

## Mobile Phones and Personal Digital Devices Policy

### Rationale

The possession and use of mobile phones, tablets and other smart devices by pupils is now widespread, including at primary school level. While such devices can have benefits outside of school, their presence in school also presents a number of challenges, including:

- Devices are valuable items and may render pupils vulnerable to loss or theft
- The use of devices may undermine classroom management and learning
- Devices with audio, video or camera functionality raise serious child protection, data protection and cyberbullying concerns

This policy is informed by the school's commitment to pupil wellbeing, safeguarding and positive behaviour and is aligned with the school's **Code of Behaviour, Anti-Bullying Policy** and the national **Bí Cineálta** framework.

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### Definition

For the purpose of this policy, *personal digital devices* include mobile phones, smart watches, tablets and any wearable or personal device with audio, video, camera or internet capability.

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### Users of the School Building

This policy applies to pupils, staff, parents/guardians, visitors and all other users of the school premises.

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### Pupils

#### Internal School Procedures

The Board of Management accepts that it is not realistic to prohibit pupils from carrying mobile phones to and from school. The Board also acknowledges that some parents may have legitimate safety concerns, particularly where children travel independently.

However, the Board **prohibits the use of mobile phones and personal digital devices by pupils while on school premises, school grounds or during school-related activities.**

### **Guidelines for Parents and Pupils**

- Parents are strongly discouraged from allowing pupils to bring mobile phones to school, as they are valuable items and may be lost or stolen.
- Smart watches or wearable devices with audio, video or recording functionality are **not permitted** in school.
- Where a pupil brings a mobile phone or permitted device to school, it must be **switched off at the school gate** and remain switched off for the duration of the school day.
- Devices must not be used for any purpose on school premises, school grounds or during off-site school activities (including swimming, sports or school tours).
- Parents are reminded that, in the event of an emergency, the **school office is the first and most effective point of contact** and will ensure that a child is reached promptly and supported appropriately.
- Where a parent believes that a child carrying a phone is essential, parents are expected to ensure that their child understands and complies fully with this policy.

### **Breaches of Policy**

- Where a pupil is found using a prohibited device, the device will be confiscated and returned only to a parent or guardian.
- The school accepts no responsibility for the loss, theft or damage of personal digital devices.
- Breaches of this policy will be treated as breaches of the **Code of Behaviour** and managed accordingly.
- Any pupil found taking photographs, audio or video recordings of pupils or staff, or sharing content inappropriately, will be regarded as committing a serious breach of behaviour. Sanctions will be applied in line with the Code of Behaviour and Anti-Bullying Policy.
- Where images or recordings have been taken, the device will not be returned until the content has been deleted by the pupil in the presence of a staff member.

It should be noted that it is a criminal offence to use a personal device to menace, harass or offend another person (Coco's Law, 2020). Where school-based sanctions are deemed insufficient, the school may consider referral to the appropriate authorities.

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### **Promoting a Phone-Free Childhood**

In keeping with our inclusive and wellbeing-focused ethos, the school actively supports initiatives such as **Gen Free**, which encourage parents to delay the purchase of smartphones for children. These initiatives promote positive peer relationships, online safety, emotional wellbeing and age-appropriate independence. Participation in such initiatives is entirely voluntary and supported in a non-judgemental and inclusive manner.

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### **Staff**

- Staff do not share personal phone numbers with pupils or parents/guardians.
- Staff are trusted to use personal devices responsibly and professionally and in a manner that does not detract from supervision or engagement with pupils.
- Staff may use personal devices for school-related purposes where appropriate, but the school cannot accept responsibility for any recordings or data stored on personal devices.
- No unauthorised recordings of school business, meetings or events may take place. Any recording requires the explicit consent of all participants.
- Unauthorised recording will be treated as a breach of disciplinary procedures.

### **Work and Personal Calls**

- Calls to parents/guardians should be kept brief. Where longer engagement is required, a meeting should be arranged.
  - Calls to external professionals should be made in consultation with the principal, with supervision arranged as required.
  - Personal calls should take place outside of teaching time where possible. In urgent cases, discretion must be exercised and supervision ensured.
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### **Parents, Guardians, Visitors and Others**

- All adults must ensure that any digital content accessed on school premises is appropriate and in keeping with the ethos of the school.
- Adults must not record audio, images or video on school premises unless explicitly permitted by the school.
- Meetings with staff must not be recorded without the consent of all participants.
- Visitors must be particularly vigilant in relation to child protection and must never share images or media of pupils online, including on personal social media platforms, unless expressly permitted by the school and by all individuals appearing in the media.

Media organisations may record pupils for approved purposes, subject to parental consent and opt-out arrangements as outlined in the school's Internet Acceptable Use Policy.

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**Date of Ratification:** 23<sup>rd</sup> of January 2026