

Mobile Phone & Electronic Device Policy

Bunscoil Mhuire

Board of Management of Bunscoil Mhuire N.S. **- Mobile Phone & Electronic Devices Policy**

Introduction & Rationale

The possession and use of mobile phones and/or other electronic devices (e.g. iPod, iPad, tablet, camera, gaming console etc.) by school pupils is now extensive, even in the primary school sector.

Possession and use of mobile phones/electronic devices, particularly with the advent of increasingly sophisticated equipment and cameras, presents a number of problems. These include being a distraction to learning, causing discipline problems or as a method of bullying, to menace, harass or offend another person.

There are serious child protection issues and privacy concerns related to the possession and/or use of phones/electronic devices, such as the ability to take photographs, make video or voice recordings. In order to manage the issue, this policy has been reviewed.

Relationship to School Ethos

The use of mobile phones/electronic devices contravenes the provision of a safe and secure school environment and is not conducive to learning - a provision which is central to the mission statement and ethos of Bunscoil Mhuire N.S.

Aim of Policy

This policy prohibits the possession and use of mobile phones and/or any other electronic devices by pupils while on school premises, travelling to/from school premises, or involved in school-related activities (such as tours/trips, extra-curricular activities etc.). This is in order to create a safer environment and to lessen intrusions on and distractions to pupils' learning.

School Procedures

The use of mobile phones and/or any other electronic devices by pupils who attend this school is not permitted, as outlined above. Therefore, pupils should not have phones/electronic devices on the school premises. Neither should pupils have any phones/electronic devices in their possession when engaging in school-related activities and/or travelling to/from school premises.

The school will operate this policy in conjunction with the Code of Behaviour, Anti-bullying Policy and Child Protection Policy. A breach of the Mobile Phone and Electronic Devices policy will be treated as a serious breach of the aforementioned policies.

The school accepts no responsibility for lost, stolen or damaged phones/electronic devices, whether on the school premises, travelling to and/or from school, or at any school-related event.

Staff personal calls are normally conducted at break times. Members of staff are entitled to have mobile phones and other electronic devices in case of emergency and/or for school-related business. Members of staff are permitted to use their own phones and/or other electronic devices to take photos of school-related work/activities.

Assistive learning technology may be used by pupils in school for school-related purposes, in accordance with the recommendations of the Special Education Needs Organiser (SENO).

Inappropriate Conduct & Sanction Procedures

Pupils who choose to disregard this policy will be required to hand over the phone/electronic device to a member of staff. Any pupil whose phone/electronic device is seen or heard by a staff member, whether or not the phone/electronic device is switched on, will have their phone confiscated.

The phone/electronic device should be given to the school office by the member of staff and it will be retained there until it is collected by a parent/guardian. The parent/guardian who collects the phone/electronic device from the office must sign out the device. The parent/guardian will be required to enforce this policy with their child.

The progression of sanctions is as follows.

1. First breach: confiscation of phone/electronic device
2. Second breach: confiscation of phone/electronic device and yellow card
3. Third breach: confiscation of phone/electronic device and red card

Failure to relinquish a phone/electronic device for confiscation, when asked by a staff member to do so, will be treated as a serious offence, in accordance with the Code of Behaviour.

Pupils using phones/electronic devices to bully, harass or take images/recordings of other pupils will face disciplinary actions. If it is clear to the school management that these offences have taken place, the parent/guardian of the offending pupil will be requested to come to the school to discuss the matter.

If a pupil uses a phone/electronic device to take any photo or video images or recording of a member of staff, without the staff member's permission, the pupil may be suspended, in accordance with the Code of Behaviour.

It should be noted that it is a criminal offence to use a phone/electronic 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.

The school management reserves the right to entrust phones/electronic devices to the Gardaí for further investigation in the following circumstances:

- If the school has any reason to believe that a phone/electronic device has unacceptable material stored on it.
- Where there is suspicion that material on a phone/electronic device may provide evidence relating to a criminal offence.

Parents/Guardians will be informed in such circumstances.

Responsibility

It is the responsibility of parents/guardians, members of staff and pupils to adhere to this policy. Any pupil who is feeling unwell at school and needs to go home, or who needs to contact their parents/guardians for any reason, must notify their class teacher. The class teacher will notify the school secretary, who will contact parents/guardians.

Evaluation

This policy will be monitored on an ongoing basis. It will be reviewed every two years or sooner if deemed necessary.