



MOBILE PHONE & DIGITAL DEVICES POLICY

Meán Scoil Mhuire

Chairperson: Ms. Karen Clabby
Principal: Ms. Mairéad Lyons
Date: 16/05/2024

Mobile Phone and Digital Device Policy

Mission Statement

Meán Scoil Mhuire is a voluntary Secondary Catholic School. It is a centre for the holistic formation of girls and young women.

Aims

- We respect the dignity of each person with their unique background, talents, traditions and beliefs.
- We provide a pleasant disciplined atmosphere in which students can grow spiritually, morally, academically, socially and culturally.
- We expose all to a rich cultural heritage and help them to acquire the knowledge and skills, which enables them to understand, appreciate and respect themselves, others and their environment.
- We foster positive Christian values and self-esteem so that our students leave school with a sense of self-worth and self-esteem and are well equipped for the challenges of life.
- We encourage partnership at all levels between the management, staff, parents, students and the local community.
- Meán Scoil Mhuire has not only a highly respected academic tradition. We also develop creativity, leadership and social skills by promoting involvement in extra-curricular activities

In line with the Mercy philosophy, the holistic development and full potential of each student, particularly those who are disadvantaged or marginalised, are of utmost importance. We strive to create an atmosphere of care, respect and joy. Mercy education is committed to ongoing whole school development in collaboration and partnership with the board of management, teaching staff, parents and the wider community.

Rationale

While Meán Scoil Mhuire accepts that it is a student's right to have a mobile phone/digital device, the following policy aims to maintain a safe, nurturing environment where the personal dignity and rights of all members of the school community are respected.

The school acknowledges that:

- Mobile phones and digital devices can be of great benefit to students when used appropriately.
- Mobile phones / digital devices can be a major distraction to the teaching and learning setting/ in the bathrooms, on the corridors.
- Mobile phones/digital devices can be used as a tool for ‘cyberbullying’ between students and have the potential to be used to undermine teachers.
- Mobile phones can be mislaid or taken by other students.

The school policy on mobile phones/digital devices is therefore devised with the intention of ensuring that teaching and learning can take place without interruption and also with the intention of protecting all students and staff from the potential of harassment or bullying.

Scope of this policy

This policy covers all Personal Electronic Devices (P.E.D.s) including mobile phones/ smart phones/ smart watches/ MP3/4 players/ personal music devices/tablets or any device capable of recording or sending messages. This list is not exhaustive.

This policy applies to the entire school campus, including buildings, environs and all school related activities that happen on-site and off-site in the name of the school.

Procedures

If a student brings a mobile phone or digital device to school, it is expected that the device is fully switched off once on school grounds, and stored and secured in the student’s ‘locked’ locker throughout the school day. ‘Switched off’ does not mean ‘silent’, ‘meeting’ or similar modes. The phone must be powered off. Mobile phones/ headphones etc. must not be visible at all during the course of the school day. Mobile phones must not be switched back on until the student has left the school grounds at the end of the school day.

In order to assist the school in implementing this policy, parents/guardians are asked not to contact students by mobile phone at any time during the school day. Contact with the school can be made through the school office at 043 3346608. Also, students may use the school phone in cases where a student needs to contact a parent/guardian in an emergency.

A student, who wishes to go home for any reason during the school day, must arrange to do so through the school office and not independently by mobile phone. This ensures that correct procedures for leaving school for a part of the day are observed. Responsibility cannot be taken by the school authorities for students who arrange independently to go home without following proper procedure. Any such behaviour is in breach of the Code of Discipline and will incur sanctions.

Mobile phones must not be used for making calls, checking the time, texting or using as a calculator. Students are not permitted to carry their mobile devices in uniform pockets (trousers, skirt or shirt). The school does not permit the streaming of music through mobile devices at any time of the school day. Mobile phones must remain switched off during all school-based activities.

In exceptional circumstances (e.g. school trips, out of school matches, foreign trips, medical needs etc.) prior permission may be granted by the Principal for use of the mobile phones/P.E.D.s on request by the staff member responsible for the activity. Students participating in school related activities e.g. extracurricular activities, school trips or tours, must abide by the rules governing these activities.

Occasionally, students may be permitted to use a mobile phone or digital device for educational purposes in the classroom. This is only permitted with the prior permission of the teacher or staff member and must only be used while under the supervision of this person. Once such work is completed, devices are to be switched off and stored as outlined above.

No student has permission to take photographs, audio or visual recordings may be taken while on school premises and/or during school related activities unless permission is given by the Principal. Using mobile phones/digital devices in such a way without permission can seriously infringe on people's rights and will be considered to be a serious breach of the school's Code of Behaviour. If the misuse involves the taking of photographs or recording of other students, the student will be asked immediately, to delete such images. A digital device will not be returned to a student until such time as the school authorities are satisfied that the inappropriate material has been deleted.

Incidents where students use mobile phones /digital devices to bully other students or send offensive messages or calls will be investigated in accordance with our Anti Bullying Policy. It should be noted that it is a criminal offence to use a mobile phone or digital device to menace, harass or offend another person. As such, the school may consider it appropriate to involve the Gardai in such incidents.

The school accepts no responsibility for replacing lost, stolen or damaged mobile phones or P.E.D.s. The safety and security of these items is wholly a matter for students/parents/guardians. The school encourages mobile phones and devices to be left at home.

Signage is displayed throughout the school to remind students of the rules regarding mobile phone use. Please see Appendix 1.

Sanctions

Students who breach this policy will have the some or all of the following sanctions imposed.

First Offence: The mobile phone (including SIM card) or digital device will be taken from the student and brought to the Office or locked in a school mobile phone pouch. All incidents are recorded in the Mobile Phone & Digital Device Offence Book located in office. The student may collect the phone or have it unlocked and returned at the end of the school day 4.05pm.

Second Offence: The mobile phone (including SIM card) or digital device will be taken from the student and brought to the Office or locked in a school mobile phone pouch. All incidents are recorded in the Mobile Phone & Digital Device Offence Book located in office. A message will be sent to the parent/guardian that the phone/device has been taken for a second time. The parent must collect the phone at the end of the school day at the school office 4.05pm.

Third Offence: The phone is confiscated and returned only when a parent/guardian collects it.

Further breaches will lead to the phone being confiscated, parent/guardian will be contacted and more serious sanctions will be imposed in accordance with the Code of Discipline. Student will not be permitted to bring a mobile phone into school.

Failure to hand over a mobile phone when requested to do so will result in an automatic detention. Failure to hand over the mobile phone to the Deputy Principal or Principal will result in a suspension.

The school accepts no responsibility for replacing lost, stolen or damaged mobile phones/digital devices. The safety of these devices is wholly a matter for students and their parents/guardians.

Roles & Responsibilities

All Staff

- Monitor the implementation of the policy.
- Implement sanctions in case of a breach of the policy.

Parents/ Guardians

- Support the school policy on the use of mobile phones and digital devices.

Students

- Comply with the rules on mobile phones and digital devices.

This policy has been reviewed in consultation with the students, staff and parents. It is subject to periodic review as the need arises.

APPENDIX 1

Sample signage reminders around the school for students'



IF IT'S

ON



IT'S

GONE