**This policy outlines the appropriate use of mobile phones and electronic devices in St. Mary’s NS.**

**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 presents a number of problems which also pertain to I-Pods, Game Boys, PSPs etc.

**Aims**

* To inform all members of our school community about the appropriate use of mobile phones in our school.
* To outline the procedures and processes of this policy.

It is the Board of Management’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** **and Parents**

* Parents are reminded that in cases of emergency, the school office remains the first point of contact.
* The Board discourages (and asks all parents to discourage) pupils from bringing mobile phones to school.
* Where a parent feels that their child having a phone in school is essential the following will apply: Parents must send the Board of Management a letter requesting that their child be permitted to bring her mobile phone to school. The letter should be addressed to the chairperson of the board of management and may be handed into the office. This letter, if approved, will be kept on file. A renewed letter of request will need to be submitted annually irrespective of previous permission. (See Appendix A)
* 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 class teacher at the start of the school day. The teacher will keep the phones in a lockable container until the end of school day.
* Any child found to intentionally have in their possession and/or use a phone in school will have the phone confiscated. The phone will not be returned until a parent collects it from the school office. Similarly, the use of electronic games, personal stereos etc. is not permitted during the school day (including arrival, class time, breaks and dismissal).
* Phones must remain switched off until the pupil has exited the school gates.
* 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.

**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 for personal use in sight of children except in the case of an emergency.
* Personal calls are confined to break times.
* Where possible staff should endeavour to refrain from using their personal mobile phone when contacting parents/guardians.

**Roles and Responsibilities**

* All aspects of this policy will be discussed with 4th, 5th and 6th class children by the class teacher, the principal and the parents
* The class teacher will have a list of the children who have permission from the Board of Management to bring a mobile phones and/or an electronic device to school. This will be provided by the principal.
* Devices that are confiscated will be switched off and stored in the office until collected by the parents.
* This policy is part of the school’s Code of Behaviour. A breach of this policy will be treated in the same way as any breach of the school’s Code of Behaviour
* Children using mobile phones or electronic devices to bully other children or send offensive messages/calls outside school which impacts a child/children in school will face disciplinary actions as per the school’s Code of Behaviour and/or Anti-Bullying Policy
* It should be noted that it is a criminal offence to use a mobile phones and/or electronic devices to menace, harass or offend another person. As such, if action as sanctioned by the school in this regard is deemed ineffective, as with all such incidents, the school may consider it appropriate to involve the Gardaí.
* All staff share in the co-ordination and implementation of this policy.

**Ratification**

Signed on behalf of the Board of Management- Signed: J. Fitzpatrick Date:19/11/19

**Appendix A**

Please note the following in relation to any letter requesting permission for a child to bring a mobile phone to school:

The letter must:

* be addressed to the Chairperson of the Board of Management
* include the date on the application is made
* include daughter’s name, class and Class Teacher
* outline the reason(s) why it is necessary for your daughter to bring her mobile phone to school
* include acknowledgement that this Policy has been discussed with your daughter by the parent(s)/guardian(s)
* include acknowledgement that all parties are aware of the consequences of any breach of this Policy
* include acknowledgement that this application, if approved, is sufficient for one school year only
* be signed by both parent(s)/guardian(s) and pupil