

**Scoil Mhuire, Broadway,
Our Lady's Island, Co. Wexford.
Roll No. 19741A**



Mobile Phone and Electronic Device Policy

Introductory Statement:

This policy was drawn up in response to technological advances, which have seen a significant and widespread increase in handheld and wearable electronic 'gadgets' amongst the school population over recent years.

Rationale:

- Modern technology provides us with a wide array of electronic devices including iPods, iPads, mobile phones, Game Boys, PSP's, MP3's etc. They are intrusive and can be distracting in a school environment.
- Strategies must be put in place to reduce the intrusiveness of unauthorised technology in a school situation.
- Some electronic devices may be harmful due to frequent use.
- Mobile phones and electronic devices may be used to conduct bullying campaigns.

Relationship to School Ethos:

The use of staff and pupil's personal mobile phones and other electronic games contravenes the provision of a safe and secure school environment and is not conducive to learning - a provision which is central to the mission statement and ethos of Scoil Mhuire.

Aims:

- To ensure our school is an environment which uses technology in a positive and educationally productive manner.
- To lessen intrusions on and distractions to children's learning.
- To be mindful of the duties and responsibilities assigned to staff in working with children, it is vital that staff be engaged with children at all working times. In this context, access to phones should be limited to urgency only.

Staff:

Work Calls:

- Calls to parents/guardians should be kept as short as possible. Where a lengthy conversation with parents/guardians is required, appointments should be made to meet parents.
- Calls to other professionals and organisations should be made in consultation with the Principal and classroom supervision will be arranged where appropriate.

Personal Calls:

- In general, personal calls should be carried out during break time.
- In cases of urgency, a staff member should use discretion in making calls.
- Incoming personal calls should be reserved for urgent matters. When this arises, cover should be arranged so that the teacher can take that urgent call.
- Texting should follow the rules in relation to calls.

Students:

- **Children are not permitted to bring mobile phones or electronic devices to school.** If, at the request of parents, a child takes a mobile phone or electronic device to school, it must be switched off and handed up to the principal or teacher as soon as the child enters the classroom.
- The principal or teacher returns the mobile phone or electronic device to the child at home time.
- Pupils who are obliged to carry a mobile phone or electronic device must switch it off on entering the school grounds in the morning.
- Pupils are forbidden to switch their phone back on until they leave the school grounds after school.
- Pupils who ignore this policy and are found with their phones or electronic device switched on will be dealt with according to the Code of Behaviour.
- If a child needs to bring a mobile phone or electronic device to school on an ongoing basis, the parents/ guardians must write to the Board of Management asking permission for the phone/ device to be brought to school. They must clearly outline the reasons why an exception must be made, and they must promise that the phone or device will be switched off at all times during the school day. The Board of Management have the right to refuse permission if the reason is not a valid one.
- Students who use IT to help support their learning, and who are granted special access to Assistive Technology must ensure that their device is used in an appropriate manner. This will be agreed upon with the student's parents and teacher at the beginning of the school year.
- If a teacher or staff member has a suspicion that a mobile phone or electronic device has unsuitable material stored on it, the pupil will be asked to hand over the phone to

the teacher or the school principal. The child's parents will be contacted and will have to collect the phone from the school.

- Where there is evidence that the material on the phone or electronic device may provide evidence relating to a criminal offence, the phone will be handed over to the Gardaí for further investigation and the parents will be informed.
- The school accepts no responsibility for replacing lost, stolen or damaged mobile phones or electronic devices.
- Should a student get permission to bring in a phone or an electronic device, they should mark their phones clearly with their name.
- Mobile phones or electronic devices which are found in the school without a name must be handed to a member of staff immediately.
- Mobile phones or electronic devices are not permitted on any school tour, excursion or any school related activities.
- It is strongly advised that pupils have passwords/pin numbers to ensure that unauthorised phone calls cannot be made from their phones. These pins and passwords must be kept confidential.
- Pupils who use mobile phones or electronic devices to bully other pupils or to send offensive messages or to make offensive calls will face disciplinary actions as per the school's Code of Behaviour.
- The same applies to pupils who take unauthorised photos or recordings of other students or staff members.
- It is a criminal offence to use a mobile phone or an electronic device to menace, harass or offend another person. As such, if action as sanctioned by the school in this regard is ineffective, as with all incidents, the school may consider it necessary to involve the Gardaí.

School Technology:

- The school does encourage the use of technology under staff supervision. Each class is encouraged to use the laptops and a timetable is available. Only educational apps and websites are to be used, and internet access is limited to only research for projects. Every Classroom has access to laptops also. Writing programmes are encouraged here, and the same rule applies in relation to access to the internet. Access to the internet is only permitted under supervision, and safe search engines are to be used only e.g KidRex, Safe Search Kids, Kiddle or Wacky Safe.

Roles and Responsibilities:

All staff share in the co-ordination and implementation of this policy.

Implementation and Review:

This policy is monitored on an ongoing basis and amendments added as new technology comes on stream. On-going review and evaluation will take cognisance of changing information or guidelines (e.g. from the Data Protection Commissioner, An Garda Síochána, Department of Education and Skills, Audit units (internal and external to the school), national management bodies, legislation and feedback from parents/guardians, students, staff and others.

This policy has been made available to school personnel, published on the school's website and provided to the Parents' Association.

Ratification

This Policy was ratified by the Board of Management of Scoil Mhuire on 10/12/2020.

Chairperson: *Jim Cogley*
Fr. Jim Cogley

Principal: *Tom Cousins*
Tom Cousins