



Mobile Phone and Electronic Devices Policy

Relationship to School Ethos

Respect for the person is a fundamental tenet of the Catholic faith and is based on our belief in the sanctity and uniqueness of each human being. In terms of the use of Mobile Phones / Electronic Devices, this means that each member of the school community has the right to expect that their dignity and privacy will be respected, honoured and protected.

This policy has been introduced in response to technological advances, which has seen phones and electronic games/devices/tablets/smart watches (fit bits, apple watches, V- Tech watches etc) equipped with cameras, internet access and/or recording facilities being used inappropriately by children.

Please note discretion exists with the Board of Management to cover the fact that technology is constantly changing. We as a school cannot provide an exhaustive or explicit list of future electronic games and devices. The guiding principles of this policy are Student Safety and privacy as well as the promotion of learning.

Rationale

Mobile phones and electronic games/devices/tablets/smart watches can be valuable items and Holy Well N.S. does not accept responsibility for the loss of or damage to mobile phones or electronic games/devices/tablets/smart watches. The use of Nintendo DSi, PSP, Game Boys, MP3s, iPods, Tablets, Smart Watches(this list is not exhaustive) is not appropriate in the primary school due to their intrusive and distracting nature.

They are a potential and real source of bullying and abuse through texting and dissemination of unacceptable inappropriate images and/or recordings.

Please note:-

1. Our core business of teaching and learning needs to be conducted in an environment free from unnecessary distractions or disruptions. Therefore, the school strongly discourages the bringing of mobile phones to school by pupils
2. Experience has shown that the misuse of Mobile Phones has caused upset and distress to Pupils, Parents and Teachers, and has wasted an inordinate amount of teaching and learning time in investigating and dealing with such incidents
3. The school is prepared to allow mobile phones on the premises but **only** within the parameters of the policy, as outlined below

4. Use of mobile phones (particularly with the advent of increasingly sophisticated equipment and camera phones) presents several problems, including:
 - a. Mobile phones can be valuable items and might render a pupil vulnerable to theft
 - b. Mobile phones (and their cost and level of sophistication - or otherwise) can make pupils objects of envy or disparagement and could have implications with regard to discipline and potential bullying
 - c. Even when apparently silent, the use of mobiles phones for texting purposes could be potentially undermining of classroom discipline
 - d. Use of phones and electronic games/devices/tablets/smart watches with integrated cameras, internet access and/or recording facilities could lead to Child Protection and Data Protection issues.

Aims

1. To inform all members of our school community about the appropriate use of Mobile Phones at our school
2. To outline the measures to be taken in the school to ensure the safe use of Mobile Phones during school hours
3. To lessen intrusions on and distractions to the child's learning

Objective

It is the Board's objective to prohibit the unauthorised use by pupils of mobile phones while on school premises, grounds or off site activities e.g. school tours or trips

Practical Issues

1. The Board of Management accepts that it is not realistic to have a policy which prohibits pupils from taking phones to school
2. A number of parents would be concerned for health and safety reasons if their child/children were not allowed to carry a phone at all and are, therefore, unable to contact their parents in respect of any situation that might arise before or after school

Guidelines for Parents and Children

1. The Board discourages (and asks all parents to discourage) pupils from bringing mobile phones to schools on the grounds that they are valuable and may be lost or stolen
2. Where a pupil, with his/her parents considered approval, does bring a mobile phone to school, the phone must remain switched off during the school day and may not be used, for any purpose, on school premises, school grounds or during off-site school activities e.g. school tours and trips

3. Parents are reminded that in cases of emergency, the school office remains the first point of contact to ensure that a child is reached quickly, and helped in any appropriate way
4. Where a parent feels that it is essential for their child to have a phone in school the following will apply:
 - a. Parents must complete a permission slip to request that the Board of Management permit their child to bring his/her mobile phone to school. (See Appendix I). This form must be filled in at the start of every School Year. The form will be kept on file.
 - b. All phones brought to school should have a sticky label on the back with the child's name and classroom number.
 - c. The phones must be turned off and placed in a container for this purpose at the start of the school day. The Class Teacher will put this container into a locked drawer/cabinet or other suitable place in the classroom until the end of school day
5. Any child found to have a phone in school without a signed Mobile Phone Permission Form or without having handed it to teacher in the morning will have the phone confiscated. The phone will not be returned until a parent / guardian collects it
6. The school will not be liable for the replacement of lost, stolen or damaged devices
7. This policy will be harmonized with the school Code of Behaviour as follows:
 - a. Possession of a Mobile Phone during the school day without an updated signed form being lodged in the school will be regarded as Serious Misbehaviour and the phone will be confiscated and returned only to the child's parent / guardian.
 - b. Misuse of a Mobile Phone by taking photographs or video footage of pupils or teachers or sharing inappropriate messages will be regarded as Gross Misbehaviour and, accordingly, will be grounds for possible suspension. If images of other pupils or teachers have been taken, the phone will not be returned to the pupil until the images have been removed by the pupil in the presence of a teacher and the child's parent / guardian,

School Trips and Outings

Children are not permitted to bring mobile phones with them on school trips and tours. Parents may contact the school office in regard to any matter regarding their child while on a school trip

Guidelines for Staff

1. The success of this policy depends on the support of BOM, Parents and School Staff. The Teaching Staff have been consulted in the drafting of this policy and fully support its implementation
2. Teaching Staff may use their mobile phones in a manner which is professional, discreet and accountable. Teachers will supervise the use of any other mobile phone in their classroom to ensure that its use is in

accordance with Child Protection Guidelines or for use in the context of a lesson or project. At all times such use must be fully accountable and justifiable.

3. Covid-19 – members of staff may need to use their phone on occasion to contact the office/other staff member in the event that urgent assistance is required in their classroom
4. Teachers and Parents are reminded that all official communication regarding school business should be conducted through the School Office. Teacher personal mobile numbers should not be used for such communication.

Remote/Distance Learning

For the purpose of distance learning staff may contact parents on their mobile phones. When speaking to pupils the school expects that a parent/guardian remains in the room and listens to the conversation between the staff member and the child on speaker.

Evaluation

This policy is monitored on an ongoing basis.

This policy was ratified by the Interim Manager on 24th October 2020

Interim Manager

Principal

Appendix I

Request for permission to bring a Mobile Phone / Electronic Device into the school

To: Chairperson, Board of Management of Holy Well National School,

I / We request that the Board of Management give permission for _____ (*name of Child*) to

bring a Mobile Phone / Electronic Device into the school during this school year. I / We have read the school's Policy on the use of Mobile Telephones and Electronic Devices and agree to the provisions and sanctions contained in that policy. In particular, I / we are agree that

1. _____ (*name of Child*) will place the Mobile Phone / Electronic Device into the container provided for it in the classroom each morning and collect it before going home each evening
2. I / we are aware that the Board of Management accepts no responsibility for Mobile Phones / Electronic Devices lost or stolen on school property
3. I / we have spoken to _____ (*name of Child*) and have discussed the dangers of and possible misuse of Mobile Phones / Electronic Devices and that I / we am / are satisfied that my / our child can be trusted to be in possession of a Mobile Phone / Electronic Device. I / we am / are also satisfied that my / our child will place the Mobile Phone / Electronic Device into the container every morning when entering the classroom. I/we have spoken to my/ our child who has agreed that the phone will not be taken out of the school bag within the school day and on the school grounds other than school sanctioned use in the presence of a teacher.
4. I / we agree to support the school in the implementation of this Policy to ensure the safety and privacy of all Pupils and Teachers in the school.

Signed: _____
Parent/Guardian

Parent/Guardian

Dated: _____