

Naíscoil agus Bunscoil Bheanna Boirche



Mobile Phone Policy

Introduction

In Naíscoil agus Bunscoil Bheanna Boirche the welfare and well being of our pupils is paramount. This policy on the use of mobile phones in school has been drawn up in the best interests of pupil safety and staff professionalism, and is informed by guidance provided by the DE in their 2024/14 Circular “Guidance for Schools on Pupils’ Personal Use of Mobile Phones and other Similar Devices During the School Day”.

As set out in this Guidance, the Department advises that the personal use of pupil mobile phones and other similar devices should be restricted during the school day for the vast majority of pupils. This includes during lunch and recreational periods.

There is significant and growing evidence of the positive impact of such an approach, which has been implemented in a significant number of countries. Both the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) have recognised that the use of digital devices such as mobile phones for leisure during the school day can negatively impact students’ academic performance.

There are risks associated with children and young people bringing their own personal mobile devices into schools. There is significant potential for misuse, both in terms of low-level disruption in classes and more serious misuse such as bullying and harassment of children and young people as well as staff. Such behaviour is unacceptable in any context. Such inappropriate use of this technology can also detract from their appropriate use in learning and can involve teaching staff, children

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and young people, and parents in investigations which can cause significant disruption to the school and wider community.

There is also growing evidence to indicate that restricting the use of mobile phones during the school day can have a positive impact on academic engagement and achievement. Further information on these studies is available from the DE Circular 2024/14.

Research has found correlations between mobile phone restriction in schools and a range of positive outcomes, including reduced bullying, an overall reduction in social media usage, increased healthy play, reduced distraction and improved academic attainment. Overall, the academic evidence of the positive impact of prohibited use is increasing.

Related Policies:

Safeguarding and Child Protection

Positive Behaviour and Code of Conduct

ICT and eSafety Policy

Social Media Policy

Use of Mobile Phones

Pupils

- Pupils are not permitted to have mobile phones during the school day. We understand that in some very exceptional circumstances, some pupils may need to have access to a mobile phone. In these very exceptional circumstances, which should be discussed with the class teacher in advance of the phone being brought to school on a case-by-case basis, phones are to be turned off when the pupil enters the school grounds and given straight to the class teacher. Phones will be returned to pupils at the end of the school day. Pupils are not to turn the phone on again until after they have left the school grounds. Parents/guardians must also provide the class teacher with a note explaining that their child will have a mobile phone.
- Pupils are not permitted to have mobile phones on school trips.
- Parents and carers need to be aware that whilst there are obvious benefits to pupils having a mobile phone in terms of personal safety there are also some associated risks such as potential for theft, bullying and inappropriate contact, including grooming by unsuitable persons.
- We would also like to alert parents and carers to the risks that using a mobile phone has while walking to and from school. Children who are concentrating on using their phone can have reduced general safety awareness which may result in road accidents and/or injury if a child is not paying attention to their surroundings.

Mobile phones brought into school without permission will be confiscated and must be collected by the parent.

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Staff

- Staff must have their mobile phones on silent or switched off during class time or in the school playground when on duty.
- Staff must not use the **school phone** to take or make calls during class time or in the school playground when on duty. In an emergency, staff needing to make or receive a personal call during a lesson or whilst on duty should first obtain agreement from the principal and ensure that adequate cover has been put in place and make the call in an area not used by children.
- Staff may not make or receive calls or texts on their mobile during teaching time. If there are extreme circumstances the member of staff will have made the principal aware of this and can have their phones on in case of having to receive an emergency call.
- Use of phones must be limited to the use of educational apps only i.e. uploading and correcting work on Google Classroom/ SeeSaw and awarding points/ sending messages on Class Dojo. When possible teachers should use these apps on their class computers/ iPads or during non-contact time i.e. before or after school hours or during breaks when the pupils are not in class.
- Phones should be kept out of sight when staff are with children.
- Phones will never be used to take photographs of children or to store their personal data.
- Staff should never allow students to have access to their personal mobile phone number. If contact should be necessary e.g. on a school trip, this will be made via the school office or by the member of staff with the school mobile phone. In an emergency a teacher may use his/her mobile phone to make direct contact.
- Staff are not required to make work calls on their own phones, either mobile or landline, however, in exceptional circumstances (working from home), if this should be necessary then they are advised to use the prefix 141 before dialling the recipient's number to ensure their own number is protected.
- Staff should never store parents', carers' or children's telephone numbers on their mobile phones and staff must never give their private mobile number to parents, carers or children.

This policy will be reviewed annually and will be available to view on the school website.