



# St James' NS Mobile Phone / Smart Devices Policy

## **Introductory Statement**

This policy was drawn up in response to technological advances which have seen a significant increase in hand held electronic 'gadgets' amongst the school population over recent years.

## **Rationale**

- Mobile phones, Game Boys, PSP's, MP3's, Ipads, Ipods, smart watches, (Including any device capable of recording or taking pictures) are intrusive and distracting in a school environment.
- Strategies must be put in place to reduce the intrusiveness of unauthorised technology in a school situation.
- Mobile phones may be used to conduct bullying campaigns. They are a potential and real source of bullying and abuse through texting and the dissemination of unacceptable and inappropriate images.
- 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.
- Mobile phones and smart devices can be valuable items and could potentially be damaged in school or may render a pupil vulnerable to theft.

## **Relationship to School Ethos**

The use of mobile phones and other smart devices contravenes the provision of a safe and secure school environment conducive to learning, a provision which is central to the mission statement and ethos of St. James' National School.

## **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.
- To ensure a "technology safe" school environment
- To lessen intrusions on and distractions to children's learning

## **Definition of Smart Devices**

A smart device is an electronic device, generally connected to other devices or networks via different wireless protocols such as Bluetooth, NFC, Wi-Fi, LiFi, 3G, etc. Examples of smart devices include but are not limited to iPods, iPads, tablets, mobile phones, smart watches, digital cameras, Kindles and gaming devices.

## **Guidelines:**

The Mobile Phone & Smart Devices Policy is consistent with the school's Code of Behaviour, Anti-Bullying, Child Safeguarding, Data Protection and Acceptable Usage Policies. Any inappropriate use of mobile phones and/or smart devices (i.e. any breach of this policy) will be treated in accordance with these policies.

## **Internal School Procedures**

The following are the guidelines for the usage of smart devices in the school:

## Pupils

1. The use of mobile phones/smart devices 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 extra-curricular activities.
2. The children should, therefore, not bring mobile phones and other personal devices to school or when engaging in school-related activities.
3. School Trips and Outings - Children are not permitted to bring mobile phones or any personal device with recording or image taking capability with them on school trips and tours. Teachers will have a contact number in the event that it is necessary to make contact with a parent/guardian.
4. Mobile phones/ Gadgets that are found in the school should be handed in to the school office.
5. Children who need to contact home during school hours may do so through the class teacher/school secretary using the school landline phone. 069 64780

## Staff

1. Staff have access to the school landline if urgent calls need to be made to parents.
2. Staff personal calls are normally confined to break times.
3. Staff are permitted mobile phones in case of emergency and for school related business eg school related apps
4. Any images or recordings taken by staff on smartphones or other personal devices must be downloaded onto the school server and/or on to the school App/relevant school affiliated website and then immediately deleted from source.
5. Classroom supervision is usually organized if a class teacher has to contact other professionals or outside agencies in relation to a particular child.

## **Exceptional Circumstances**

Personal devices should only be in school under **exceptional circumstances** and prior permission must be sought from the school. This will be at the discretion of the teacher/Principal and at times subject to BOM approval.

In the event of it being deemed necessary the device must be powered off during school hours and be clearly identifiable. The phone should be handed

to a staff member first thing on entering the school. The mobile phone should be left in the office/with the class teacher for the duration of the school day. The child is responsible for collecting the phone at home time.

In an emergency situation where prior permission has not been sought then the parent/ guardian should ring the school that morning or send an explanation note with the child explaining why the phone is necessary. The rules as outlined above will apply.

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.

### **Sanctions**

1. Any child found to have a phone in school without obtaining prior permission, or without having handed it to the Teacher/Principal in the morning, will have the phone confiscated. The phone will not be returned until a parent/guardian/carer collects it. Similarly, the use of personal electronic devices is not permitted during the school day - this includes arrival, class time, breaks and dismissal.
2. Where a pupil is found by a member of staff to be using a mobile phone or other personal device for any purpose, it will be confiscated from the pupil and returned only to the parent/guardian/carer.
3. The School will not be liable for replacing mobile phones or other devices that are lost, stolen or damaged.
4. If a pupil 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 a level 2 or 3 breach of our Code of Behaviour and disciplinary action will be taken in accordance with the Code of Behaviour Policy.
5. It should be noted that it is a criminal offence 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.

### **Roles and Responsibilities**

All staff share in the co-ordination and implementation of this policy.

All staff, parents & pupils have a responsibility for appropriately using electronic gadgets & phones. Please read our Acceptable Use Policy and our Anti-Bullying policy in relation to this.

## **Evaluation**

This policy is monitored on an ongoing basis and amendments added as new technology comes on stream.

## **Ratification, Review and Communication**

### **REVIEW:**

Timeframe for Review: December 2023

This policy was presented to B.O.M. on the \_\_\_\_\_ for ratification.

**Cyril Madigan**

Chairman

***Tara Rocca Houlihan***

Principal

**7/12/2020**

Date

**Appendix 1: Mobile Phone Permission Form**

Name of Pupil:

I believe that my child needs to bring their mobile phone to school  
on \_\_\_\_\_ because:

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I agree that my child will:

- Switch off his/her phone before they enter the school grounds and will give it to a staff member immediately.
- Collect their phone at home time.
- Have their phone confiscated if it is used inappropriately. The phone will be kept in the office until I collect it.
- Follow all the procedures and rules outlined in the St. James' NS Acceptable Use Policy and Code of Behaviour Policy in relation to the use of mobile phones and smart devices.

I agree to: all guidelines, procedures and rules set out in the school's Mobile Phone and Smart Devices policy, including that the school takes no responsibility for lost, stolen or damaged phones (either at school, or on the way to and from school)

Signature of Parent/Guardian:

Signature of Pupil:

Date:

\*Storage and retention of this data is in keeping with our Data Protection Policy.\*