

# Mobile Phone Policy

## CONTEXT

Both the Board of Management and staff of St. Patrick's actively discourage the practice of children bringing mobile phones to school. School is a place of teaching and learning where we try to foster an atmosphere of trust, mutual respect and inclusiveness. Inappropriate use of a mobile phone in school, no matter how innocent, can be an infringement on the rights and privacy of others, thus damaging that atmosphere of mutual trust and respect.

Parents should be reassured that if they need to contact their child(ren) urgently during the course of the school day, such contact can be facilitated through the school office on 01-2860504. The same facility is available to the children where urgent contact with a parent is required. The Board of Management, however, is mindful that, in certain specific circumstances, it may be necessary for children to bring mobile phones to school. If a parent feels it is absolutely necessary for their child(ren) to have a mobile phone in school the following conditions will apply:

- School will not accept responsibility for mobile phones that are lost, stolen or damaged. The safety and security of mobile phones is wholly a matter for pupils/parents
- Children must have written permission to bring their mobile phone to school. To this end, parents should complete the permission slip in their child's homework notebook.
- Phones must be switched off before children enter the school grounds in the morning, remain switched off for the duration of the school day and may only be switched on again once the children have vacated the school. Pupils should ensure that alarms/reminders are turned off to avoid activation during school hours.
- Each child's phone must be kept in their school bag during the school day.
- Phones must not be used for any purpose on school premises, school grounds, during extra-curricular activities facilitated by the school or during off-site school activities e.g sports activities, school outings/tours. The only exception is with the approval of a teacher in the case of an emergency.
- If a phone is found to be on, is used or activated on the school premises or the school grounds or at any school-related activity, sanctions will apply. For a first breach of the school's policy, the phone will be confiscated for two school days. Parents will be notified of such circumstances. For any further breach of the school's policy, the child will no longer be permitted to bring the phone to school.
- Children who have a mobile phone in school but who do not have the permission slip signed will be deemed to be in breach of the school's policy and have their phone confiscated.
- Pupils should mark their mobile phones clearly with their names.

**P.T.O.**

- It is strongly advised that pupils use a password/pin number to ensure unauthorised phone calls cannot be made from their mobile phones by other pupils or in the case of the phone being stolen. These should be kept confidential at all times.
- Pupils using mobile phones to bully others or send offensive messages will be subject to the procedures detailed in the school's *Code of Behaviour* and/or *Anti-Bullying Behaviour Policy*
- If a teacher has good reason to suspect that a mobile phone may contain unsuitable or offensive material, the child will be required to hand over their phone, the child's parents will be notified and the child will be required to allow the contents of the phone to be inspected by the school authorities in the presence of a parent/guardian. If there is good reason to suspect that a mobile phone may contain evidence relating to a criminal offence the Gardaí will be notified. This is in keeping with *Child Protection Guidelines* and the school's *Child Protection Policy*.
- It should be noted that it is a criminal offence to use a mobile phone to menace, harass or offend another person. If such circumstances prevail and measures taken by the school are deemed to be ineffective, the school may consider it appropriate to involve the Gardaí.

### **PARENTAL CONSENT**

I have read the above policy and I am happy to co-operate with the school with regard to the implementation of this policy.

It is necessary for my child to bring a mobile phone to school.

Name of Child \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Parent / Guardian \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_