



Scoil an Athar Tadhg

Mobile Phone and Devices Policy

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Purpose and Rationale

The purpose of this policy is to ban the use of and access to personal mobile phones by pupils during the school day in line with Circular 0044/2025 from the Department of Education and Youth. The policy aims to create a distraction-free learning environment that prioritises safety and educational outcomes in our school. We recognise the disruptive potential of smart devices – including smartphones, smart watches, tablets, laptops, or any device that is internet-connected or can record audio or video. The school has adequate technology and a full-time secretary to enforce the ban.

General Policy Statement

All students are prohibited from using any non-school-owned smart devices on school premises during school hours. The school provides enough smart devices for its pupils through its Chromebooks and other smart technology.

Children who need to contact home during school hours may do so through the School Secretary using the school landline.

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.

Staff are permitted to use their phones for school-related business only or for emergencies. Staff should not use their phones for personal reasons during teacher-pupil contact time.

Exceptions

The only exceptions to this rule are:

Assistive Technology:

Students who require assistive technology, approved by the NCSE, can use their smart device for specific purposes as outlined by their class teacher or other member of staff.

Medical Exceptions:

Students who require a smart device or similar equipment for medical purposes must submit relevant documentation (e.g. a doctor's note) to the school's administration for approval.

Pre-Verbal Communication:

Children who need a device to communicate their needs must complete an application outlining the necessity of the device. Approval will be granted on a strictly controlled basis.

Any Other Reasons:

Parents/guardians who wish for their child to be allowed to use a smart device in school for any other reason must complete the form at Appendix A and return it to the school principal. Until permission is granted, the child will not be allowed to use the device on school premises. In the case where permission is granted, the mobile phone/smart device must be turned off, put in a labelled bag and stored in the Secretary's Office. It must be handed to the office before school starts and collected after class ends. The device cannot be switched on until the student leaves the school premises.

School Tours and Off-Site Activities

No Use of Personal Smart Devices

During school tours and any off-site activities, students are prohibited from using smart devices (including any internet-connected device or any device capable of recording audio or video).

Resource Provision

Where needed, the school will provide any necessary technological resources for educational purposes during these activities.

Compliance and Enforcement

Students found using personal smart devices during these events will be subject to the same measures as outlined in this policy.

Implementation and Enforcement

Clear Communication

The school will clearly communicate this policy to all students, parents, and staff via newsletters, assemblies, and the school website.

Enforcement Procedures

It is recognised that with the best will in the world, it is impossible to monitor all children, all of the time. There are limits on what staff are allowed to do. They cannot search schoolbags, etc. With this in mind:

- Staff will remind students that no smart devices are to be brought onto school premises during school hours.
- Teachers will monitor classrooms to ensure compliance. Any student found with a smart device on school grounds during school hours will be subject to a minimum consequence of immediate confiscation. In this situation, the school will not take responsibility for any reported loss or damage to the device while in their possession.
- It is the responsibility of parents/guardians to regularly monitor any internet-connected device their child uses (or has access to), ensuring all content is appropriate.

Offences and Consequences

Based on feedback from staff and parents, the following offences and corresponding consequences will apply:

Unauthorised Possession

If a student is found in possession of a smart device during school hours without approved parental permission, at a minimum, the device will be confiscated and returned only upon parental collection. Repeated breaches may result in exclusion.

Unauthorised Use

If a student uses a smart device during lessons or in any manner that disrupts the learning environment or any other part of the school day, at a minimum, the device will be confiscated, and the incident recorded. In cases such as recording, viewing, or sharing explicit material, a student may be excluded from school on a first offence.

Record Keeping

The school will maintain records of all incidents involving unauthorised smart device use and/or possession, detailing the nature of the offence and the measures taken.

Exclusion

If a child fails to comply with the policy, he/she may be excluded from school in line with the school's Code of Behaviour Policy. Exclusion can take various forms from being sent home from school to

suspension. In cases of very serious breaches, a child may be permanently excluded from the school. All situations will be judged on a case-by-case basis in line with the school's Code of Behaviour Policy.

Serious Offences

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.

Medical and Communication Exceptions

For students who qualify for an exception there is an application process for the use of a device.

Application Process:

Parents must write to the principal and provide supporting documentation. The principal will review each application on a case-by-case basis, ensuring that exceptions are granted only when absolutely necessary.

For approved exceptions, any permitted use of a smart device or communication device will be strictly monitored and limited to the purpose stated in the approval (e.g. managing a medical condition or essential communication for pre-verbal children).

Staff Responsibilities

Enforcement

Teachers and staff are responsible for ensuring that students comply with this policy. While they are not expected to conduct invasive searches, they must remain vigilant and take appropriate action if a breach is suspected.

Support

The school will provide clear guidelines and training for staff to handle breaches of this policy, ensuring enforcement is consistent, fair, and respectful of student rights.

Parental Involvement and Communication

Mandatory Consent Form:

Parents/guardians must sign a consent form if they wish for their child to bring a smart device onto school premises outside of authorised circumstances (i.e. for use on the bus or outside school hours)

- The mobile phone/smart device is not to be used during school hours – this includes arrival, class time, breaks and dismissal.
- The mobile phone/smart device must be turned off, put in a labelled bag and stored in the Secretary's Office. It must be handed to the office before school starts and collected after class ends. The device cannot be switched on until the student leaves the school premises.
- The school will not be responsible for any loss, theft, damage, or unauthorised use of the device.
- The signed form will state that the school assumes no responsibility for loss, theft, damage, or unauthorised use of the device once it is off school premises

Policy Briefing

The school will ensure that all parents are fully informed of the new policy and its rationale via newsletters, parent meetings, and the school website.

Ongoing Review

Periodic Assessment

The policy will be reviewed periodically, incorporating feedback from staff, parents, and students, as well as considering any changes in technology or educational practices.

Adjustment Process

Any proposed adjustments to the policy will be communicated in advance to all stakeholders, ensuring transparency and collective agreement on changes.

Roles and Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of all staff, families and BOM to familiarise themselves with the terms of this policy and to contribute positively to its on-going implementation within the school setting.

Success Criteria

We are committed to monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of this policy. This policy will be subject to evaluation/review on an on-going basis through:

- a) Feedback from the stakeholders.
- b) The efficient and smooth operation of the Mobile Phone Policy.
- c) Benefits to the school arising from the implementation of the Mobile Phone Policy.
- d) Revised/New DES Circulars and Guidelines.

Communication, Monitoring and Review

Following consultation with all stakeholders, the Board of Management adopted this policy at its meeting on 08-06-26

and shall be reviewed by the Board of Management and changed where deemed necessary and appropriate.

Signed: *Dan Crowley* 08/06/26

Chairperson of Board of Management

Signed: *Cormac Duggan* 08/06/26

Principal/Secretary to the Board of Management

The Original, signed copy of this policy is available in the School Office.

This policy will be communicated to parents via the Parents Association and to the Board of Management.

Appendix A Consent Form

Student Mobile Phone/Smart Device Consent Form

Parents/Guardians must sign the consent form below and return it to the school if they wish for their child to bring a smart device onto school premises.

- The mobile phone/smart device is not to be used during school hours – this includes arrival, class time, breaks and dismissal.
- The mobile phone/smart device must be turned off, put in a labelled bag and stored in the Secretary’s Office. It must be handed to the office before school starts and collected after class ends. The device cannot be switched on until the student leaves the school premises.
- The school will not be responsible for any loss, theft, damage, or unauthorised use of the device.

Please complete the form below and return it to the school principal via the school office.

Child: _____

Class Teacher: _____

I confirm that my child _____ needs to have their phone/smart device with them because they travel to and/or home from school alone. My child will bring the phone/smart device into school in a labelled bag and the phone will be switched off. My child will hand their phone/smart device to the school office on arrival and collect it from the office at the end of the school day. The phone/smart device will not be switched on until my child leaves the school premises.

Parent/Guardian signature: _____

Parent/Guardian signature: _____

Date: _____

