

Acceptable Use of Mobile Phone Policy

St. Patrick's & St. Brigid's College, Claudy



Foreword

The widespread ownership of mobile phones among young people requires that school leaders, teachers, pupils, and parents take steps to ensure that mobile phones are used responsibly at schools. This Acceptable Use Policy is designed to ensure that potential issues involving mobile phones can be clearly identified and addressed, ensuring the benefits that mobile phones provide (such as increased safety) can continue to be enjoyed by our pupils.

St. Patrick's & St. Brigid's College has established the following Acceptable Use Policy for mobile phones that provides teachers, pupils and parents guidelines and instructions for the appropriate use of mobile phones during school hours.

Pupils, their parents or guardians must read and understand the Acceptable Use Policy before pupils are given permission to bring mobile phones to school.

The Acceptable Use Policy for mobile phones also applies to pupils during school excursions and extra-curricular activities.

****for the purpose of this document the term, 'mobile phone' will also include any other portable device which would enable a photograph to be taken and social media to be accessed.***

Personal safety and security

St. Patrick's & St. Brigid's College accepts that parents give their children mobile phones to protect them from everyday risks involving personal security and safety. There is also increasing concern about children walking to school alone or travelling alone on public transport. It is acknowledged that providing a child with a mobile phone gives parents reassurance that they can contact their child if they need to speak to them urgently.

Responsibility

- ✓ It is the responsibility of pupils who bring mobile phones to school to abide by the guidelines outlined in this document.
- ✓ The decision to provide a mobile phone to their children should be made by parents or guardians.
- ✓ Parents should be aware if their child takes a mobile phone to school.

Acceptable Use

The college's Safeguarding Team reserves the right to view the content of any child's mobile phone at any time in respect to issues regarding the safeguarding of children.

- ✓ Mobile phones should be switched off (when pupils arrive on the school site) and stored appropriately.
- ✓ Parents are reminded that in cases of emergency during the school day, the school office remains the appropriate point of contact and can ensure your child is reached

quickly and assisted in an appropriate way. Parents should not attempt to contact their child via mobile phone during the school day.

- ✓ Pupils should protect their phone numbers by only giving them to friends and keeping a note of who they have given them to. This can help protect the pupil's number from falling into the wrong hands and guard against the receipt of insulting, threatening or unpleasant voice, text and picture messages.
- ✓ Pupils are advised not to use their mobile phones as they walk to school, unless there is an emergency, as there have been traffic incidents involving pupils who are texting or talking on the phone and not paying full attention to their road use.
- ✓ Pupils may use their phones to video and/or photograph only if they have been given permission by a teacher who has received permission from the Principal/SLT to use them as part of a curricular activity. This will only be approved in exceptional circumstances only.
- ✓ Pupils are expected to put their mobile phone in one of the caddies in the classroom at the beginning of a lesson and collect it at the end.

Unacceptable Uses

- ✓ Unless express permission is granted by a Senior member of staff, mobile phones should not be used to make calls and should never be used to go online or access social media sites during the school day (including during extra-curricular activities and school trips)
- ✓ The use of a mobile phone or portable device to threaten other pupils is unacceptable and will not be tolerated, regardless of where/when the threat is made. In some cases, it can constitute criminal behaviour.
- ✓ It is forbidden for pupils to "gang up" on another pupil and use their mobile phones to take videos and pictures of acts to denigrate and humiliate that pupil and then send the pictures to other pupils or upload it to a website for public viewing. This also includes using mobile phones to photograph or film any pupil without their consent.
- ✓ It is a criminal offence to use a mobile phone to menace, harass or offend another person and almost all calls, text messages and emails can be traced.
- ✓ Mobile phones are not to be used or taken into toilets or used in any situation that may cause embarrassment or discomfort to their fellow pupils, staff or visitors to the school.
- ✓ Pupils who use their mobile phones or other portable devices to publish information/footage that would be damaging to the college and its reputation will be disciplined in line with school procedures.

Theft or damage

- ✓ Pupils who bring a mobile phone to school are responsible for it.
- ✓ Mobile phones that are found in the school and whose owner cannot be located should be handed in to the office.
- ✓ The school accepts no responsibility for replacing lost, stolen or damaged mobile phones.

- ✓ The school accepts no responsibility for pupils who lose or have their mobile phones stolen while travelling to and from school.

Inappropriate conduct

- ✓ Any pupil who uses vulgar, derogatory, or obscene language while using a mobile phone will be subject to the school's Behaviour Policy.
- ✓ Pupils with mobile phones may not engage in personal attacks, harass another person, or post private information about another person using SMS messages or other means, taking/sending photos or objectionable images, and phone calls. If this occurs during the school day, the pupil concerned will be subject to the school's Behaviour Policy. If online bullying of a pupil occurs outside school time, the college may still invoke disciplinary procedures, in line with the school's Anti-Bullying policy.

Sanctions

- ✓ Pupils who infringe the rules set out in this document could face having their phones confiscated by teachers and their parents will be informed.
- ✓ A pupil who has used their mobile phone on three occasions will have their phone removed and stored in the school office until a parent/guardian is able to collect it.
- ✓ Appropriate arrangements should then be made for the parents to collect the mobile phone.
- ✓ Repeated infringements may result in the withdrawal of the agreement to allow the pupil to bring the mobile phone to school.
- ✓ The school reserves the right to insist that a pupil is not permitted to have a mobile phone in the school, should the Principal and/or Assistant Principal deem this to be a necessary strategy to support the well-being/welfare of the pupil concerned or other members of the school community.

Link Policies

Positive Behaviour & Discipline Policy
Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy
Anti-Bullying Policy