

St. Joseph's Grammar School

Scoil Iósaef



Mobile Phones/ Electronic /Smart Technology Policy 2023-2024

Policy Author	Mrs Annette McGleenan
Frequency of Review	Bi-annual
Date of Last Review	04-04-2023
Date Approved by Governors	
Proposed by	
Seconded by	
Date of Next Review	04-04-2025

Rationale

School recognises that there are occasions when access to a mobile phone/electronic technology/smart technology can be convenient, especially for youngsters who remain in school after 3.30 p.m. for extra-curricular activities. These devices must be switched off and kept in the student's inside blazer pocket throughout the school day. They may be used to contact parent/guardian after 3.30 p.m. if necessary. Unfortunately, we have found that mobile phones/electronic technology/smart technology in school create more problems than they actually solve. Issues of health and safety, privacy, security and safe guarding are of such importance that we require the full support of both pupils and parents for this school's policy on mobile phones/electronic technology/smart technology.

We would ask both parents and pupils to read the enclosed document and then to sign the agreement slip and return it to your son/daughter's form teacher as soon as possible. We appreciate your support and cooperation in this matter.

Below, we have detailed some of the issues of concern to us regarding the use of mobile phones/electronic technology/smart technology in school.

1. Health and Safety

There is currently much debate about the potential danger to health posed by the use of mobile phones and school recognises that young people may be exposing themselves to unnecessary health risks. In addition, "cyber-bullying" has become a widely recognised form of bullying and where pupils bring mobile phones into school, the incidence of this inevitably increases. Unsolicited and inappropriate calls/messages/images increase the risk to our pupils' well-being and safety. Thus by removing the use of mobile phones during the school day, except with express permission of a subject teacher, we can be certain of providing a safer and healthier environment for all school pupils and personnel.

2. Discipline and Behaviour

If mobile phones/electronic technology/smart technology are switched on during the school day they have the potential to disrupt the learning of all pupils. They distract not only the individual but all those around him/her and the teacher. Thus, phones/electronic technology/smart technology should remain switched off during the school day unless a subject teacher requires pupils to use them for educational purposes. Any online behaviour which brings the school into disrepute such as abusive/ inappropriate comments directed at another person will attract the most serious sanction in line with student policies.

3. Child Protection and Privacy

As a school we have a duty to ensure that all members of the school community can work and learn in a secure environment. All members of our school community are entitled to their right to privacy. Any student found taking unauthorised pictures, still or moving, will be deemed to be in serious breach of school policy and the matter will be dealt with as such. Any breach of this rule will automatically result in a two-day out of school suspension with the potential for expulsion depending on the nature of the material or situation.

4. Exams

Mobile phones/electronic technology/smart technology in exam centres are expressly forbidden by all exam boards. Pupils who bring a phone/smart watch into a centre, whether it is switched on or not, will be disqualified from that exam. (Please see examples of malpractice involving mobile phones reported by the OCR examining Board from two other centres).

GCSE Mathematics: The Candidate was found to be using a mobile phone as a calculator during the examination.

The candidate denied this and claimed he was just turning the phone off when it was discovered.

Outcome: The candidate was disqualified from the subject.

“Introduction of unauthorised material into the examination room (mobile phone)”

AS Level Ancient History: *The Centre reported that despite the usual warning, a candidate’s mobile phone rang some five minutes into the examination. The centre pointed out that the candidate had not used the phone, he was honest in admitting it was his and it did not unduly disturb other candidates. The subject teacher drew attention to the candidate’s absent-mindedness. The candidate pointed out that many candidates keep phones in their possession to avoid theft and that he did not seek to gain any advantage.*

Outcome: *The Regulations Committee noted that the appropriate warnings had been given to the candidates, and there were no mitigating factors in this case. The candidate was disqualified from the unit.*

**SCHOOL PROCEDURE FOR THE USE OF
MOBILE PHONES/ ELECTRONIC TECHNOLOGY**

Smart watches are strictly forbidden. It is preferred that students should not bring mobile phones/electronic technology/smart technology to school. In circumstances where a phone/electronic technology is brought to school please note the procedures below.

1. Students who bring mobile phones/electronic technology/smart technology to school are entirely responsible for them. The school does not accept responsibility for the theft, loss or damage of mobile phones/electronic technology/smart technology or other similar property belonging to pupils.
2. If a pupil needs to bring a phone for after-school arrangements, they should switch the phone off. Phones must remain switched off and in the **inside blazer pocket** at all times during the school day: 8.55 am – 3.30 pm. Whilst on school premises outside of these times students are not permitted to take pictures/ moving images or to use social media.
3. With the exception of those students who have been given permission to use their phones/electronic technology in Language/Music class, any student who breaches Rule No.2 will have his/her mobile phone/electronic technology confiscated immediately and **an after-school detention will automatically be imposed by the member of staff who has confiscated the phone.**
4. The confiscated phone/electronic technology will be left in the school office as soon as possible after it has been confiscated and labelled with the pupil’s name and class.
5. For a first offence, the student will collect their phone/electronic technology from the main office on the day it has been confiscated.
6. Before returning a confiscated phone/electronic technology, the school may require a pupil/parent to open the phone to check for inappropriate content so that it can be removed.
7. Students whose phones/electronic technology are confiscated on a subsequent occasion must have it collected by their parent/guardian after they have been informed by a member of staff. A subsequent offence may result in a more serious sanction being imposed.
8. It is forbidden for pupils to make recordings (video or audio) take pictures or post /share images with a mobile phone or digital device in class/school **of any pupil or staff member** without the permission of the classroom teacher/senior teacher/or principal. **Any breach of this rule will automatically receive a minimum of one day suspension with the potential for expulsion depending on the nature of the material or situation**

9. Students may be permitted to carry their mobile phones on out-of-school visits providing they observe the regulations regarding mobile phone use on the trip and on any premises that they visit. School will not be liable for any theft, loss or damage to mobile phones taken on educational visits.
10. Yr 13/14 students **ONLY** are permitted to use electronic technology in study as per instructions by the school staff.
11. Parents are requested not to contact their children directly via mobile phone however parents can continue to convey information to their son/daughter by contacting the child's **form teacher** via the school office. Tel: 028 877 61227
12. Where it is deemed necessary by the form teacher, a pupil may contact a parent during the school day using the public telephone at the school reception.
13. **Cyber-bullying is forbidden and will attract the most severe sanctions when proven, up to and including suspension.**
14. If school is made aware of a student(s) being involved in the possession or distribution of inappropriate or indecent images advice will be sought from the Child Protection School Support Service. School may be obliged to consult and refer the matter to the PSNI.
15. Any student who takes the school into disrepute through inappropriate use of Mobile Phones/Electronic Technology/smart watches or similar devices will have an appropriate sanction imposed depending on the nature of the incident.