

Scoil Naomh Fiachra: Mobile Phone/Smart Device Use Policy

**Scoil Naomh Fiachra
Clontubrid
Roll No. 16865D**



Acceptable Use Policy for Mobile Phones/Smart Devices (Circular 0038/2018)

Purpose

- This policy was updated in December 2018 in order to take into account recent legislation, notably circular 0038/2018. It was most recently reviewed in March 2023
- The increased ownership of mobile phones/smart devices requires that school administrators, teachers, students, and parents take steps to ensure that mobile phones/smart devices are used responsibly.
- This Acceptable Use Policy is designed to ensure that potential issues (such as mobile etiquette) can be clearly identified and addressed, ensuring the benefits that mobile phones/smart devices provide (such as increased safety) can be enjoyed by our students.
- Scoil Naomh Fiachra has established the following Acceptable use Policy for mobile phones/smart devices that provides guidelines and instructions for the appropriate use of mobile phones/smart devices in our school.
- Permission for use of a mobile phone/smart devices will be sought from the principal on a case by case basis and the attached request form will be returned to the school.
- If a parent is given permission for their child to have a mobile phone/smart device during school hours, pupils and their parents / guardians must first read and understand the Acceptable Use Policy.
- The Acceptable Use Policy for mobile phones/smart devices also applies to pupils during school trips and extra-curricular activities.
- For the purpose of this policy, smart devices include any device capable of connecting to the internet, taking a photograph, video or voice recording.

Rationale

1 Personal Safety and Security

- Scoil Naomh Fiachra accepts that some parents give their children mobile phones/smart devices to protect them from everyday risks involving personal security and safety and to allow them to make contact with home.
- It is acknowledged that providing a child with a mobile phone/smart device may give parents reassurance that they can speak with their children quickly at any time.

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2 Young People and Mobile Phones/Smart Devices

- The scientific evidence does not indicate the need for special precautions for either adults or older children in the use of mobile phones/smart devices.
- This view is supported by the World Health Organisation (WHO) and other leading experts and health authorities internationally.
- The safety margins on international guidelines take into account any differences in exposure that could be experienced by children due to conductivity and head size.
- However recent research has raised questions of safety for children under eight years old.
- Where parents / guardians propose to provide mobile phones/smart devices to their children they should first satisfy themselves that it is safe to do so.
- In any event we do not consider that, on balance, children from Infants to Second Class should be allowed mobile phones/smart devices in school.

Responsibility

- It is the responsibility of students who have permission to bring mobile phones/smart devices onto school premises to adhere to the guidelines outlined in this policy.
- Parents should be aware if their child takes a mobile phone/smart device onto school premises.
- Permission to have a mobile phone/smart device at school or while under the school's supervision is contingent upon parents / guardians signing the Consent Form attached to this policy and permission being granted by the principal teacher.
- Parents/ guardians may revoke approval at any time.

Acceptable Uses

- If a child is granted permission to bring a mobile phone/smart device to school, it should be switched off during school hours, including break times.
- In exceptional circumstances, should the parent / guardian specifically request it, a pupil may be permitted to have a phone/smart device switched on during school hours.
- Such requests will be handled on a case-by-case basis, and should be directed to the Principal Teacher.
- Parents are reminded that in cases of emergency, the school telephone remains the appropriate point of contact and can ensure your child is reached quickly.

Unacceptable Uses

- Mobile phones/smart devices should not disrupt classroom lessons by ringing or beeping.
- This also applies to school trips and other out-of-school supervised activities.

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- Should there be repeated disruptions to lessons caused by a mobile phone/smart device; the responsible pupil may face disciplinary actions under the school's Code of Good Behaviour.
- Children are not permitted to use mobile phones/smart devices to take photographs/videos/recordings or to access the internet during school hours. This includes school tours, field trips, etc. School staff will be solely responsible for taking photographs.

Theft or Damage

- Students are required to mark all their mobile phones/smart devices clearly with their names.
- Mobile phones/smart devices which are found in the school and whose owner cannot be located should be given to a teacher.
- The school accepts no responsibility for replacing lost, stolen or damaged mobile phones/smart devices.
- The school accepts no responsibility for mobile phones/smart devices lost or stolen while travelling to and from school.
- It is strongly advised that pupils use passwords / pin numbers to ensure that unauthorised phone calls cannot be made on their phones (eg. by other pupils, or if stolen).
- Pupils should keep their passwords / pin numbers confidential.

Inappropriate Conduct

- Any pupil who uses vulgar, derogatory, or obscene language while using a mobile phone/smart device will face disciplinary actions under the school's Code of Good Behaviour.
- Pupils with mobile phones/smart devices may not engage in personal attacks, harass another person, or post private information about another person using SMS messages, phone calls or images, social media, etc.
- Pupils using mobile phones/smart devices to bully other students will face disciplinary actions under the school's Code of Good Behaviour.
- Any pupil who feels threatened or disturbed by any message or phone call they receive should report this immediately to a teacher (if it happens at school or on school-related activities) or to a parent / guardian (if it happens outside of school).
- Any incident involving a student taking unauthorised photos or recordings of other students or staff members will be considered a serious misdemeanour or a gross misdemeanour depending on the nature of the offence.
- Non-observance of these rules may result in the mobile phone/smart device being confiscated and privileges restricted or withdrawn.
- If the mobile phone/smart device is confiscated, it will need to be collected from the Principal by a parent/guardian.
- Where there are repeated breaches of the rules, Parents will be required to collect the mobile phone/smart device and give an undertaking as to the future behaviour of the pupil. Otherwise the pupil's privileges under this policy will be withdrawn.

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- Incidents occurring outside of school that are brought to the attention of Staff, will be reported to parents/guardians who can refer to the Gardaí as necessary. If it is a Child Protection concern, a referral will be made to TUSLA.
- It is a criminal offence to use a mobile phone/smart device to menace, harass or offend another person. As such, if action as sanctioned by the school in this regard is ineffective, as with all incidents, the school may consider it necessary to involve the Gardaí.

The Board of Management ratified this policy at its meeting on 9th March 2023

Signed: Kieran Costello

Chairperson of the Board of Management

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Acceptable Use Policy for Mobile Phones/Smart Devices **Consent Form for School Year 20__/20__**

I / We have read and understand the above information about appropriate use of mobile phones/smart devices at Scoil Naomh Fiachra and I / we understand that this form will be kept on file at the school and that the details may be used (and shared with a third party, if necessary) to assist/identify a phone should the need arise (e.g. if lost, or if the phone/smart device is being used inappropriately).

I / We give my / our child _____, in _____ class permission to carry a mobile phone/smart device to school and understand that he / she will be responsible for ensuring that the mobile phone/smart device is used appropriately and correctly while under the school's supervision, as outlined in this document.

Signature of Parents / Guardians: _____

Signature of Pupil: _____

Mobile Phone Number: _____