

Gaelscoil Ros Eo



May 2024

MOBILE PHONE & PERSONAL ELECTRONIC DEVICE PRACTICES

INTRODUCTION

This school policy on Mobile Phone and Personal Electronic Device Policy Introduction was drafted on a collaborative basis. It was circulated to the entire school community.

RATIONALE

The possession and use of mobile phones by school students is now extensive, even in the primary school sector. The use of mobile phones and personal devices 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. Use of mobile phone and personal electronic devices by staff and visitors to the school may also contravene General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) legislation.

RELATIONSHIP TO SCHOOL ETHOS

Gaelscoil Ros Eo strives to provide a child-friendly, secure environment catering for all the needs of all students as far as is practicable and where respect is fostered in a culture which values diversity and difference. The use of mobile phones and other electronic devices may contravene the provision of a safe and secure school environment and is not conducive to learning.

AIMS & OBJECTIVES

- To prohibit the use by students of mobile 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.
- To ensure a safe, child friendly school environment is available to all children.
- To comply with General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) legislation.

SCHOOL PROCEDURES

- The use of mobile phones/personal devices (e.g smartwatches) by children who attend the school is not allowed while the children are in the care of the school staff, while at school, on trips from the school or involved in extracurricular activities. The children should, therefore, not bring mobile phones and other personal devices to school or when engaging in school-related activities.
- Children who need to contact home during school hours may do so through the school secretary using the school landline phone.
- Parents are reminded that in cases of emergency, the school office remains the first point of contact and can ensure that your child is reached quickly and a message passed onto them.
- In the event that a parent thinks that their child having a Mobile Phone/Personal Electronic Device in school is **essential**, the following will apply:
 - The phone/personal device (e.g smartwatch) must be turned off before entering the school gate and handed to the class teacher at the start of the school day. The class teacher will keep all phones and devices locked away until the end of the school day.
 - The phone/personal device will be returned by the class teacher to the child, at the end of the school day. The phone/personal device must not be switched on until the pupil has left the school grounds.
 - Gaelscoil Ros Eo accepts no responsibility for any loss/damage to mobile phones or electronic devices if they are brought to school by pupils. The school will not be liable for replacing mobile phones or other devices that are lost, stolen or damaged.
- Mobile phones/personal devices that are found in the school should be handed in to the school office.

SANCTIONS

- Any child found to intentionally have a phone/electronic device in school without having it switched off before entering school grounds or handing it to the class teacher in the morning will have the phone/device confiscated.
The phone will not be returned until a parent/guardian/caregiver collects it.
- The school incorporates this policy into the Code of Behaviour and Acceptable Use Policy, and will treat breaches in the same manner as any other breach of these policies.
- If a child uses a mobile phone or personal device to take photographs, video footage or recording of other pupils or staff members, or shares inappropriate messages via Bluetooth or other methods, this will be regarded as serious unacceptable behaviour, or very serious unacceptable behaviour, and disciplinary action will be taken in accordance with the school's Code of Behaviour.

It should be noted that it is a criminal offense to use a mobile phone/personal device 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.

SCHOOL TRIPS & OUTINGS

Children are not permitted to bring mobile phones with them on school trips and tours. Teachers will have access to contact numbers in the event that it is necessary to make contact with a parent/guardian. Mobile phones/personal electronic devices will be collected in the usual manner, and returned at the end of the school day. Pupils will have access to the school mobile phone to call home once per day on overnight trips.

PHONE POLICY FOR STAFF

Mindful of the duties and responsibilities assigned to staff in working with children, it is vital that staff be engaged with children at all working times. In this context, access to phones should be limited to work related business only.

Work-related Calls

- Calls/online discussion to parents/guardians should be kept as short as possible. Where a lengthy conversation with parents/guardians is required, appointments should be made to meet parents. The school landline/Linkus App should be used for all calls to parents/guardians regarding their child.
- Calls to other professionals and organizations should be made in consultation with the principal and classroom supervision will be arranged where necessary.

Personal Calls

- In general, personal calls should be carried out during break times and before/after school.
- In cases of urgency, a staff member should use discretion in making calls.
- Incoming personal calls should be reserved for urgent matters.

Mobile Phones

- Mobile phones should not be used during teaching time except in the case of emergencies or if the school communication system (Slack) is not working.
- While on playground duty and during meetings, mobile phones will only be used in case of emergency
- In case of urgency, staff should use discretion in making calls.
- Texting/other use of phones should follow the rules in relation to calls.

GENERAL DATA PROTECTION REGULATION (GDPR)

Parents and visitors to the school are reminded that the taking of images/video of children on school premises and/or during school events/performances is a contravention of General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) legislation. Posting of such images/recordings on social media is also not permitted.

IMPLEMENTATION & REVIEW

All staff share in the coordination and implementation of this policy and will be reviewed on an ongoing basis and amendments added as new technology comes on stream.

RATIFICATION & COMMUNICATION

This policy was presented to and ratified by the Board of Management in May 2024. Following ratification, it was made available to the wider school community on the school website.

Signed:

_____ *Cathaoirleach*

_____ *Príomhoide*

Date: _____