

## **St. Daigh's N S**

### **Policy on Mobile Phones**

#### **Use of Mobile Telephones and Electronic Devices, including watches with a recording/photograph/video facility.**

This policy outlines the appropriate use of mobile phones and electronic devices in our school.

#### **Rationale**

The possession and use of mobile phones by school pupils is now extensive, even in the primary school sector. Our core business of teaching and learning needs to be conducted in an environment free from unnecessary distractions or disruptions. Therefore, the school strongly discourages the bringing of mobile phones to school by students. 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 smart phones and newer phones with integrated cameras and recording facilities could lead to child protection and data protection issues with regard to inappropriate capture, use or distribution of images and voice recordings.
- Many of the above issues also pertain to i-Pods, i-pads, tablets, Game Boys, PSPs, etc. They can be very intrusive, distracting and anti- social in a school environment.

#### **Aims**

To inform all members of our school community about the appropriate use of mobile phones at our school.

To outline the procedures and processes of this policy. The school's Board of Management accepts that it is not realistic to have a policy which prohibits pupils from taking phones to

school. Not only would it be impractical to forbid pupils from carrying them (when the latest phones are so slim that they could be hidden easily), but it is believed that a number of parents/guardians would be concerned for health and safety reasons if their child were not allowed to carry a phone at all (and might therefore be unable to contact their parents/guardians in respect of any situation that might arise.)

However, it is the Board's policy to prohibit the unauthorised use by pupils of mobile phones while on school premises, grounds or off site activities e.g. school swimming, as follows:

### **Guidelines for Children**

- The Board discourages (and asks all parents/guardians to discourage) pupils from bringing mobile phones to schools on the grounds that they are valuable and may be lost or stolen. Where a pupil does bring a mobile phone to school, 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.)
- Parents/guardians 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.
- Where a parent/guardian feels that their child having a phone in school is essential the following will apply:
  - Parents/guardians must send the Principal/Deputy Principal a letter requesting that their child be permitted to bring his/her mobile phone to school.
  - All phones brought to school must have a sticky label on the back with the child's name and class name.
  - The phones must be turned off and handed up to class teacher, Principal or Deputy Principal at the start of the school day. The teacher will keep the phones locked in top drawer or in the Principal's office until the end of school day.
  - Any child found to intentionally have a phone in school without parental/guardian letter or without having handed it to teacher in the morning will have the phone confiscated. The phone will not be returned until a parent/guardian collects it. Similarly, the use of social media sites, 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, the phone will be confiscated from the pupil and returned only to the parent, guardian or carer.
  - 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 any other breach of the Code.

- If a pupil is found taking photographs or video footage or voice recordings with a mobile phone or a watch device, of either other pupils or teachers or sharing inappropriate messages via Bluetooth this will be regarded as a serious offence and disciplinary action will be taken according to the school's Code of Behaviour.
- If images of other pupils or staff have been taken, the phone will not be returned to the pupil until the images have been removed by the pupil in the presence of a teacher.

### **School Trips and Outings.**

- Children are not permitted to bring mobile phones with them on school trips and tours except at the discretion of the class teacher. The office contact number is available for parents/guardians from which a phone call can be made to the teacher on the trip.
- Children are not encouraged to bring cameras with them on school tours.

### **Guidelines for Staff**

- Teachers are reminded to be careful when using their personal mobile phones to contact parents/guardians. In some schools, personal phones have been used in the past and there have been occasions where teachers who have used their phones in good faith have subsequently received crank calls.

### **Implementation**

This policy has been reviewed and is effective from 8<sup>th</sup> March 2023

### **Review Timetable**

This policy will be reviewed in 2 years' time and amended as necessary by means of a whole school collaborative process.

### **Ratification & Communication**

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on 8<sup>th</sup> March 2023

Signed: Michael Mc Ardle Signed: Tom M. Hill  
 (Chairperson of Board of Management) (Principal)

Date: 5/3/23