

Mobile Phone, Electronic Devices and Digital Media Policy

Mobile Phones:

The school recognises that there are times when it is genuinely appropriate for students to have access to a mobile phone, for example, to contact parents in emergencies, to confirm or change collection times after sports practice or music rehearsals.

It is neither necessary nor acceptable for mobile phones to be switched on during class hours. Parents who need to contact students during class hours should ring the school office at 4813800.

In the event that pastoral intervention is required, the school will do everything in its power to assist the student's parents/guardians in providing for the needs of the student.

Students should note the following:

The school authorities will not accept responsibility for personal mobile phones, electronic or digital media devices on the premises, or on school trips or outings.

Mobile phones, digital media devices must be turned off **and** put away, except during break-time and lunch-time. Headphones must be put away.

Students operating a mobile phone/digital media device in school are in direct breach of this policy.

Examples of such breaches of policy include: leaving a mobile phone turned on, (except at break or lunch time), texting, checking the time, using the device as a calculator, checking texts, playing of ringtones, alarms and alerts etc.using the keyboard, the unauthorized taking of images/recordings (still or video). This list is not exhaustive.

Students may not use mobile phones/digital media devices during field trips, excursions or other activities, unless authorised by a supervising staff member.

Courtesy and respect for others is paramount. Students must not use their mobile phone to engage in bullying, personal attacks, "pranking" or harassment.

Students must not send private or personal information about another person by phone/digital media device.

Students must not take or send photos of an objectionable nature by phone/digital media device.

Students are not permitted to take photos, voice or video recordings, with cameras, phones equipped with cameras or digital media devices without the expressed permission of a staff member and the permission of the intended subject.

Examinations:

Mobile phones or any other devices must not be turned on or used during any examination. If a student is found in breach of these rules, the phone/device will be confiscated. A note will be made on his/her examination script and school report. The State Examinations Commission may impose sanctions which may include cancellation of examinations and criminal investigation.

Sanctions:

For phones/digital media devices turned on and/or not put away -

Immediate confiscation of the mobile phone/digital media device for the remainder of the school day. The mobile phone/digital media device will be held in the Deputy Principal's office. It will be available for collection, by the student, after the last class of the day. In the case of repeated incidents, the parent/guardian/carer will be notified and requested to collect the phone/digital media device.

For unauthorised/inappropriate voice, video or picture recording, abusive texts or calls to others, bullying -

The mobile phone/digital media device will be confiscated and held in the Deputy Principal's office, or in the case of a school trip, by the supervising staff member. The parent/guardian/carer will be notified of the incident and the student will face disciplinary action as sanctioned by the Principal/Deputy Principal.

Sanctions will be in accordance with the Code of Behaviour and will include reprimands, loss of privileges, extra work, report card, up to suspension and expulsion.

Inappropriate use of Digital Media & Social Networks

All rules relating to digital media devices and social networks are in place to maintain a safe, nurturing environment, where the personal dignity of all the members of the school community and the reputation of the school is safeguarded.

Students should always think before posting anything online because sharing information with others can mean that one can lose control of it. Remember the characteristics of digital media:

- It's searchable – anyone, anytime, anywhere can find it
- It's forever – anyone can find it today, tomorrow, or 30 years from now.
- It can 'go viral' – once found it can be copied, shared and modified immediately and into the future
- It has a potential global audience – even if your page is private, you cannot tell which friend shares your information. You have no control over what your friends do with it.

Student should not send malicious emails or use social networks to target another student. Examples of such misuse include posting website comments, status updates, images, video and comments - 'like'ing same. Impersonation, organised exclusion, malicious/inappropriate tweets and retweets etc. *This is not an exhaustive list.*

Students should never use digital media or social networks to engage in bullying behaviour. The school policy for dealing with bullying behaviour will be followed in such cases, in addition to this policy.

Right to Dignity at Work:

Students are strictly forbidden from posting/liking/(re)tweeting offensive comments/images/videos/recordings of, or about, school personnel on any phone, media device, /website.

Parents/guardians will be contacted. The offending material must be removed immediately.

Following investigation, sanctions will be imposed in accordance with the Code of Behaviour, which prohibits irresponsible behaviour placing others at risk.

Sanctions will include reprimands, loss of privileges, report card, up to suspension and expulsion.

Deletion of Offensive or Incitive Content:

A student will be required to hand up the digital media device if he/she behaves in any of the following ways in school, during school activities, or on school outings, or trips

- Takes a photo/video/recording on the school premises without permission,
- Takes a photo/video/recording of school personnel without their consent,
- Post comments that may threaten the safe environment of the school or place members of the school community at risk.

This list is not exhaustive

The school has the right to insist that the above content be deleted before the digital media device is returned to the student's parents/guardians.

In such an event, the school will notify parents/guardians/ of the student of the situation.

The inspection of the contents of the phone will take place in the presence of the student and/or his parents/guardians. Only the Principal, Deputy Principal or Acting Principal may conduct this inspection.

Depending on the nature of the content viewed, the school reserves the right to contact relevant bodies to determine the appropriate course of action, i.e. Gardaí, legal advice etc.

For very serious breaches i.e. irresponsible behaviour putting others at risk, the parent/guardian/carer will be informed immediately and the student will be suspended.

The Board of Management may impose the most serious sanction of expulsion, in accordance with the Expulsion Policy.

Criminal Offence:

It should be noted, that it may be a criminal offence to use a mobile phone or digital media device to menace, harass or offend another person. As such, the school may consider it appropriate to involve the Gardaí in such incidents. The student and his/her parent/s /guardians will be informed, if the Gardaí are being involved.

It is the responsibility of students to adhere at all times to the guidelines above in relation to mobile phones and digital media devices to ensure a safe environment and a culture of respect.

Review:

This policy will be reviewed biannually/at the discretion of the Board of Management.

Ratified by the Board of Management June 2013