



## **Mobile Phone/Electronic Device: Acceptable Use Policy**

### **St Fintan's High School**

#### **Mission Statement**

We at St Fintan's High School aim to promote and encourage positive attitudes to the optimum development of pupils in a community that promotes Christian, Catholic values. Every student is encouraged to develop a sense of responsibility and a caring attitude for others and these values are reflected in this policy.

#### **Rationale**

The use of mobile phones/electronic devices is now a feature of modern society and this technology is integral to the lives of most of our students. The school recognises that mobile phones/electronic devices can be a powerful source of learning and that they represent a valuable educational tool. However, the school also recognises that student use of mobile phones/electronic devices presents a number of problems/risks prompting the need for restrictions on their use.

The following policy aims to maintain a safe, nurturing environment where the personal dignity and rights of all members of the school community are preserved. Therefore, the school's policy on mobile phones/electronic devices is devised with the intention of ensuring that teaching and learning can take place without interruption while also protecting students and staff from potential harassment or bullying.

#### **Scope**

This policy deals with student use of mobile phones/electronic devices while in class, on the school premises and during all school related activities, excursions and extra-curricular events, both in Ireland and abroad.

#### **Parental/Guardian Contact**

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 may be made through the office at (01) 8324632. If a student needs to make an urgent telephone call to a parent or guardian during the day, he must ask permission from the class teacher and a school telephone will be used if deemed appropriate.

## **Use of Mobile Phones/Electronic Devices**

Teachers may encourage the appropriate use of mobile phones/electronic devices as an aid to learning in classrooms and other learning settings in the school. In this case, the phone/electronic device must only be used for the specific task outlined by the teacher and must be powered off and put away when the task is completed.

## **Restrictions on use of Mobile Phones/Electronic Devices**

- Where a student brings a mobile phone/electronic device to school, it must be switched off at all times, unless otherwise directed by teachers.
- Mobile phones/electronic devices must not be used for any purpose, e.g., phoning, texting, checking the time, using the calculator, taking photos, taking video/audio recordings, surfing the internet, etc., unless directed by a teacher.
- Mobile phones/electronic devices may not be used during break or lunch times.
- Students with mobile phones/electronic devices must not engage in personal attacks, harass others or post private information about another person via SMS messages/phone calls/chat rooms/social networking sites or by taking/sending/uploading photos, etc.
- Mobile phones/electronic devices must not be used to gain advantage in exams or assessments.

## **Sanctions**

- If a student's mobile phone/electronic device goes off in class, it will be confiscated until the end of the school day.
- If a student uses a mobile phone/electronic device without permission, for any reason, the phone/device will be confiscated for a period of 48 hours. Should this happen a subsequent time, it will be confiscated for a week.
- If a student uses a mobile phone/electronic device to take photographs or make recordings while on the school premises or during any other school related activities, the phone/device will be confiscated for a period of 5 days and must be collected by a parent. A further sanction may also be imposed.
- Incidents where students use a mobile phone/electronic device to bully or harass any member of the school community or who use it to post private information about another person online via any of the methods mentioned above, will be treated as a very grave offence. Such incidents will warrant a serious sanction.

In such cases, the school has the right to ensure, in so far as is practicable, that the mobile phone/digital device contains no images or information which would compromise any member of the school community. The student will be required to remove any such material from their mobile phone/electronic device immediately.

Students are not permitted to remove the SIM card from their mobile phone prior to it being confiscated.

- Any student found using a mobile phone/electronic device to gain advantage in exams or assessments will face disciplinary actions as sanctioned by the school.

## **Criminal Law**

It should be noted that it is a criminal offence to use a mobile phone/electronic device to menace, harass or offend another person. As such, the school may report the offence to An Garda Síochána.

## **Theft or Damage**

The school accepts no responsibility for lost, stolen or damaged mobile phones/electronic devices. The safety and security of mobile phones/electronic devices is wholly in the hands of the student.

The school accepts no responsibility for students who lose or have their mobile phones/electronic devices stolen while travelling to and from school or during any school related activity.

It is strongly advised that students mark their mobile phones/electronic devices clearly with their name.

It is also advised that students use passwords/pin numbers to ensure that unauthorised phone calls cannot be made on their phones (e.g. by other students or if stolen). These passwords/pin numbers should be kept confidential and should not be shared.

Mobile phones/electronic devices, which are found on the school premises, should be handed into the school office.

## **Communication of the Policy**

This mobile phone/electronic device policy will be posted on the school website, included in the school journal and made available to all members of the school community on request.

## **Review**

This policy will be reviewed by the school management authority every two years or as deemed necessary.