



Mobile Phone and Electronic Device Policy

Introduction and Rationale

This policy and strategies herein are required for the safety and protection of everybody in our school community, in accordance with the ethos and the mission statement of Gaelscoil na Ríthe.

- The use of personal electronic devices such as mobile phones, tablets, iPads, smart watches and other devices is strictly prohibited during school hours or during extracurricular activities as they can be intrusive and distracting in a school environment.
- The use of devices with integrated cameras can lead to child protection and data protection issues with regard to inappropriate capture, use or distribution of images. Mobile phones and other devices are often very expensive - the school or staff cannot be held responsible for their safekeeping in school or during any school related activity or excursion.
- At times the use of Mobile phones and other devices can lead to cases of bullying. Parents can often be unaware of how devices are being used.
- We ask that parents give serious consideration to the challenges associated with 'Smart Phones' and not to buy such a device for your child before the age of 12.
- Parents are reminded that in cases of emergency, the school office (landline number 01-8259933) remains the first point of contact

Aims

- To inform all members of our school community about the appropriate use of mobile phones and electronic devices and to outline the procedures and processes of this policy.
- To prioritise the safety of all children and staff in our school, free of cyber bullying, and to avoid situations of envy, division or any form of distraction
- To enable parents who need their child to be contactable after/before school to do so without affecting the workings and the ethos of our school.

Procedure

Pupils may have mobile phones/devices in school but only within the following parameters:

- Parents must apply to the school Board of Management to request permission for their child to bring a mobile phone to school. A permission form needs to be signed by both parent and pupil. This form is available from reception and if approved, will be kept on file.
- If a pupil brings a mobile phone / electronic device to school, the phone must be turned off once they are on school property (being on silent does not suffice) and remain off for the duration of the school day. They may not be used, for any purpose, on the school premises, grounds or during off-site school activities (such as swimming / sports activities). Phones must be stored securely and discreetly by the pupil.

- Any pupil who has a mobile phone/electronic device without permission will have the device confiscated immediately. Parents will be contacted to collect the phone personally from the school.
- If a pupil activates/uses a phone/ electronic device during school hours will be obliged to leave the phone/device and its SIM card at the school office. The phone will be returned to a parent/guardian only.
- Any use of a device to record (audio or video) on the school premises or during any school activity is strictly forbidden. Pupils using mobile phones to bully other pupils or send offensive messages/calls will face disciplinary actions as per the school Code of Behaviour. If a staff member has any suspicion that a phone/device contains any inappropriate material stored on it, the device must be handed over immediately. The school reserves the right to view the contents of the phone/device, in the presence of the student, to ensure that it contains no images or information which would compromise any member of the school community.
- A student who wishes to go home for any reason during the school day, must arrange to do so through the school office and not independently by mobile phone. This ensures that correct procedures for leaving school before the ending of classes for that day are observed. Responsibility cannot be taken by the school authorities for students who arrange independently to go home without following proper procedure. Any such arrangement is a breach of the Code of Behaviour and will incur sanctions.

This updated policy is published on our school's website and will be reviewed on a regular basis. The school's policy will be explained and discussed in all classes and at our school assembly.