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## DIGITAL DEVICE POLICY

### Introduction

This policy is devised in line with the requirements of Department of Education & Skills [Circular 0044/2025](#), *Banning the use of and access to personal mobile phones by pupils during the school day and Bí Cineálta Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post Primary Schools June (2024)*. According to this Circular, schools are required to implement a policy to ban the use of and access to, personal mobile phones by pupils in all recognised schools for the duration of the school day. Glasnevin ETNS includes smartwatches in this ban. Pupils are not permitted to wear Smartwatches during school hours and/or on the school premises.

The possession and use of electronic devices and mobile phones by school pupils is now extensive. Glasnevin ETNS supports the development of technology skills and recognises the educational value digital devices can have. At the same time, the school recognises potential problems associated with electronic devices and mobile phones, some of which are listed below:

- Mobile phones/Devices can be valuable items and might render a pupil vulnerable to theft.
- Mobile phones/Devices (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.
- Even when apparently silent, the use of mobiles phones/ smart watches for texting purposes could be potentially undermining classroom discipline.
- Use of phones/smart watches with integrated cameras could lead to child protection and data protection issues with regard to inappropriate capture, use or distribution of images, sound and videos.
- Many of the above issues also pertain to ipads, tablets, portable gaming devices,

smart watches and other electronic devices. They can be very intrusive, distracting and anti-social in a school environment.

## Aims:

The aim of this Digital Device Policy is to

- ensure that pupils will benefit from learning opportunities offered by electronic resources in a safe and effective manner.
- inform all members of our school community about the appropriate use of electronic devices and mobile phones at our school
- outline the procedures and processes of this policy

## Personal Devices

Personal devices will not be used by children under any circumstances for school-based activities. School owned devices (cameras, tablets, laptops etc) will be the only devices used during school hours or school related activities to give best assurances of pupil and staff safety. This does not apply to devices that are granted under assistive technology or are used for medical reasons. Where a device is needed for medical reasons, permission must be sought from the Board of Management. The board may request further details from a medical professional

## Smart Watches

As technology evolves, smart watches are becoming an alternative method of communication for parents to communicate with their children, replacing mobile phones in many cases. A smart watch is defined as a watch with the ability to make/receive calls, text messages, photographs and/or video content. Due to their size and ease of concealment, these devices can be harder to track within a classroom environment. It is for these reasons that parents/children must adhere to the following conditions if a smartwatch is being considered:

- Smart watches may be taken to school where its only function is to communicate with parents/guardians before and after school.
- The parent/guardian and child take the responsibility to ensure the watch is switched off and in the child's bag before entering school premises and is not taken out and switched on until the child has left school property. Leaving the watch on or on 'school mode' in the bag is not acceptable so please ensure your child can independently switch off the device.
- The smart watch is left in the child's bag at all times.
- A smart watch for communication with home before/after school is in place of a mobile phone. Children are not permitted to have both a mobile phone and a smart watch in school.
- Where a pupil does bring a smart watch to school, the parent must inform the

teacher in writing (Appendix A) of the request to bring a smart watch to school. It is the responsibility of parents to have some form of identification on the device.

- If the school does not have prior notification of devices on the premises the device may be confiscated.
- Should a breach of the policy occur, the school will take action in accordance with this policy, which may include confiscation of the device.

## Mobile Phones

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, 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 on their way to or from school if walking home by themselves).

## Expectations for pupils

- The Board encourages parents to request that children leave mobile phones at home as they are valuable and may be lost or stolen.
- Where a pupil does bring a mobile phone to school, the parent must inform the teacher in writing (Appendix A) of the request to bring a phone to school. It is the responsibility of parents to have some form of identification on the device.
- If the school does not have prior notification of devices on the premises the device may be confiscated.
- Children will not be allowed access to any personal device; phones (including smart phones), tablets, smart watches, gaming devices or any other personal digital device during school hours or activities.
- Where a pupil does bring a mobile phone to school, parents must sign the Digital Device Statement (Appendix A) stating their acceptance and compliance with this policy.
- Children's phones must be switched off and put into school bags before entering the grounds.
- The phone must remain switched off and in the pupil's school bag 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 tour 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 mobile phone/smart watch in school is essential, the following will apply:*

- The school accepts no responsibility for replacement or repair of lost, stolen or damaged mobile phones. The safety and security of mobile phones is wholly a matter for pupils/parents.
- The school will not be liable for the replacement or repair of lost, stolen or damaged devices that were confiscated due to noncompliance with this policy.
- The phone must be turned off and stored in school bags before the school day starts (i.e. prior to 8.40 am or from when the child first arrives on school grounds).
- Digital devices which are not switched off may be confiscated by the class-teacher and returned only to the parent/guardian. Devices may be confiscated if children do not comply with rules regarding device storage and/or accessing a personal device during school hours or school related activities. Where a device has been confiscated the parent will be contacted with regard to the return of the device.
- The Digital Device Policy is consistent with the Positive Behaviour Policy and inappropriate use of mobile phones or any digital device will incur sanctions as per the Positive Behaviour policy and/or Bí Cineálta Policy.
- Taking photographs, audio or video footage with a mobile phone or electronic device of other pupils or teachers or sharing inappropriate messages during the school day or school activities will be regarded as serious misbehaviour and sanctions will apply according to the school's Positive Behaviour Policy and/or Bí Cineálta Policy.
- If a teacher has reason to believe or suspect that a mobile phone/digital device has unsuitable material stored on it, pupils will be required to hand over the device to a teacher and parents/guardians will be asked to collect it from the school.
- Pupils sending nuisance, vulgar or inappropriate text/picture/video messages is a direct breach of the school's acceptable usage policy.
- The unauthorised taking of images, video or audio with a mobile phone camera or electronic device, still or moving is in direct breach of the school's acceptable usage policy.
- Please see AUP Policy, Positive Behaviour and Bí Cineálta Policy for further information.

*Where there is a suspicion that the material on the mobile may provide evidence relating to a criminal offence the phone will be handed over to the Gardaí for further investigation. Parents will be informed in such circumstances.*

## Digital Devices & Anti Bullying

Parents should note that our Bí Cineálta Policy currently states:

*“One-off incidents may be considered bullying in certain circumstances. A single hurtful message posted on social media can be considered bullying behaviour as it has a high likelihood of being shared multiple times and thus becomes a repeated behaviour.”*

## School Trips and Outings

Children are not permitted to bring mobile phones / smart watches / electronic devices with them on off-site school related activities such as GAA matches, athletic events or school trips and tours. Parents will be able to contact the teacher in charge via the school office. Where children are found to be using digital devices or have them on their person it will be regarded as serious misbehaviour and sanctions will apply according to the school’s Positive Behaviour Policy and/or Bí Cineálta policy.

For off-site activities where pupils will not be returning before the end of the school day, devices must remain switched off and in the child’s bag until the end of the activity.

## Guidelines for Staff

- Mindful of the duties and responsibilities assigned to staff in working with children, it is vital that staff be engaged with children at all working times. Staff are trusted to use their phones/electronic devices accordingly.
- Mobile Phone / Electronic Device use during pupil contact time should be for school purposes only, e.g. Aladdin, internal school communication etc.
- Staff members do not give out their phone number or that of any other staff member to pupils or parents/guardians.
- Calls for school business e.g. checking a booking for school tour, making arrangements for sporting events etc. should be done on the school phone.
- During teaching time, while on playground duty and during meetings, mobile phones/electronic devices should be switched off or put on ‘silent’ or ‘discreet’ mode, with ‘vibrate’ off
- When leaving the classroom (PE, nature walk, fire drill) take an electronic

/ mobile phone device with you.

- If taking photos of pupils/school related events on your mobile phone/ electronic device, staff are trusted that they will use these recordings responsibly for school-related activities and delete them immediately from their device once they have been used for purpose.
- Staff must also be vigilant in terms of child protection with regards to recording children in the school. Staff members must ensure that they never share any media of children in school on their own social media profiles. Photos of children will not be shared on the school's social media and/or website unless parental consent is given.
- Under no circumstances should mobile phone devices belonging to staff members be given to pupils to use.

\*\*\*The guidelines above also apply to any school visitors.

*The Board of Management advises all staff to keep their personal mobile phone number and social networking sites private.*

#### Guidelines for Teachers re. confiscation

- A device may be confiscated if not stored in a school bag, if not switched off or if accessed during school hours or activities.
- If a device is confiscated parents should be notified by phone or email to inform them of breach of policy and organise return of the device.
- Where a device remains in school overnight, the Principal or Deputy Principal should be notified and the device stored as much as possible in a safe place e.g. locked drawer, filing cabinet etc.

#### Guidelines for Parents

- The Staff and BOM recognise the parents as the child's primary educator and believe that parents have an important role to play in ensuring their child's appropriate and safe use of electronic devices
- Parents and guardians are encouraged to regularly check their child's online activity / digital footprint. Parents are encouraged to check social media apps (e.g. TikTok, Facebook, Snapchat, WhatsApp, Instagram etc.) on mobile phones and electronic devices to ensure they are aware of their child's online interaction with others and approve of same.
- Parents/guardians are encouraged to talk with their child regularly about their use of electronic devices and discuss who their child is interacting with and the content of such interactions.

- If purchasing phones for child/ren, parents are strongly encouraged to consider opting for mobile phones that can only access phone calls and SMS/text messages as an alternative to a Smartphone.
- Parents are asked to attend internet safety talks held in the school at least once every two years.

## Support Structures

Glasnevin ETNS endeavours to have support structures in place to ensure the appropriate use of electronic devices in school and to ensure staff, parents and pupils feel supported in same.

- The school will provide Internet Safety and Cyber Bullying talks for pupils from 4<sup>th</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> class.
- The school will provide Internet Safety and Cyber Bullying talks for parents and guardians to all parents in the school.
  - Community Gardaí link in with classes re Internet Safety and Cyber Bullying.
- Staff will regularly partake in Continuous Professional Development in relation to AUP, internet safety and Cyber Bullying.
- The school will inform students and parents of key support structures and organisations that deal with illegal material or harmful use of the Internet.

*The school also reserves the right to report any illegal activities to the appropriate authorities.*

## Review

This policy was drafted in January 2026 and will be updated in line with department guidelines.

## Ratification

Ratified by Board of Management

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Chairperson of Board of Management

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Date

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Principal

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Date

Next Review Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix A

### Digital Device Permission form

I wish to inform the school that \_\_\_\_\_ will be in possession of a (please tick all that apply):

- Mobile/Smart Phone
- Smart Watch
- Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

Reason for device in school:

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I have read the following and understand all terms in the following school policies (tick when read):

- Digital Device Policy
- Acceptable Usage Policy
- Positive Behaviour Policy



By signing this, I am agreeing to all terms of the Digital Device Policy and accompanying AUP and Positive Behaviour policies. I confirm I as parent/guardian and my child have read and clearly understand our responsibilities with regards to these policies and are aware that sanctions may occur as a result of breaches of these policies.

Student Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_