

Castaheany Educate Together National School



Mobile Phone & Smart Devices Policy for our School Community

Rationale

While the possession and use of mobile phones and other smart devices by school pupils is now commonplace, even in the primary school sector, such devices are not required by pupils at school. Appropriate use of mobile phones and smart devices by staff members is welcomed at CETNS and these devices are seen as valuable educational tools.

The school recognises the potential challenges/risks associated with the possession and use of mobile phones and smart devices at school, some of which are listed below:

- Use of mobile phones and smart devices with integrated cameras 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.
- Mobile phones and smart devices may make pupils objects of envy or disparagement and could have implications with regard to discipline and potential bullying.
- Mobile phones and other smart devices can be intrusive, distracting and antisocial when used in a school environment.

Definition of Smart Device

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 mobile phones, tablets, iPods, iPads, smart watches, Kindles, gaming devices, smart glasses and fitness trackers.

Policy Aims & Objectives

- To inform all members of our school community of the potential risks/challenges raised due to mobile phone and smart device possession and use at our school
- To define the appropriate uses of mobile phones and smart devices for our school community

- To outline the guidelines and procedures for this policy.

The guidelines in this policy are separated into two sections:

1: Use of personal smart devices/mobile phones at school.

2: Use of smart devices for educational and communication purposes in school.

SECTION 1: Use of personal devices at school

Guidelines

- The Mobile Phone & Smart Devices Policy is consistent with the school's Code of Good Behaviour, Anti-Bullying and Acceptable Use Policies and any inappropriate use of mobile phones and/or smart devices will be treated in accordance with these policies.
- Pupils are not permitted to bring smart devices to school. These include, but are not limited to iPods, iPads, smart watches, Kindles, gaming devices and fitness trackers.
- In exceptional circumstances, Senior Leadership may give permission to bring and use smart devices in school.
- Pupils are requested not to bring mobile phones to school as they are not needed. We ask for parents' co-operation in this matter.
- If, however, a parent feels that their child genuinely needs to bring their phone to school, this can be permitted for pupils in 3rd - 6th Class only, and the parent must complete, sign and return the Mobile Phone Consent Form (Appendix A) to the school.
- After the completed and signed Mobile Phone Consent Form has been received and accepted by the school, the following procedures must be followed:

For Pupils

- 1. Pupils must switch off their phone at the outer school gates, when entering the school grounds in the morning.**
 - 2. The phone can be switched on again at the outer gates, when they leave the school grounds at 2.10pm, the end of the school day.**
 - 3. At 8.30am the pupil must give their phone to their class teacher to lock away until the end of the school day at 2.10pm.**
 - 4. Pupils can collect their phone from their teacher at 2.10pm, or on a half day, 11.30am.**
 - 5. Pupils may not bring their phone on school trips or events. Phones must be handed up on arrival to school. Phones will be locked away and returned to pupils on return from the trip or event.**
 - 6. It is the pupil's responsibility to hand up and collect their phone each day.**
- If any pupil brings a mobile phone to school without permission (without signed Mobile Phone Consent Form) from the principal/class teacher, that phone will be confiscated and kept in the school office until a parent comes to collect it.
 - If a pupil who has been granted permission to bring their mobile phone to school (via signed Mobile Phone Consent Form) but is then found with / using the phone during school hours, or if their phone rings/beeps in the classroom, that phone will be taken to the school office and the pupil's parent(s) will be asked to come and collect the phone.

- In the event of any pupil repeatedly breaking the above rules, Senior Leadership will inform parents that the pupil is no longer permitted to bring their mobile phone to school.

Parents

- Parents must complete and sign a Mobile Phone Consent form and return it to school if they wish their child to be permitted to bring a mobile phone to school.
- Parents are reminded that in cases of emergency, the school office remains the first point of contact and can ensure your child is reached quickly and helped in any appropriate way.
- If a staff member has reason to believe that a mobile phone has unsuitable material stored on it, pupils will be required to hand over the phone to a teacher and parents will be asked to collect it from the school. Where there is a suspicion that the material on the mobile phone may provide evidence relating to a criminal offence, parents will be informed and the phone will be handed over to the Gardaí for further investigation.
- The school accepts no responsibility for replacing lost, stolen or damaged mobile phones. The safety and security of mobile phones is wholly a matter for pupils/parents.
- The school accepts no responsibility for pupils who lose or have their mobile phones or other smart devices stolen while travelling to and from school.

Staff

- Personal phone calls may not be made or taken and personal text messages may not be sent or read during teaching time/yard duty unless in exceptional circumstances.
- If a staff member needs to make/take an important call during class time they may organise supervision for their pupils and leave the classroom to do so.

SECTION 2: Use of Smart Devices for Educational and Communication Purposes in School.

Guidelines for Staff:

- Staff members are encouraged to be discerning in the use of their own or school-owned mobile phones and smart devices as educational tools in the classroom.
- Personal phones and smart devices belonging to staff members must be used by those staff members only.
- Pupils must be fully supervised at all times when using school-owned smart devices.
- All school-owned devices must be used and looked after properly and should be returned to the relevant storage/charging points after use.
- Mobile phones and smart devices can be used by staff during the day for necessary school business, using applications such as E-share, WhatsApp, Aladdin, Google Classroom and email.

This policy was created in consultation with staff, parents and the Board of Management. The attention of all new families will be drawn to this policy upon registration in the school. This policy will be published on the school website. A copy of this policy will be made available to the

Department of Education and the Patron, if requested. Hard copies of this, and all school policies, are available at the school on request.

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on 13 June 2022 and will be reviewed in 2024. It may be reviewed at an earlier date, to reflect changes in legislation or in other school policies.

Signed _____ (Chairperson) Date _____

Mobile Phone Consent Form

Name of pupil: _____

Class: _____

I believe that my child, _____, needs to bring their mobile phone to school each day because:

If he/she fails to do so, their phone will be confiscated and kept in the office until I come and collect it.

I understand that _____ will switch off his/her phone each morning when they enter the school grounds and will give it to their class teacher at 8.30 in the plastic bag provided, which has their name on it.

If he/she fails to do so, their phone will be confiscated and kept in the office until I come and collect it.

They must also collect their phone from their teacher at home time.

Signed: _____

Date: _____