



Use of Mobile Telephones and Electronic Devices Policy

This policy outlines the appropriate use of mobile phones and electronic devices in our school. Any reference to mobile phones in this policy also includes electronic devices. It was drafted in consultation with staff, parents and pupils of Naas Community National School in January/ February 2016.

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 (particularly with the advent of increasingly sophisticated equipment and camera phones) presents a number of problems, including:

- Mobile phones can be valuable items and might render a pupil vulnerable to theft
- Mobile phones (and their cost and level of sophistication - or otherwise) can make pupils objects of envy or disparagement and could have implications with regard to discipline and potential bullying
- Even when apparently silent, the use of mobiles phones for texting purposes could be potentially undermining of classroom discipline
- Use of the newer phones with integrated cameras could lead to child protection and data protection issues with regard to inappropriate capture, use or distribution of images
- Many of the above issues also pertain to I-Pods, Game Boys, PSPs, etc. They can be very intrusive, distracting and anti- social 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 Single School Manager accepts that it is not realistic to have a policy which prohibits pupils from taking phones to school. Not only would it be impractical to forbid pupils from carrying them (when the latest phones are so slim that they could be hidden easily), but it is believed that a number of parents would be concerned for health and safety reasons if their child were not allowed to carry a phone at all (and might therefore be unable to contact their parents in respect of any situation that might arise). However, it is the school'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, trips to library, shows etc.

Guidelines for Parents and Pupils

The school 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.

Only parents of children from 3rd class upwards are allowed to seek permission to have a mobile phone at school.

Where a pupil does bring a mobile phone to school, the phone must remain switched off during the school day and may not be used, for any purpose, on 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:

- Parents must sign a letter requesting that their child be permitted to bring his/her mobile phone to school stating the reason why the child needs a phone and return it to the Principal, Mrs. Colleran. One letter per school year needs to be submitted and if approved, will be kept on file.
- All phones brought to school must have a sticky label on the back with the child's name and classroom number. If there is no label on the phone, the school cannot take responsibility for the phone and it will be confiscated until a parent collects the phone.
- Similarly, the use of electronic games, personal stereos, mp3, ipods etc is not permitted during the school day (including arrival, class time, breaks, Golden Time and dismissal.)
- 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 locked in top drawer until the end of school day.

Where a pupil is found by a member of staff to be using a mobile phone or other electronic device, without parental letter or without having handed it to teacher in the morning, they will have the phone confiscated. The the phone/device will be confiscated from the pupil and returned only to the parent, guardian or carer following a meeting with the Principal.

The school incorporates this policy into the Code of Behaviour and will treat breaches as they would treat any other breach of the Code.

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 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 Policy.

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 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. A contact number will be provided for parents which may be used by them to contact the teacher on the trip.
- Children may bring cameras with them on school 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 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.

In very exceptional circumstances, the teacher may, with the permission of the principal, have their phones on for a period. An explanation should be given to the class in this case.

Teachers are reminded to be careful when using their personal mobile phones to contact parents.

Mobile phones are used by teachers for uploading data to the Class Dojo and for educational purposes. Sometimes staff use the mobile phones for photographs for educational purposes (class timers, school website, school blogs, DPSM Award, parent information, class dojo, Projects etc). These images are done in line with school policy and with permission from the parents at their enrolment.

Success Criteria

Ensure a safe environment for all our children.

Increase awareness among the children about appropriate use of mobile phones and respect each others privacy.

Review

This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis.

Implementation

This policy was ratified by the Single School Manager on _____
and circulated to all staff and parents. It will be implemented from February
2016.

Signed: _____(Single School Manager)

Date: _____