

Boyne Community School  
Mobile phone/ devices Policy  
2018/19



## **Introduction.**

Boyne Community School recognises that the use of mobile phone/devices has increased dramatically in the last number of years. We also acknowledge that mobile phone/devices have become a source of communication and learning and we acknowledge the positive aspects of this. While restrictions to their use must apply in a variety of circumstances – meetings, classrooms, etc.; nonetheless, in Boyne Community School we recognise that mobile phone/devices can enhance learning, and can be used to positive effect.

Having a mobile phone/device cannot compromise or disrupt teaching and learning. Urgent phone calls to or from a student will **ALWAYS** be facilitated through the office. There are potential dangers for the school community (pupils, parents, visitors, staff, coaches, teaching staff, management, trustees) stemming from the misuse and abuse of electronic media. As a result, the school will rigorously endeavour to protect the personal dignity and right to privacy of all the members of the school community.

Mobile phone/devices can be a cause of difficulty in schools when/if they are used in 'cyber bullying', where students/teachers are photographed against their will, where some recordings/video recordings are made against the will of those featured etc. Mobile phone/devices can be a major distraction to students in the classroom or on the corridor. They are a threat to privacy in bathrooms or changing rooms. They can also cause isolation rather than interaction and integration of students.

## **Aims of the policy**

- ☐ To promote the responsible use of mobile phones.
- ☐ To optimise teaching and learning situations for students.
- ☐ To reduce the possible distractions to students and teachers.
- ☐ To provide an environment free from threat or invasion of privacy to members of our school community.
- ☐ To discourage cyber bullying among students in the school.

## **Use of mobile phone/devices in Boyne Community School**

Teachers may encourage the appropriate use of mobile phone/devices in pursuit of learning, in classrooms and other learning settings. Staff will make clear to pupils when this is appropriate and students will be given clear guidance on the use of the mobile phones/devices in a learning setting.

## **Restriction on use of mobile phone/devices in Boyne Community School**

Where students bring a mobile phone/device to school, the phone/device must be switched off while on the school premises, unless otherwise directed by teachers. Contact during class time should only be made via the school office.

- *Switched off does not mean 'Silent', 'Meeting' or any similar mode.*

*The phone must be **POWERED OFF**.*

While off the school premises, but on school business (games, field trips and school tours etc.) mobile phone/devices must be switched off. However, if it is necessary for the student to contact his parent/guardian, then permission to turn on a mobile phone/device must be sought from the supervising teacher. The phone must be turned off again at the conclusion of the conversation.

During House Examinations, students must have their phones switched off. Mobile Phones **cannot** be used as calculators.

**The use of mobile phones in State Examinations is prohibited.** Candidates using mobile phones as calculators etc. are liable to have their examinations cancelled and possibly barred from all public examinations in this state.

## **Sanctions**

If a student is using a phone/device without permission on school premises, for any reason, the phone/device will be confiscated for a period of 72 hours/ 3 days. The phone must be collected from the Principal by a parent/guardian. Should this happen a second time, the phone/device will be confiscated for a longer period.

Mobile phones/devices will be retained by the Principal and all names and relevant details will be recorded. The parent/guardian must sign this logbook on collection of the phone.

If a student **refuses to surrender** a phone/device found in his/her possession, this will be seen as direct defiance and will be sanctioned as per the School Code of Behaviour.

No photographs or recording, either video or audio, can be made on the phone/device on the school premises. Using phones/devices in such a way can seriously infringe on people's privacy and rights. Use of a mobile phone /device in this manner will result in suspension. The length of suspension will be dependent on the nature of the photograph/ footage.

An incident where mobile phones/devices are used to bully or harass a member of the school community by sending offensive messages or calls is a serious breach of the schools' Code of Behaviour and will be dealt with accordingly.

It should be noted that it is a criminal offence to use a mobile phone/device to menace, harass or offend another person. The school may consider it appropriate to involve the Gardaí in such instances.

### **Liability for mobile phones/devices**

A pupil bringing a mobile phone/device to school is responsible for its care and usage at all times. It is, in the end, a choice to bring mobile phones/devices to school, and as such, the school cannot accept any responsibility for damage or loss of any device. We advise appropriate insurance for any mobile device brought onto the school premises, as the school **cannot/ will not** cover any loss or damage.

### **Communication of the policy to school community**

A copy of the mobile phones/devices policy is made available to the whole school community. An abridged version of the policy will be available in the student journal, this must be signed by both parents/guardians and students.

### **Implementation of the policy**

School personnel have the responsibility of enforcing this policy. A copy of the policy will be circulated to all staff members.

Parents/guardians are requested to familiarise themselves with the policy and to sign the relevant section of the journal.

Parents/guardians are requested **not** to contact students by mobile phone at any time during the school day. Contact with the school may be made through the office (046) 9481654 or Ms. Darby, the Attendance Officer on 086-1747958. Students are directed to use the office phone in emergencies. Responsibility cannot be taken by the school authorities for students who arrange independently to go home without following proper procedure.

Students are requested to familiarise themselves with the policy and to sign the relevant section of the journal. By signing the policy students acknowledge that bullying or harassment of pupils or staff via mobile phone misuse is unacceptable in any form and that using a mobile phone to take photographs and/or video clips of other pupils/staff without individual permissions is not permitted and will incur sanctions up to and including suspension or permanent exclusion from the school.

## **Monitoring of the policy**

A record will be kept by the Principal of all phones confiscated. Recurring breaches of this policy will result in referral to the Board of Management.

## **Policy reviews**

This policy will be reviewed by the school management authority periodically or when necessary due to changes in mobile device capabilities or school circumstances.

## **Date of policy adoption**

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on [date]

Signed:

Chairperson of Board of Management

Date:

Date of next review: