

POLICY ON THE USE OF MOBILE PHONES AND ELECTRONIC DEVICES

Rationale

The possession and use of mobile phones by school students is now extensive, even in the primary school sector. Use of mobile phones (particularly with the advent of increasingly sophisticated equipment and camera phones) presents a number of problems, including being a distraction to learning, causing discipline problems or a method of bullying, to menace, harass or offend another person. The issue of privacy is also a concern and is related to the ability of many phones to take photographs, make video recordings or record. In order to manage the issue of mobile phones this policy has been reviewed.

Relationship to Our School Ethos

The use of mobile phones and other electronic games contravenes the provision of a safe and secure school environment and is not conducive to learning - a provision which is central to the mission statement and ethos of Ratoath Senior National School.

Aim of Policy

The Board of Management of Ratoath Senior National School is introducing a policy which prohibits the use by students of mobile phones while on school premises or involved in school activities such as tours/trips, extra-curricular activities and sports events in order to create a safer environment and to lessen intrusions on and distractions to children's learning.

School Procedures

The use of mobile phones by children who attend the school is not allowed while the children are in the care of the school staff, while at school or on trips from the school. The children should therefore not bring mobile phones to school or when engaging in school-related activities and therefore the school will not be liable for replacing mobile phones that are stolen, lost or damaged.

Mobile phones which are found in the school should be handed in to the principal.

In the interests of protecting all children, use of cameras/camcorders or any recording device by parents/guardians and/or children/visitors, is strictly prohibited on the school premises or at school related events.

Any photographs or recordings at school events taken by school staff are used for school purposes and parental/guardian written permission is sought in advance of the school event on the School Consent Form.

Ratoath Senior National School does not take responsibility for photographs or recordings of school events that are uploaded onto any/all Social Media Sites.

Inappropriate Conduct and Sanctions

1. Any student whose phone is seen or heard by a staff member on school premises, grounds or on off-site activities e.g. school tours, sport activities, whether or not the phone is switched on, will have their phone confiscated.
 - The phone should be given to the principal by the teacher. The matter will be treated as a Gross Misbehaviour. (Steps 11 and 12 on the Code of Behaviour) The phone may be collected by a parent(s)/guardian from the principal.
 - The parent(s)/guardian who collects the phone from the principal must sign out the phone and agree to enforce the mobile phone policy with the child who owns the phone.

2. Students using mobile phones or similar devices to bully, harass or take pictures of other children, staff members or others will face disciplinary actions. If it is clear that these offences have taken place then the parent(s)/guardian of the offending child will be requested to come to the school to discuss the matter.
3. If a child uses a phone or similar device to take pictures of or record a member of staff without the staff member's permission the parent(s)/guardian of the offending child will be requested to come to the school to discuss the matter. The phone will not be returned to the child until the images and/or recordings have been deleted to the satisfaction of the principal.
4. The use of mobile phones or other electronic devices by parents/guardians to take photographs of children, other than their own children, while on school premises is strictly prohibited.

It should be noted that it is a criminal offence to use a mobile phone to menace, harass or offend another person. As such, if action as sanctioned by the principal is deemed ineffective, the school may consider it appropriate to involve the Gardaí. Hence, students with mobile phones must not engage in personal attacks, harass another person, or post private information about another person, via SMS messages/chat rooms/social network sites, taking/sending/uploading photos, phone calls. Circulating objectionable images will also be treated as a gross disciplinary issue. Infringements under section 2 and 3 above may result in the matter being referred to the Gardaí. In such case the parents/guardian will be informed.

Responsibility

It is the responsibility of parents/guardians, staff and children to adhere to this policy. Any student who is feeling unwell at school and needs to go home, or who needs to contact their parents for any reason must arrange this through the secretary in the office. Parent(s)/guardians seeking to pass a message onto their child can do so through the secretary in the office.

Teachers and staff members who accompany children on school outings and to sports events will have a school mobile phone with them. Parents can be contacted using this mobile phone. Children who are involved in after school sports activities will be able to use the school mobile phone to contact their parents/guardians.

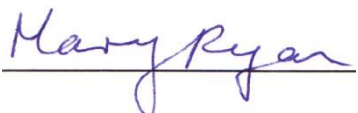

Evaluation

This policy is monitored on an ongoing basis and amendments added as new technology comes on stream or as necessary.

Implementation

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management of Ratoath Senior National School in May 2012.

This policy has been made available to school personnel, published on the school website and has been provided to the Parents' Association.

Signed:		
	Chairperson of Board of Management	Principal
Date:	24 th June 2016	24 th June 2016

Date of next review: October 2017