while on yard duty).
- All staff should have their phones on silent during class time.
- It is acknowledged that teachers and SNAs may need to be contactable by their family/their children's school, etc. during the day, so phones may be left in view (while on silent) throughout the school day. Staff personal calls on their mobile phones may be answered in cases of emergencies.

Implementation, Review and Communication

This policy was initially drafted and introduced in 2006. It was revised in February, 2018. The Board of Management will monitor the implementation of all aspects of this policy and amend as required.

Ratified by the Board of Management on _____

Chairperson: _____