

**Scoil Mhuire
Droichead an Chláirín
Co. na Gaillimhe
H91D7P3**



**Scoil Mhuire
Clarinbridge
Co. Galway
H91D7P3**

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Mobile Phone Usage Policy

This policy was developed by the staff of Scoil Mhuire, the Board of Management (BoM) and the Parent's Association in the school year of 2023/ 2024. Its purpose is to provide information and guidelines to parents and staff on the correct use of mobile phones by children and staff members.

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. Similarly, the use of smart watches, smart pens, electronic games, tablets etc is not permitted during the school day (including arrival, class time, breaks and dismissal).**

Use of mobile phones presents several problems, including:

1. Mobile phones can be valuable items and might render a pupil vulnerable to theft.
2. Mobile phones can make pupils objects of envy and could have implications regarding discipline and potential bullying.
3. Even when apparently silent, the use of mobiles phones for texting purposes could be potentially undermining classroom discipline.
4. Use of phones and devices with integrated cameras could lead to child protection and data protection issues regarding inappropriate capture, use or distribution of images.
5. Many of the above issues also pertain to IPADS, tablets, Nintendo's 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 for specific reasons on rare occasions. However, it is the Board's policy to prohibit the unauthorised **use of mobile phones by pupils** while on school premises, grounds or off site activities e.g. school swimming, sporting activities, tours etc

In exceptional cases where a pupil does bring mobile phones, the guidelines below must be followed;

Guidelines for Pupils

- 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 for a specific reason, 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 Principal a letter requesting that their child be permitted to bring his/her mobile phone to school and outlining the specific reason.
 2. One letter per school term.
 3. The letter should be addressed to the Principal and may be handed to the class teacher.
 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 on it.
 6. The phones must be turned off and handed in to the class teacher 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 class teacher 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 will have the phone confiscated.
 10. The phone will not be returned until a parent collects it.

Procedure

- ❖ 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/device will be confiscated from the pupil and returned only to the parent, or guardian.
- ❖ **The school will not be liable for the replacement of lost, stolen or damaged devices.**
- ❖ If a pupil is found taking photographs or video footage with a mobile phone/device of either other pupils or teachers or sharing inappropriate messages, 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 from the device, and any backup storage, 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. Any contact with parents regarding late arrival home etc. will be conducted on the Aladdin noticeboard.

Guidelines for Staff

- During teaching time, while on breaktime supervision duty and during meetings, mobile phones will be switched off or put on ‘silent’ 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.
- Laptops are provided for most school communication usage (Aladdin/Gmail)
- In very exceptional circumstances (e.g. a car has broken down en route to school and a mechanic has been called) the teacher/SNA may, with the permission of the principal, have their phones on for a period.

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management

Chairperson: _____

Principal: _____

Date: June 2024