

Mobile phone and Smart Devices Policy

Scoil Naomh Pio

Introduction

The possession and use of mobile/smartphones/smartwatches by school students are now extensive, even in the primary school sector. In order to manage the issue of mobile phones, and other personal devices, this policy has been developed in collaboration with the staff, parents and Board of Management of Scoil Naomh Pio.

Rationale

The use of mobile phones and personal devices (Smartwatches, tablets, iPods, iPads, PSPs, MP3s etc.) presents a number of problems that can prove intrusive and distracting in a school environment:

- They can be used as a means of bullying, cyberbullying, which can create social anxiety.
- Excessive smartphone use can disrupt sleep and can have an impact on mental health.
- Pupils can have access to content that is not age appropriate
- They can be a source of distraction in the school environment.
- They can be a source of unneeded competition between students.
- The capacity of many devices to take photographs, and make video or sound recordings could lead to child protection and data protection issues with regard to inappropriate capture, use or distribution of images.

Aim of the Policy

School Management is introducing a policy that prohibits the use by students of personal mobile/smartphones, and other personal devices, while on school premises or involved in school activities such as tours, trips or extra-curricular activities. This is to create a safer environment and lessen intrusions on, and distractions to, children's learning. We strongly discourage students from bringing mobile phones to school. All pupils from 5th to 6th class must have agreed to a permission to bring phones to school and that phones will be locked in a filing cabinet during school hours.

School Procedure: Guidelines for Parents and Students.

- Personal smart devices including smartwatches or similar devices are not allowed on school grounds by any student.
- A mobile phone may be brought to school by students in 5th and 6th classes only.
- Phones are only permitted if required by students for their return journey home after school.
- Written permission must be given by parents/guardians each term through email.
- A hard copy of the permission form will be signed by parents including the make and model/serial number will be kept in student's file
- Phones must be entirely turned off before the students enter the school gates in the morning and not turned back on until the students leave the school grounds in the evening.

- Phones must be immediately handed over to the class teacher and locked in the classroom filing cabinet.
- If a student does not follow school procedure and has a mobile phone or smart device without permission, the device or mobile phone will be confiscated. It must be collected from the office by a parent or guardian.
- In some exceptional circumstances, students in 4th class may bring a phone, however, permission must be sought from the Principal.
- Mobile phones are brought in at the owner's risk and the school accepts no responsibility for loss or damage to the device.
- Parents / Guardians will speak to their children regularly about appropriate behaviour online in line with the school's Acceptable Use Policy (AUP).
- Parents / Guardians will monitor their children's activity on these devices in line with the school's AUP.

School Procedure: Guidelines for staff.

- During teaching time, while on yard duty and during meetings, mobile phones will be switched off or put on 'silent' or 'discreet' mode. Staff should not use their phones for personal reasons during teacher-pupil contact time.
- Staff are permitted to use their phones for school-related business such as Class Dojo only or for emergencies.
- In very exceptional circumstances (e.g. illness in the family, a car has broken down en route to school and a mechanic has been called) the teacher may, with the principal's permission, have their phones on for a period. An explanation should be given to the class in this case.
- Teachers must only use school phones to contact parents to discuss any issues.
- In the event that a teacher must use their personal mobile phones to contact parents, they must deactivate their caller ID and not share their personal number.
- Staff will follow the school's AUP in regard to GDPR.
- Liability for any loss, damage, or theft of any device is NOT, under any circumstance, the responsibility of the Board of Management

This policy was ratified on the _____ by the Board Management.