

St. Dominic's National School

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Use of Mobile Telephones and Electronic Devices

This policy outlines the appropriate use of mobile phones and electronic devices in our school.

Rationale

The possession and use of mobile phones by school pupils is now extensive, even among primary school pupils. 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 students. Use of mobile phones (particularly with the advent of increasingly sophisticated equipment and camera phones) presents a number of problems, including:

- Mobile phones can be valuable items and might make a pupil vulnerable to theft
- Even when on silent, the use of mobiles phones for texting purposes could be undermining of classroom discipline
- Use of the newer phones with integrated cameras and access to the internet could lead to child protection and data protection issues with regard to inappropriate capture, use or distribution of images.
- Many of the above issues also pertain to ipods, ipads, PSPs or any hand held electronic device. They can be very intrusive, distracting and antisocial in a school environment.

Aims

- To inform all members of our school community about the appropriate use of mobile phones at our school.
- To outline the procedures and processes of this policy.
- To prohibit the unauthorised use by pupils of mobile phones while on school premises, grounds or off site activities e.g. school swimming, special events or school tours
- The school's Board of Management accepts that it is not realistic to have a policy which prohibits pupils from taking phones to school. Not only would it be impractical to forbid pupils from carrying them (when the latest phones are so slim that they could be hidden easily), but it is believed that a number of parents would be concerned for health and safety reasons if their child were not allowed to carry a phone at all (and might therefore be unable to contact their parents in respect of any situation that might arise.)

Guidelines for Children

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. Where a pupil 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, grounds or during off-site school activities (such as school swimming or sports activities.)

- 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.
- Where a parent feels that their child having a phone in school is essential the following will apply:
 - Parents must send the principal a letter requesting that their child be permitted to bring his/her mobile phone to school. One letter per school year.
 - The phones must be turned off and handed up to class teacher at the start of the school day. The teacher will keep the phones locked in top drawer until the end of school day.
- Any child found to intentionally have a phone in school without parental letter or without having handed it to teacher in the morning will have the phone confiscated. The phone will not be returned until a parent or guardian collects it. Similarly, the use of electronic games, personal stereos, etc is not permitted during the school day (including arrival, class time, breaks and dismissal.)
- Where a pupil is found by a member of staff to be using a mobile phone or other electronic device, as above, for any purpose, the phone will be confiscated from the pupil and returned only to the parent, guardian or carer.
- The school incorporates this policy into the Code of Behaviour and will treat breaches as they would treat any other breach of the Code of behaviour. If a pupil is found taking photographs or video footage with a mobile phone of either other pupils or teachers or sharing inappropriate messages via bluetooth this will be regarded as a serious offence and disciplinary action will be taken according to the school's Discipline Policy. 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.
- Children are not permitted to bring mobile phones with them on school trips and tours. A contact number will be provided for parents which may be used by them to contact the teacher on the trip.
- **The school will not be liable for the replacement of lost, stolen or damaged devices.**

Ratified by Board of Management on: _____

Chairperson: _____

Principal: _____