



Mobile Phone/Smart Devices Policy

Introduction

The possession and use of mobile phones/smart devices by school students is now extensive, even in the primary school sector. The use of mobile phones and personal devices (smart watches, iPads etc.) presents a number of problems that can prove intrusive and distracting in a school environment. They can cause discipline problems or be used as a means of bullying others. The capacity of many devices to take photographs, make video or sound recordings could lead to child protection and data protection issues with regard to inappropriate capture, use or distribution of images. In order to manage the issue of mobile phones, and other personal devices, this policy has been developed by *An Bord Bainistíochta*.

1. General

Taking these factors into consideration and mindful of the welfare of all our children, *An Bord Bainistíochta* wishes to make clear that pupils should not bring mobile phones/smart devices to school. The school will always facilitate communication between pupil and home using the school phone/s. Neither should pupils bring mobile phones on school outings.

- 1.1 If a mobile phone is brought to school the phone will be confiscated and will be kept in the office until the end of classes when it can be collected. Parents will be notified about this breach of rules. If a teacher has any suspicion that a mobile phone has unsuitable material stored on it, pupils will be required to hand over the phone to *An Príomhoide* and parents will be asked to collect it from the school.
- 1.2 Sim-enabled watches or any personal device that has access to the internet, can be used to communicate with other people through text or voice calls, can be used to record sound, take photos or videos, are not permitted in school. If a child comes to school with/wearing such a device it will be kept in the office for the remainder of the day, available to be collected at the end of the school day.

2. Exceptional circumstances

2.1 *An Bord Bainistíochta* recognises that exceptional circumstances may arise where parents may wish their child to bring a mobile phone to school in order to use it outside school hours. In such a case, this must be communicated to the *Príomhoide* in writing, outlining the reason. The phone must be deposited (switched off) in a clearly marked envelope/zip lock bag in the office until the end of classes, when it can be collected. It is stressed however, that having collected the phone, it should not be used on the school premises or grounds by the pupil, without the permission/supervision of a teacher.

2.2 It is the view of *An Bord Bainistíochta* that particular dangers attach to a pupil bringing a mobile phone on a school outing. Communication between child and home will, however, be facilitated by the supervising teacher/adult. Where very exceptional circumstances pertain requiring a pupil to bring a mobile phone on a school outing, these must be communicated in writing, outlining the reason to *an Príomhoide*. In such cases the pupil's mobile phone will be held by the supervising teacher/adult until it is required, and thereafter. However, the primary responsibility of the supervising teacher/adult is to ensure the safety of the pupils in their care and the school accepts no responsibility for replacing lost, stolen or damaged mobile phones.

2.3 In exceptional circumstances children with additional needs will be permitted to use smart devices as assistive technology (such as iPads) and this will be agreed with *An Príomhoide* in advance of the device being used in school.

3. Misuse

It should be noted that it is a criminal offence to use a mobile phone/smart device to menace, harass or offend another person. It is recognised that mobile phones/smart devices are frequently used to bully. *Bord Bainistíochta Ghaelscoil na Cille* is determined to protect our children from such behaviour. Accordingly, the school will view such misuse of a mobile phone/smart device as very serious misbehaviour and appropriate sanctions will apply.

4. Staff and other adults

4.1 The use of mobile phones/smart devices by staff should respect the principles set out above. In particular, calls should not be taken, nor made in class and should be taken /made (if possible) in an open area or in an area where pupils are not present. Occasions such as school tours and sporting outings constitute exceptions where the teacher may need to use the mobile phone in the presence of pupils.

4.2 Parents or other non-pupils on school premises or grounds should avoid using mobile phones/smart devices while pupils are present. *An Bord Bainistíochta* are aware that mobile phones are used by parents/guardians to take photographs on special occasions in the school premises or on the school grounds. Images/video recording taken by you here at Gaelscoil na Cille must only be used for private/domestic purposes only and not be put online or on social media. Parents/Guardians are reminded that images which may identify other pupils should not be made accessible to others online or published in any other way, as you do not have the permission from the parents or of the other pupils to do this.

5. School Policy

5.1 The school will incorporate this policy into the school's code of behaviour/discipline policy.

5.2 This policy will be communicated to all the members of the school community parents, management, pupils and staff.

Ratified by An Bord Bainistíochta on:

9/9/24 **Dáta**



Signed

Cathaoirleach an Bhoird Bhainistíochta



An Príomhoide