



Mobile/Smart Phone and Personal Electronic Device Policy

Introduction and Rationale

The possession and use of mobile/smart phones by school students is now extensive, even in the primary school sector. The use of mobile phones and smart devices* (e.g. tablets, smart watches, PSPs, etc) presents a number of problems that can prove intrusive and distracting in a school environment. They can 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.

Relationship to Our School Ethos

The use of personal mobile/smart phones and other electronic devices contravenes the provision of a safe and secure school environment, a provision that is central to the mission statement and ethos of St Tolas National School.

Aim of Policy

School Management is introducing a policy that prohibits the use by students of personal mobile/smart phones, and other personal devices, while on school premises or involved in school activities such as tours, trips or extra-curricular activities. This is in order to create a safer environment and to lessen intrusions on, and distractions to, children's learning.

School Procedures

- The use of personal mobile/smart phones and other personal devices by children who attend the school is not allowed while the children are in the care of the school staff, while at school, on trips from the school or involved in extra-curricular activities. The children should, therefore, not bring mobile phones and other personal devices to school or when engaging in school related activities.
- Mobile/Smart phones and other personal devices that are found in the school should be handed to the School Office or Principal's Office.
- Children who need to contact home during school hours may do so through the School Secretary using the school landline phone 061 362894.
- Parents are reminded that in cases of emergency, the School Office remains the first point of contact and can ensure that your child is reached quickly and a message passed on to them.
- Staff are permitted to use their phones for school-related business only or for emergencies. Staff should not use their phones for personal reasons during teacher-pupil contact time if at all possible.

**Smart Device = device that has the capacity to take photographs, make videos or sound recording, or send/receive messages/calls.*

In the event that a parent thinks that their child having a phone or smart device* in school is essential, the following will apply:

- Parents must send the Principal a letter requesting that their child be permitted to bring his/her mobile phone/device to school. The letter should be addressed to the Principal. This letter will be kept on file.
- The phone or smart device* must be turned off throughout the school day and *handed up to the class teacher unless it is required for medical reasons. It will be stored in a secure location throughout the day.* St Tolas NS accepts no liability for phones lost/stolen/damaged.
- If a child forgets to bring their phone/device home at the end of the day it will remain in school and can be collected at the end of the next school day.

Sanctions

- Any child found to have a phone/personal device in school or on the school grounds without parental letter will have the phone/device confiscated. The phone will not be returned until a parent/guardian/carer collects it. Similarly, the use of all personal electronic devices is not permitted during the school day – this includes arrival, class time, breaks and dismissal.
- Where a pupil is found by a member of staff to be using a mobile phone or other personal device for any purpose, it will be confiscated from the pupil and returned only to a parent/guardian/carer.
- The School will not be liable for replacing mobile phones or other devices that are lost, stolen or damaged.
- The School incorporates this policy into the Code of Behaviour and Acceptable Use Policy, and will treat breaches in the same manner as any other breach of these Policies.
- If a pupil uses a mobile phone or personal device to take photographs, video footage or recording of other pupils or staff members, or shares inappropriate messages this will be regarded as a Level 2 or Level 3 inappropriate behaviour, and disciplinary action will be taken in accordance with the School's Code of Behaviour.

It should be noted that it is a criminal offence to use a mobile phone/personal device to menace, harass or offend another person. As such, if action as sanctioned by the School in this regard is deemed ineffective, as with all such incidents, the School may consider it appropriate to involve the Gardaí.

School Trips and Outings

Children are not permitted to bring mobile phones and other personal devices with them on school trips and tours. Teachers will have a contact number in the event that it is necessary to make contact with a parent/guardian.

A copy of the Mobile Phone and Devices Policy is made available to school personnel and to the Parents' Council. The policy is readily accessible to parents on request.

A copy of the Policy is also published on the school website

Policy review: this policy will be reviewed by the school management authority periodically.

**Smart Device = device that has the capacity to take photographs, make videos or sound recording, or send/receive messages/calls.*

Date of Policy Adoption: _____

This Policy was adopted by the Board of Management on 28/2/23

Signed: R. Burke

Chairperson of Board of Management

Date: 28/02/23

Signed: Mary Orlie Fitzgerald

Principal

Date: 28/2/23

**Smart Device = device that has the capacity to take photographs, make videos or sound recording, or send/receive messages/calls.*

Telephone: 061 362894 Email: office@tolasns.com

