

<b>Approved Date:</b>	
<b>Review Date:</b>	<b>March 2027</b>

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

### **Introduction and Rationale**

The possession and use of mobile phones by school students is now extensive, even in the primary school sector. The use of mobile phones and personal devices presents a number of problems that can prove intrusive and distracting in a school environment. They can be used to cause discipline problems or as a means of bullying others. The capacity of many devices to take photographs, make video or sound recordings could lead to child protection and data protection issues with regard to inappropriate capture, use or distribution of images. In order to manage the issue of mobile phones, and other personal devices, this policy has been reviewed.

### **Personal Devices**

Personal devices will not be used by children under any circumstances for school based activities. School owned devices (cameras, tablets, laptops etc) will be the only devices used during school hours or school related activities to give best assurances of pupil and staff safety. This does not apply to devices that are granted under assistive technology or are used for medical reasons. Where a device is needed for medical reasons permission must be sought from the Board of Management. The board may request further details from a medical professional.

### **Smart Watches**

Children are not permitted to have smart watches/technology on their person or in their possession. A smart watch is defined as a watch with the ability to make/receive calls, text messages, photographs and/or video content. A simple wrist watch or fitness trackers (that do not include any of the above technologies) are allowed.

### **Relationship to Our School Ethos**

The use of mobile phones and other electronic devices contravenes the provision of a safe and secure school environment and is not conducive to learning - a provision that is central to the mission statement and ethos of Scoil Cholmcille.

### **Aim of Policy**

School Management is introducing a policy that prohibits the use by students of mobile phones, and other personal devices, while on school premises or involved in school activities such as tours, trips or extra-curricular activities. This is in order to create a safer environment and to lessen intrusions on, and distractions to, children's learning.

### **School Procedures**

- The use of mobile phones by children who attend the school is not allowed while the children are in the care of the school staff, while at school, on trips from the school or involved in extracurricular activities. The children should, therefore, not bring mobile phones and other personal devices to school or when engaging in school-related activities.
- Mobile phones that are found in the school should be handed to a member of staff.
- Children who need to contact home during school hours may do so through the School Secretary or Principal using the School landline phone.
- Parents are reminded that in cases of emergency, the School Office remains the first point of contact and can ensure that your child is reached quickly and a message passed onto them.

### **Sanctions**

- Any child found to intentionally have a phone in school without permission will have the phone confiscated. The phone will not be returned until a parent/guardian collects it. Similarly, the use of all personal electronic devices is not permitted during the school day – this includes arrival, class time, breaks and dismissal.
- Where a pupil is found by a member of staff to be using a mobile phone or other personal device for any purpose, it will be confiscated from the pupil and returned only to the parent/guardian.
- The School will not be liable for replacing mobile phones or other devices that are lost, stolen or damaged.

- The School incorporates this policy into the Code of Behaviour and Discipline and Acceptable Use Policy, and will treat breaches in the same manner as any other breach of these Policies.
- If a pupil uses a mobile phone or personal device to take photographs, video footage or recording of other pupils or staff members, or shares inappropriate messages via Bluetooth or other methods, this will be regarded as serious unacceptable behaviour, or very serious unacceptable behaviour, and disciplinary action will be taken in accordance with the School's Discipline Policy

It should be noted that it is a criminal offence to use a mobile phone/personal device 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.

### **Digital Devices & Anti Bullying**

Parents should note that our Anti Bullying Policy currently states:

“In the context of this policy, placing a once-off offensive or hurtful public message, image or statement on a social network site or other public forum where that message, image or statement can be viewed and/or repeated by other people will be regarded as bullying behaviour.”

### **School Trips and Outings**

Children are not permitted to bring mobile phones with them on school trips and tours. Teachers will have a contact number in the event that it is necessary to make contact with a parent/guardian.

Where children are found to be using digital devices or have them on their person it will be regarded as serious misbehaviour and sanctions will apply according to the school's Code of Behaviour Policy and/or Anti-Bullying policy.

### **Guidelines for Parents**

- The Staff and BOM recognise the parents as the child's primary educator and believe that parents have an important role to play in ensuring their child's appropriate and safe use of electronic devices.
- Parents and guardians are encouraged to regularly check their child's online activity / digital footprint. Parents are encouraged to check social media apps (e.g. Facebook,

Snapchat, Viber, WhatsApp, Instagram etc.) on mobile phones and electronic devices to ensure they are aware of their child's online interaction with others and approve of the same.

- Parents/guardians are encouraged to talk with their child regularly about their use of electronic devices and discuss who their child is interacting with and the content of such interactions.
- Parents are asked to attend internet safety talks when they are held by the school.

### **Review**

This policy was first drafted in May 2019 and has been updated in line with Department guidelines.

### **Ratification**

This policy was ratified by the BOM