

Bohermore National School

Mobile Phone Policy

School Aims and Implementation

It is the primary aim of our school that every member of the school community feels valued, respected and that each person is treated fairly. We are a caring community, whose values are built on mutual respect for all in line with our equality policy. Bohermore National School aims to provide children the opportunity to develop towards their full potential; academically, emotionally and socially:

- ✚ Providing the highest standard of education to enable children to acquire the skills, knowledge and concepts relevant to their future.
- ✚ Promoting an ethos of care, mutual respect and support, where effort is valued and success celebrated.
- ✚ Enabling children to become active, responsible and caring members of the school and wider community.

The school works towards these aims by:

- ✚ Promoting high quality learning
- ✚ Providing a high quality learning environment.
- ✚ Valuing each other and ourselves.
- ✚ Working in partnership with parents and the community.

1. Introduction

1.1 This school is committed to providing an environment that is at all times conducive to learning. Accordingly this environment should remain (as far as is practicable) free from disruption or distraction and should allow pupils to concentrate fully on their learning activities.

1.2 The unauthorised or inappropriate use of mobile phones will not be tolerated, nor will any suggestion of using such devices as an instrument of bullying or harassment directed against students and/or staff.

2. Purpose and scope

2.1 This policy is designed to inform all staff of expectations regarding the use of mobile phones during working hours. It is intended to offer guidance to staff with regard to what constitutes appropriate (and inappropriate) use of mobile phones within the workplace or elsewhere whilst carrying out duties of employment, and additionally covers the potential consequences of misuse in contravention of the policy.

2.2 This policy is also of relevance with regard to employees who are required to have access to a mobile phone owned by the school in order to carry out the duties of their post, including those employees required to undertake 'on-call' duties.

3. Key principles

3.1. Any mobile phones brought into school remain the responsibility of the individual owner. The school accepts no responsibility for the loss, theft or damage of personally-owned mobile phones.

3.2 Mobile phones must not be used in for private or personal use during lessons or formal school time). They should be switched off (or set to silent) at all times. Ideally, mobile phones must be stored in the staffroom.

3.3 Use of mobile phones by staff during working hours for social networking activity (other than in accordance with curriculum use) is strictly prohibited.

3.4 Staff members are not permitted to use their own mobile phones for contacting students or their families in a professional capacity (either on or off duty) other than in an emergency.

3.5 Staff should never give their personal mobile phone number to students, nor should they store parent's numbers on their personal phones as this facilitates the possibility of inappropriate contact from parents.

3.6 Staff should never send to (or accept from) colleagues or parents any texts or images that could be perceived as inappropriate or offensive.

3.7 Staff needing to access their mobile phones during the working day (in the event of family emergencies etc), must inform the principal that they are expecting a call. They will be asked to take this call in the staff room and once the call is over, it is expected that the staff member store the phone in the staff room until the end of the day. Staff will not be allowed to walk around the carpark during school time in order to take their calls. Staff may also give the phone number of the office to their families and in the event of a family emergency, the office staff will locate the staff member and alert them to the call.

4. Use of personal mobile phones during the working day

4.1 The use of mobile phones by employees for the purpose of making or receiving personal calls and/or texts during the working day is discouraged for the following reasons:

- ✚ It does not set a professional and positive example to pupils and parents.
- ✚ It is disruptive and interrupts lessons
- ✚ It is often discourteous to colleagues (e.g. during meetings)
- ✚ It is a misuse of the school's time and has potential to impact adversely on the students' learning.

4.2 In certain circumstances certified trade union representatives and staff who are carers may need to be given express permission to make or receive such calls.

4.3 Mobile phones should be switched off (or set to silent) whilst on school premises, other than during an official break or at lunchtime. Staff should store their phones in the staff room. Employees using personal mobile phones during their breaks should be respectful of their colleagues and mobile phones should not be used in front of pupils.

5. Using phone as a camera

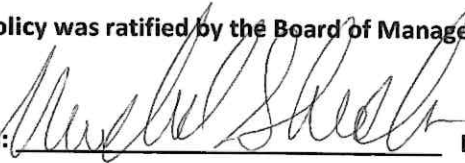
5.1 There is significant potential for camera phones to be misused in school. No staff member should use their personal phone to photograph a child. School ipads are provided for this purpose. The photos taken on these can then be uploaded to the cloud and used (with consent) on social media or the school website.

6. Contravention of this policy

6.1 All staff should be fully aware that failure to comply with this policy is likely to result in disciplinary action. Additionally, in certain circumstances, failure to observe this policy may potentially lead to allegations of inappropriate behaviour likely to generate a child protection investigation. Repeated instances of mobile phone use which prevents a staff member from carrying out his or her duties, which leads to a failure of adequate supervision of a child will constitute a child protection issue.

6.2 This guidance should be viewed as a necessary safeguard for staff in addition to maintaining the valued reputation of the school.

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on: _____

Signed:  Date: _____

Michael Sheahan,
Chairperson.