



Mobile Phone and Smart Device Policy

St. Caimin's Community School



Table of Contents

	Page Number
Introduction	3
Rationale	3
Scope of this Policy	3
Related Policies	4
Daily Procedures	4
Forgotten/Damaged Pouches	5
Breach of the Mobile Phone and Smart Device Policy	5
Sanctions	6
Monitoring and Review	6
Ratification	6
Appendix A – FAQ Students	Separate document
Appendix B – FAQ Parents	Separate document
Template for medical/AEN requests	Separate document

Introduction

This policy is a school-wide policy, for implementation by all staff, students, parents and Board of Management. It has been developed in consultation with the Board of Management, parents, staff and students. The school aims to provide a happy, safe and stimulating learning environment for all students. The purpose of this policy is to:

- Ensure that mobile phone and smart device usage does not disrupt this learning environment.
- Ensure that courtesy, respect and consideration to others are paramount at all times.
- Ensure a secure environment within our school where all members of the school community are protected from abuse/misuse of mobile phones and smart devices.
- Promote positive interactions and enhance the wellbeing of all members of the school community.
- Clarify the responsibilities of students, staff and parents with regard to mobile phones and smart devices.

Rationale

This policy was devised in response to updated technology regarding mobile phones and smart devices. St. Caimin's Community School recognises that mobile phones and smart devices are now an integral part of young people's culture and way of life and can be of considerable value when used in an appropriate manner.

However, we are also cognisant that phones can be a distraction, can hinder communication and socialisation and can increase levels of anxiety and stress for many students.

The school accepts that students may bring mobile phones and smart devices to school but that their use in school is subject to the following guidelines. The school aims to educate and support in educating students on the responsible use of technology.

The following policy aims to maintain a safe, nurturing environment where the personal dignity and rights of all the members of the school community are preserved.

Scope of the policy:

The terms mobile phone and smart devices in this policy encompass mobile phones, smart watches, tablets and any other similar portable electronic device. Please note this list is not exhaustive.

The school day refers to the time a student is in school. This policy also applies to after school study.

To assist the school in implementing this policy, parents/guardians should not contact their daughters/sons by mobile phone at any time during the school day. Contact with the school should be made through the office and students should use the office phone (061-364211) in emergencies.

The school accepts no responsibility for mobile phones or smart devices. Mobile phones are brought to school entirely at the owner's risk. The school accepts no responsibility for lost, stolen or damaged mobile phones or smart devices.

Related Policies

This policy document may be read in conjunction with the following:

- Acceptable Use Policy
- Code of Behaviour
- Countering Bullying Behaviour
- GDPR Policy
- Mission Statement
- Special Educational Needs (SEN) Policy
- Wellbeing Plan

Daily Procedures

- St. Caimin's Community School is a **phone free zone** during the school day, including break and lunchtimes.
- All students will receive a pouch at the beginning of the school year in which their phone will be kept during the school day. These pouches will be returned at the end of the school year for maintenance and repair.
- Should a student choose to bring a phone to school, it must be **switched off** and placed in their pouch **before** entering the school grounds. **Switched off** means that the mobile phone/smart device is powered off. It does not mean it is in silent, meeting, airplane mode etc. Checks may be undertaken during the school day and students will be requested to present their pouch to a member of the school staff.
- Students keep their pouch with them during the school day in their school bag.
- Students are only permitted to bring one mobile phone/smart device to school.
- Parents/guardians arrange to contact students through the school office. A student, who wishes to go home for any reason during the school day, must arrange to do so through their timetabled subject teacher and the Secretary/Deputy Principal/Principal and not independently by mobile phone/smart device. This ensures that correct procedures for leaving school before the ending of classes for that day are observed. Responsibility cannot be taken by the school authorities for students who arrange independently to go home without following proper procedure. Any such arrangement is a breach of the Code of Behaviour. Parents/Guardians may arrange to contact students through the office (061) 364211. We ask parents/guardians to co-operate and support this policy by not contacting students by mobile phone/smart device during the school day.
- Pouches containing mobile phones/smart device must be placed on the teachers' desk before a student leaves class to go to the bathroom.
- At the end of the school day, students will unlock their pouch, using the unlocking stations provided around the school.
- Students arriving late or leaving early will pouch/unpouch their phones in the main office.
- Mobile phone/smart device use is **only permitted** during class time with the teachers' permission and prior sanction. Teachers will unlock pouches when the mobile phone/smart device is required. All devices should be switched off and returned to the pouch and the pouch locked once the mobile phone/smart device is no longer required.
- Mobile phones/smart devices are not permitted in PE changing rooms or bathrooms.

- School trips/tour/matches etc.: In exceptional circumstances (e.g. school trips, out of school matches, foreign trips, out of school hours trips etc.), prior permission may be granted by school management for the use of the mobile phones on request by staff member responsible for the activity. This allows students to contact teachers or Parents/Guardians as necessary. Students participating in school related activities must abide by the relevant rules. Inappropriate use of mobile phones/electronic devices during school related activities is strictly forbidden and sanctions will apply.
- Consideration will be given to students who require their device for any of the following reasons:
 - Medical device / Disability aid
 - Assistive and Augmentative Communication
 - Students who use a translator app

Prior written agreement is required with school management in consultation with students/parents/guardians. Students in this category will be required to restrict their phone use to the purpose stated in their written agreement. School management may require student devices to be locked on the relevant app during school hours using guided access or app pinning.

Forgotten/Damaged Pouches:

- Any loss or damage of the pouch, which renders it unusable, will result in the students funding a replacement pouch at a cost of €15.
- In the event of a student forgetting their pouch, the student will be asked to leave their phone in the main office for the duration of the school day.
- Any student who purposely interferes with or damages pouches or locking/unlocking stations will be in breach of the school's code of behaviour and will face more serious sanctions, up to and including suspension.

Breach of the Mobile Phone and Smart Device Policy:

- Any use of mobile phones/smart devices outside the designated times as stated in the scope of this policy will incur the appropriate sanctions outlined below.
- An incident where mobile phones/smart devices are used to bully or harass a member of the school community is considered a serious breach of the school's Code of Behaviour and will be dealt with accordingly.
- It should be noted that it is an offence to use a mobile phone/smart device to menace, harass or offend another person (this includes uploading on any form of social media). As such, the school may consider it appropriate to involve the Gardai/ and or Tusla - Child and Family Agency in such incidents. The school may invoke the school's Code of Behaviour and sanctions up to and including suspension or expulsion may be imposed.
- No photographs or recordings either video or audio may be made on the phone on the school premises without the school's permission. Using the phone in such a way can seriously infringe on people's privacy and rights. The school reserves the right to view the contents of the confiscated mobile phone/smart device, in the presence of the student, to ensure that it contains no images or information which might compromise any member of the school community. Any photographs or recordings taken in the school building, on school grounds or during any school activity, in or outside the school may be removed before the phone is returned.

- The sharing of explicit images is totally prohibited. In accordance with the relevant current legislation, all cases involving the creation, distribution or possession of explicit images of children (i.e. children under the age of seventeen) are potentially criminal and will be reported to the Gardai.

Sanctions:

The following sanctions will apply to a student found to be in breach of this policy:

1st offence: Phone will be confiscated and given to the Principal. The phone will be kept until the end of the school day. The student can collect the phone. Parents will be informed by text message and minus point will be recorded on VSware.

2nd offence: Phone will be confiscated and given to the Principal. The phone will be kept until the end of the school day. Parents/Guardians can collect the phone. Parents/Guardians will be informed by text message and minus point will be recorded on VSware. If parents/guardians cannot collect the phone it can be collected by parents/guardians the following day.

3rd and subsequent offences: Phone will be confiscated and given to the principal. Parents will be informed by text message and minus point will be recorded on VSware. Phone will be kept overnight, and parents/guardians can collect the phone the following day. The student will also complete a lunchtime detention.

Should a student be found to be using a mobile phone/smart device during the school day without the teacher’s permission and refuses to hand up the phone/device, they will be sent immediately to the Deputy Principal/Principal. This will be considered a breach of the school’s code of behaviour and more serious sanctions could be applied.

Monitoring and Review

We are committed to monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of our Mobile Phone and Smart Device Policy.

This is conducted through student reflections and evaluations, feedback via the student council, staff review and parental feedback. This policy will be reviewed regularly.

Ratification

This Policy was adopted by the Board of Management on _____

The policy will come into effect from _____

SIGNED (Chairperson of Board of Management) _____

SIGNED (Principal) _____

Once ratified this policy will be shared on the school website and Staff Teams.