



Rathbeggan N.S.

Dunshaughlin, Co. Meath

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Registered Charity Number: 20131616

Mobile Phone and Electronic Devices Policy

The possession and use of mobile phones by school pupils is now extensive, even in primary schools. Our core business of teaching and learning needs to be conducted in an environment free from unnecessary distractions or disruptions. The school is prepared to allow mobile phones on the premises but only within the parameters of the policy as stated below.

Use of mobile phones (particularly with the advent of increasingly sophisticated equipment and camera phones) presents a number of problems, including:

- Mobile phones can be valuable items and might render a pupil vulnerable to theft
- Mobile phones (and their cost and level of sophistication - or otherwise) can make pupils objects of envy or disparagement and could have implications with regard to discipline and potential bullying
- Even when apparently silent, the use of mobiles phones for texting purposes could be potentially undermining of classroom discipline
- Use of the newer phones with integrated cameras could lead to child protection and data protection issues with regard to inappropriate capture, use or distribution of images
- Many of the above issues also pertain to Smart Watches, I-Pads, Game Boys, PSPs, etc. They can be very intrusive, distracting and antisocial in a school environment.

Aims:

- To inform all members of our school community about the appropriate use of mobile phones and other electronic devices in Rathbeggan N.S.
- To outline the procedures and processes of this policy.

Procedures :

- The Board discourages (and asks all parents to discourage) children from bringing mobile phones, tablets/iPads, Smart Watches and any electronic device to school.
- Any child found to intentionally have an iPad/tablet/Smartwatch will have the device confiscated.
- Any child found to intentionally have a phone without prior approval from the Board of Management will have the device confiscated.
- Similarly, the use of electronic games, personal stereos, etc. is not permitted during the school day (including arrival, class time, breaks and dismissal.)
- Where a pupil is found by a member of staff to be using a mobile phone or other electronic device, as above, for any purpose, it will be confiscated from the pupil and returned only to the parent/guardian.
- The school will not be liable for the replacement of lost, stolen or damaged devices.
- The school incorporates this policy into the Code of Behaviour and will treat breaches as they would treat gross misbehaviours.
- If a pupil is found taking photographs or video footage with a mobile phone or other electronic device of either other pupils or teachers or sharing inappropriate messages this will be regarded as gross misbehaviour in the Code of Behaviour.
- If images of other children or school personnel have been taken, the phone will not be returned to the parent of the child until the images have been removed by the child in the presence of a member of school staff.
- Students may not use any personal device (Mobile phone /Ipad/ tablet) with recording or image taking capability while in school or on a school outing. Any such breach of the Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) will be sanctioned accordingly. An exception to this will be when devices have been approved for communication or sensory needs.
- Smart Watches: Children are not permitted to have smart watches/technology on their person or in their possession. A smart watch is defined as a watch with the ability to make/receive calls, text messages photographs and/or video content. A simple wrist watch or fitness trackers (that do not include any of the above technologies) are allowed.

Parents are reminded that in cases of emergency, the school office remains the first point of contact and can ensure your child is reached quickly, and helped in any appropriate way.

Procedures for Permission to have a Phone on School Property

- Where a parent deems it necessary for their child to have their phone in school prior permission must be sought, in writing, from the Board of Management. One letter is required per school year.
- The letter should be addressed to the Chairperson of the board and may be handed into the school secretary. This letter, if approved, will be kept on file.
- The letter will be considered by the Board of Management and if permission is allowed the following terms must be strictly adhered to:
 - The school accepts no responsibility for lost, stolen or damaged phones
 - The phone must remain switched off during the school day and may not be used, for any purpose, on school premises, grounds or during off-site school activities (such as school swimming or sports activities.)
 - The phone must be placed in a zip lock bag with the child's name clearly labelled on the bag. The phone can be handed into the Office at 9:20 a.m. and can be collected at 3 p.m.

Guidelines for Staff

- It is acknowledged that teachers sometimes use their personal devices and personal internet data to input data onto the school administration system when the school network is not working.
- During teaching time, while on playground duty and during meetings, mobile phones will be put on 'silent' or 'discreet' mode.
- Phones will not be used in sight of children except in the case of emergency.
- Calls for school business e.g. checking a booking for school tour, making arrangements for sporting events etc. should be done on the school laptop our outside of classroom time.
- In very exceptional circumstances (e.g a car has broken down en route to school and a mechanic has been called) the teacher may, with the permission of the principal, have their phones on for a period. An explanation should be given to the class in this case.
- Teachers are reminded to be careful when using their personal mobile phones and ensure that children are not in a position to view any content on the device.

- Any images or recordings taken by class teachers on smartphones or other personal devices must be downloaded onto the school shared drive and/or on to the school App/relevant school affiliated website and then immediately deleted from source.
- Contact with parents on personal devices should only be made in the event of an emergency.

Responsibilities:

All staff share in the co-ordination and implementation of this policy.

Evaluation:

This policy is will be reviewed periodically by the Board of Management.

Signed: _____ Signed: _____
(Chairperson of Board of Management) (Principal)

Date: __/__/____

Date: __/__/____