

MOBILE PHONE USE POLICY – St. Caimin’s Community School

Basic Principles

This policy is a school-wide policy, for implementation by all staff, students, parents and Board of Management. It has been developed in consultation with the Board of Management, parents, staff and students.

Rationale

This policy was devised to respond to updated technology regarding mobile phones and personal devices. Mobile phones have become an important and invaluable part of our modern lifestyle. The school understands that there are times when the possession of a mobile phone can provide a sense of safety and security while travelling to and from school. The following policy aims to maintain a safe, nurturing environment where the personal dignity and rights of all the members of the school community are preserved.

Objectives

The school aims to provide a happy, safe and stimulating learning environment for all students. The purpose of this policy is to:

- Ensure that mobile phone usage does not disrupt this learning environment
- Ensure that courtesy, respect and consideration to others are paramount at all times
- Clarify the responsibilities of students and staff with regard to mobile phones

Students may take mobile phones to school provided they observe the following conditions:

- a) The school can accept no responsibility for mobile phones. Mobile phones are brought to school entirely at the owner’s risk. The school accepts no responsibility for lost, stolen or damaged mobile phones.
- b) The phone **must be switched off** and kept in the student’s possession during the school day. Mobile phone use is not permitted during or between classes. Parents/guardians may arrange to contact students through the office.
- c) Mobile phone use is only permitted during class time with the teachers’ permission and prior sanction.
- d) Mobile phones must be placed on the teachers’ desk before a student leaves class to go to the bathroom.
- e) Mobile phones cannot be brought into the PE hall or changing room area.
- f) A student, who wishes to go home for any reason during the school day, must arrange to do so through their timetabled subject teacher and the Secretary/Deputy Principal/Principal and not independently by mobile phone. This ensures that correct procedures for leaving school before the ending of classes for that day are observed. Responsibility cannot be taken by the school authorities for students who arrange independently to go home without following proper procedure. Any such arrangement is a breach of the Code of Behaviour. Parents/Guardians may arrange to contact students through the office (061) 364211. We ask parents/guardians to co-operate and support this policy by not contacting students by mobile phone during the school day.

Sanctions

If a student is found to be using a mobile phone on the school premises then;

- The phone and sim card will be confiscated and placed in the Principal's office. The confiscating teacher will sign and date the record sheet in the office.
- The phone will be returned to the student at the end of the school day
- Failure to hand up the phone and/or sim card to the subject teacher will result in a more severe sanction eg; phone kept for 48 hours and a lunchtime detention.
- More severe sanctions will also apply for repeat offenders. The phone may be confiscated for 48 hours or more and may only be released to a parent/guardian.
- The phone will be kept an extra 48 hours for each additional offence.
- Using a mobile phone or personal device for the unauthorised recording of images or sounds is in direct breach of Saint Caimin's Acceptable Usage Policy and /or Anti-Bullying Policy. Using phones in such a way can seriously infringe on people's rights and appropriate sanctions will be imposed.
- In accordance with legislation* in this area, it is a criminal offence to use a mobile phone to menace, harass or offend another person. As such, any party involved may consider it appropriate to involve the Gardai in such incidents.
- **School tours:** it will be at the discretion of the tour organiser whether mobile phones/personal devices may be brought on tours.

Sanctions will be applied in accordance with legislation listed below.

Legislation

- Legislation in relation to mobile usage
- Data Protection (Amendment) Act 2003 Child Trafficking and Pornography Act 1998 Interception Act 1993 Video Recording Act 1989
- The Data Protection Act 1988

Review Procedures:

The Board of Management in consultation with the school partners, will, review this policy from time to time or as the need arises.

Ratification

This Policy was adopted by the Board of Management on 23rd September 2019

The policy will come into effect from 23rd September 2019

SIGNED _____ (Chairperson of Board of Management)

SIGNED _____ (Principal)

Once ratified this policy will be shared on the school website and Staff Teams.