

**Mobile Phone  
And  
Electronic  
Devices  
Policy**

**Feb                      2022**

# Whitechurch National School

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*Acting Chairperson*  
Canon Adrienne Galligan

*Principal*  
Ms. Sarah Richards

*Deputy Principal*  
Ms. Judy Brown

## **Mobile Phone and Electronic Devices Policy**

### **Introduction:**

This policy was initially drawn up in March 2016 in response to increasing ownership by pupils of mobile phones and other electronic devices and also because of the need for some pupils to bring their mobile phones to school, as they may be required on their journey to or from school. It was then reviewed in consultation with the whole school community and updated in April 2019 in line with DES Circular 0038/2018. The Policy will be reviewed regularly as per the school development plan.

### **Relevant Policies:**

Anti Bullying Policy, Code of Behaviour, Acceptable Use Policy, Health and Safety Policy and Statement, Child Safeguarding Statement.

### **Devices covered by this policy:**

The Board of Management is aware that electronic communication and recording devices play an ever increasing role in children's lives. This policy refers to any electronic device that is capable of accessing the internet, making and receiving calls and messages, taking photographs, and/ or making audio or video recordings. This can include standalone devices or wearable devices eg. Smart watches or glasses.

### **Rationale:**

Mobile phones and other personal electronic devices can be intrusive and distracting in a school environment. The use of a mobile phone/ electronic device in school could result in inappropriate images, texts or recordings being made or viewed by the pupils. Cyber- Bullying can be carried out using mobile phones and other electronic devices.

### **Aims/Objectives:**

1. To ensure a safe and healthy school environment.
2. To lessen intrusions and distractions to children's learning.
3. To provide clear guidelines and procedures when a pupil needs to have a mobile phone in school.
4. To outline sanctions that discourage non-compliance with policy procedures.

### **Internal School Procedures and Rules**

All pupils should avoid bringing electronic devices and mobile phones into school. This includes at extra-curricular activities and school tours (except where prior permission has been given by the Principal). Under no circumstances may a pupil use personal electronic devices and mobile phones while in school.

The Board of Management acknowledges that there may be occasions when a parent wants their child to have access to a mobile phone for safety reasons eg. if they are going home by themselves or will need to make contact with them after school. In cases where a parent deems it absolutely necessary that their child brings a mobile phone to school the following procedure will apply:

Where a pupil brings a mobile phone to school, the phone must be kept out of sight and switched off during the school day. It may not be used for any purpose on the school premises, grounds or during off-site school activities (such as school swimming or sports activities). The only exception to this is in an emergency or with the prior approval of a teacher. Although it would be extremely unlikely to occur, in such cases, it is understood that pupils must use their phone in a responsible and mature manner. Under no circumstances should phones be used to take pictures/videos/recordings of other pupils or any member of staff.

Pupils who ignore this policy and use a mobile phone/ other electronic device on the school premises without permission will be required to hand over their phone to a member of staff and their parents will be asked to collect it from the Principal. A sanction may also be issued in line with the school's Code of Behaviour.

If a teacher has any suspicion that a mobile phone/ other electronic device has unsuitable material stored on it, pupils will be required to hand over the phone to a teacher and their parents will be asked to collect it from the school. Where there is a suspicion that the material on the mobile may provide evidence relating to a criminal offence, the phone will be handed over to the Gardaí for further investigation. Parents will be informed in such circumstances.

It should be noted that it is a criminal offence to use a mobile phone/ other electronic device to menace, harass or offend another person.

Pupils using mobile phones/ other electronic devices to bully other pupils, take pictures/videos or send offensive messages/calls will face disciplinary actions as per the School Code of Behaviour and Anti-Bullying Policy.

If disciplinary action sanctioned by the School in this regard is deemed ineffective, the school may consider it appropriate to involve the Gardaí.

Please note that phones/ other electronic devices brought to school are brought at the owner's risk and that the school will not accept any responsibility for loss or damage. Teachers will not take responsibility for minding pupils' electronic devices as their primary responsibility is the education and safety of the pupils in their care. Parents are advised that there will be no exception to this rule.

### **Roles and Responsibilities**

All teaching staff and S.N.A.'s share in the co-ordination and implementation of this policy. The Principal and teachers will periodically remind the pupils of their responsibilities / expectations in relation to this policy.

### **Ratification and Implementation:**

This policy was discussed and ratified by the Board of Management and communicated to the school community in March 2022. It will also be made available on the school website.

### **Review:**

The policy will be reviewed on a regular basis and amended as necessary.

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

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Chairperson of Board of Management

Principal

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_