

St. Paul's S.N.S.



Mobile Phone / Device Policy

Mobile Phone Policy

The Board of Management of St. Paul's S.N.S. has adopted this policy on 1/04/25, following consultation with all staff members.

Introduction

This policy outlines the appropriate use of mobile phones, and other electronic smart devices in our school.

Rationale

The possession and use of mobile phones and smart devices, e.g. wearables and smartwatches by school pupils is now extensive, even in the primary school sector. Our core concern of teaching and learning needs to be conducted in an environment free from unnecessary distractions or disruptions. Mobile phones, smartwatches and personal devices can be used to cause discipline problems or 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 Paul's SNS.

Aims

St Paul's SNS aims to have a clear set of guidelines concerning mobile phone use on the premises of the school:

- To inform all members of our school community about the appropriate use of mobile phones at our school.
- To outline the procedures and processes of this policy.

The school's Board of Management believes that in exceptional circumstances parents / guardians of individual pupils may require their child to take a mobile phone to school. This may be due to specific concerns for health and safety or other serious reasons that might arise outside of school or on the way to and from school.

However, it is the Board's policy to prohibit the use by pupils of mobile phones, smartwatches and electronic devices while on the school premises, grounds or off site activities e.g. sports matches, school swimming, school trips. For this reason, the school strongly discourages the bringing of these devices to school by students unless deemed absolutely necessary by parents/guardians.

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, in these instances, the School may consider it appropriate to involve the Gardaí.

School Procedures

- The use of personal mobile/smart phones and other personal devices by pupils who attend the school is not permitted while they are in the care of the school staff, while at school, in the school yard, on trips from the school or involved in extra-curricular activities. The pupils 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 will be handed into the School Office by the intervening staff member, to be collected.
- Use of these devices for the recording of pupils or staff members will be deemed a serious or gross misbehavior (as per our Code of Behaviour) and will receive the warranted sanction as a result.
- Children who need to contact home during school hours may do so only through the School Office with the permission of their class teacher.
- 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 onto them. You can contact the school via telephone on 041-9833681 or email: office@stpaulssns.com. Please do not contact your child directly while they are in school on a mobile device.
- Staff are permitted to use their phones for school-related business and for emergencies. Staff should not use their phones for personal reasons during teacher-pupil contact time. All staff contact with parents will be through Databiz, the homework journal or through the school office. Should a teacher require to call a parent, they are advised to use the school line. Should they require to contact on their own device they are advised to block their mobile number prior to calling.

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

- Parents must send the Principal a letter requesting that their child be permitted to bring their mobile phone/device to school, with the specific reason / concern disclosed. The letter should be addressed to the Principal. This is a daily process of application.
- The phone/device must be turned off at all times throughout the school day and handed over to the classroom teacher to be stored in their drawer.
- The school accepts no responsibility for replacing lost, stolen or damaged mobile phones. The safety and security of mobile phones is wholly a matter for pupils/parents.
- The school will incorporate this policy in the school's Code of Behaviour and will treat breaches as they would treat any other breach of school discipline.

Sanctions

Any pupil found to have a phone/ personal device in school without parental letter on file will have the phone/ device confiscated. The use of all personal / electronic devices is not permitted during the school day - this includes arrival, class time, breaks and dismissal. Phones/ devices will not be returned to children should a parent phone the school asking us to do so. This will require a parent to call in to the office in person to collect the item.

Where a pupil is found to be using a mobile phone or other personal device for any purpose, it will be confiscated from the pupil and returned only to their parent/ guardian after an agreed period of time.

E.g. 1st offence - overnight

2nd offence - 3 days

3rd offence - Parent must send written request to reclaim phone to BOM.

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 disciplinary action will be taken in accordance with the School's Code of Behaviour.

If a member of staff has any suspicion that a mobile phone has unsuitable material stored on it, students will be required to hand over the phone for further investigation. Where there is a suspicion that the material on the mobile may provide evidence relating to a criminal offence the phone will be handed over to the Gardaí. Parents will be informed in such circumstances.

School Tours, Trips and Outings

Pupils are not permitted to bring mobile phones and other personal devices with them on school tours, trips and tours. Teachers will contact parents via Databiz App/ Phone if it is necessary to make contact with a parent/guardian.

Availability of Policy

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 this Policy is also published on the school website stpaulssns.com/school/policies.

Ratification by the Board

This policy has been reviewed and updated by the staff of our school and will be available on the school website. The Board of Management reserves the right to amend this policy as needs arise.

Reviewed by staff on: 25/03/25

Signed: A. Kelly
(Principal)

Date: 1/04/25

Signed: Rev. John Ahern
(Chairperson of Board of Management)

Date: 1/4/25

