



Mobile Phone and Electronic Device Policy

Introduction

The use of mobile phones and personal devices (iPods, iPads, smart watches etc) presents a number of problems that can prove intrusive and distracting in a school environment. They can be used to cause discipline problems or as a means of bullying others. The capacity of many devices to take photographs, make video or sound recordings could lead to child protection and data protection issues with regard to inappropriate capture, use or distribution of images. In order to manage the issue of mobile phones, and other personal devices, this policy has been developed.

Rationale

The use of personal mobile/smart phones and other electronic devices contravenes the provision of a safe and secure school environment, a provision that is central to the mission statement and ethos of Flowerfield National School.

Aim of Policy

The Board of Management is introducing a policy that prohibits the use by students of personal mobile/smart phones, and other personal devices, while on school premises or involved in school activities such as tours, trips or extra-curricular activities. This is in order to create a safer environment and to lessen intrusions on, and distractions to, children's learning.

School Procedures

- Children are not permitted to bring mobile phones or any electronic devices which have the facility to take photos/record to school, to school-related events in the school or to offsite school related activities. The only exception to this is where a parent has sought the permission of the Board of Management and has prior permission from the Board of Management. A child who ignores this policy and brings an electronic device to school, whether he/she uses it or not, will be required to hand over such a device to a member of staff. Parents will be required to collect mobile phone or electronic device from the principal.
- In exceptional circumstances such as a medical condition or regular after-school appointments parents may apply to the Board to seek permission for their child to have a mobile phone or an electronic device in school. Parents must apply in writing to the Chairperson of the Board of Management stating specifically when and why the child requires a mobile phone or an electronic device to be brought into school.
- Children bringing a mobile phone or an electronic device to school without permission from the Board of Management risk having it confiscated.
- Children who need to contact home during school hours may do so through the school secretary/class teacher using the school landline phone. Parents who need to contact their children during school hours may do so by calling the school landline 046-9021239.
- Children who are granted permission to bring a mobile phone or an electronic device to school will place the device in the class teacher's desk drawer at the beginning of the day, to be retrieved by the child at the end of the day. The device must remain off while on the school premises. It is the responsibility of the child to remember to collect his/her own phone at the end of the day.
- The school accepts no responsibility for replacing lost, stolen or damaged mobile phones and electronic devices. The safety and security of mobile phones and electronic devices is wholly a matter for pupils/parents.

Staff use of mobile phones and electronic devices

- In general, teachers' mobile phones are on silent during class time.
- Personal calls or texts are confined to break times.
- Staff members are permitted to use their mobile phones in case of emergency.
- Class teachers may use mobile phones or electronic devices for professional use during school hours (e.g. on school tours, taking photos of activities to update website/social media, instructional purposes)

Roles and Responsibilities

- All aspects of this policy will be discussed with the children by the class teacher, principal and the parents.
- The class teacher will have a list of children who have permission from the Board of Management to bring mobile phones and/or an electronic device to school.
- Devices that are confiscated will be switched off and given to the principal for safe keeping.
- This policy is part of the school's Code of Behaviour. A breach of this policy will be treated in the same way as any breach of the school's Code of Behaviour.
- Children using mobile phones or electronic devices to bully other children or send offensive messages/calls outside school which impacts a child/children in school will face disciplinary actions as per the school's Code of Behaviour. One hurtful message sent in a group situation can be constituted as a bullying offence.
- It should be noted that it is a criminal offence to use a mobile phone and electronic devices 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.
- All staff share in the co-ordination and implementation of this policy.

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Ratified by Board of Management on Wednesday 26th May 2021

Signed: John Clarke

Chairperson, Board of Management