

MOBILE PHONE & ELECTRONIC DEVICES FOR PUPILS POLICY – Revised 2015

Rationale for the Policy: This policy was drawn up in response to the significant increase in the possession of mobile/smart phones (with cameras & internet access) and other electronic devices (ie iPads, iPods, tablets, cameras etc) by primary school pupils. Unsupervised use of mobile/smart phones and other electronic devices by pupils whilst at school can lead to inappropriate online behaviour. Privacy issues may also arise due to capability of many phones and devices to take photographs, access internet and social media sites and to record the activities of staff and/or other pupils.

Important Note for Parents/Guardians

- Pupils at all class levels in Scoil Thomáis who need to contact home during the school day may do so through the school office with the permission of the school secretary using the school landline phone. Parents who need to get a message to their child/ren may also do so via the school phone or by calling at the school office. Therefore pupils do not need to have a mobile phone in school for contact ability during the school day.
- Pupils have access to school based technology to enhance learning activities and therefore will use school cameras and computers/laptops/iPads with internet access under the direction of teachers - as outlined in the school's Acceptable Use Policy. *Pupils should not bring their own technological devices to school for class work unless authorized by teacher for a particular lesson.*

In order to manage the issue of pupils having mobile/smart phones and other such electronic devices in Scoil Thomáis the existing policy was reviewed and updated to include the following revisions.

- Pupils should not bring or have in their possession a mobile/smart phones or other such device during the school day or when involved in out of school activities such as tours/ trips or extra-curricular activities.
- *In circumstances where a parent deems it necessary that his/her child bring a mobile phone to school*, this may be facilitated subject to certain conditions laid down by the school. This permission can only be sought for 5th & 6th Class pupils.

How to make an application for permission to bring a mobile phone/device to school?

1. Parents should complete a **MOBILE PHONE/DEVICES IN SCHOOL PERMISSION FORM** (available only on request from the school office) and outline clear reasons why their son/daughter needs to bring a mobile phone or device to school. Parents should also state the duration for which the permission is being sought ie day/week/term/school year.
2. Parents must agree and discuss with their child the conditions under which the child's phone/device will be allowed in school.
 - The phone/device must be switched off and remain in the pupil's school bag at all times during the school day.
 - Pupils should not take out or activate their phone/device until the pupil has exited the school gates.
 - The school will not accept liability for any damage, loss or theft to a pupil's phone or other device under any circumstances.
 - On days that the pupils are involved in out-of-school trips/tours mobile phones or devices must not be brought to school.
3. Permission will be authorized by the Principal/Deputy Principal as appropriate subject to a maximum duration of a school year. Parents should reapply for permission each school year if necessary.

School Procedures and Sanctions for Inappropriate Conduct using Mobile Phone and other Devices

1. A pupil who has a phone or other such device in school without authorized permission or who has permission and displays or uses a mobile phone or other such device will have the device confiscated by a member of school staff immediately. In such a case the phone will be sent to the Principals/Deputy Principal's office and retained here for a minimum of 5 school days. If the offence occurs prior to a school holiday it will be at the discretion of the Principal/Deputy Principal to set the return date. The matter will be treated as a serious misbehavior issue and a misbehavior report will be completed. The mobile phone or other such device can only be collected by a parent of the pupil who must sign for its return.
2. If a pupil reoffends (and the pupil has authorization to have the mobile phone or device in school) then this privilege will be withdrawn by the school. A pupil who repeatedly disregards the school policy may be suspended as per Code of Behaviour and Suspensions and Expulsion policy.
3. Failure to hand up a mobile phone or other device for confiscation when asked to do so by a staff member will be treated as a serious offence.

Evaluation: This policy will be monitored on an ongoing basis and amended as necessary to respond to technological advances.

Implementation: Approved by Board of Management on 29th Sept 2015. For implementation from December 2015 onwards.