

## **Use of Mobile Telephones and Electronic Devices**

**St. Mary's NS, Orilia Tce., Cobh, Co. Cork**

**September 2020**

### **Mobile Phone and Electronic Devices Policy**

**Reviewed September 2020**

**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.

In light of the ongoing global pandemic as a result of Covid-19, current restrictions are in place that promote a safe and secure environment.

These restrictions have implications for possession and use of mobile phones for members of the school community.

Therefore, the school does not permit the bringing of mobile phones to school by students.

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 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 prohibits, without exception, pupils from bringing mobile phones to school.
- 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 makes contact with the school office, and arranges for the collection of the mobile phone, adhering to social distancing restrictions if appropriate. Similarly, the use of electronic games, personal stereos etc. is not permitted during the school day (including arrival, class time, breaks and dismissal).
- 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**

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- During teaching time, while on playground duty and during meetings, mobile phones will be used for professional purposes only e.g. emergency contact of a staff member by another staff member.
- 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. In the instance that staff must use their personal mobile phone for contacting parents/guardians, staff should ensure that their number is blocked.

#### **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 confiscate any mobile phones and/or an electronic device found in a student's possession at school/school outings and give the device(s) to the principal.
- Devices that are confiscated will be switched off and stored in the office until an arrangement for collection has been made 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: V. O'Flynn

Date: 29<sup>th</sup> September, 2020