

## ***Updated Mobile Phone / Electronic Games Policy 2024***

### **Introductory Statement**

This policy was reviewed by the Board of Management and school staff in response to technological advances which have seen a significant increase in handheld electronic 'gadgets' amongst the school population over recent years.

### **Rationale**

- Mobile phones are valuable items and might render a pupil vulnerable to theft of damage.
- Mobile phones could have implications with regard to discipline and potential bullying.
- Use of phones with integrated cameras could lead to child protection and/or data protection issues with regard to inappropriate capture, use or distribution of images.
- iPods, mobile phones, Game Boys, PSP's, MP3's etc are intrusive and distracting in a school environment.
- Some electronic devices may be harmful due to frequent use.
- Strategies must be put in place to reduce the intrusiveness of unauthorised technology in a school situation.

### **Relationship to School Ethos**

The use of mobile phones and other electronic games contravenes the provision of a safe and secure school environment conducive to learning, a provision which is central to the mission statement and ethos of St Anthony's School.

### **Aim**

**It is the Board's policy to lessen intrusions on and distractions to children's learning, and prohibit the unauthorised use by pupils of mobile phones while on school premises, grounds or off site activities e.g. school swimming, as follows...**

### **Guidelines for Children**

The Board discourages and asks all parents to discourage pupils from bringing mobile devices to school on the above grounds. When a pupil does bring a device to school the following rules apply:

1. Children are not allowed the unauthorised use of mobile phones/electronic games/devices during school hours.
2. Pupils who do carry phones must have prior parent/school agreement and must also turn them off and keep them in their school bag and **not** on their person during the school day.
3. Phones must be clearly labelled or marked with a child's name.
4. The school will not be liable for the replacement of lost, stolen or damaged devices.
5. Pupils may choose to hand in their phones at reception in the morning where they will be held securely until the school day is over.
6. Children who need to contact home during school hours may do so through the school secretary using the school landline phone.
7. **When on a school outing or activity out of the school building children are not allowed to carry their phone/device.**
8. The school cannot take responsibility for pupils communicating with each other outside of school time i.e. before 9.20am and after 3.00pm during school days and during weekends or holiday periods .
9. The Acceptable Use Policy, Anti-bullying Policy, Anti-cyberbullying Policy and Code of Behaviour also link with this Mobile Phone Policy as regards procedures and sanctions to be followed in the case of cyber-bullying, illegal downloads and/or other breaches of policy.
10. If a pupil is found taking photographs or video footage with a mobile device of either other pupils or staff or sharing inappropriate messages this will be regarded as a serious offence and disciplinary action will be taken according to school policy.
11. If images of other pupils or staff have been taken, the device will not be returned to the pupil until the images have been removed in the presence of a member of staff.

### Guidelines for staff

1. During teaching time, while on playground duty and during meetings, mobile phones will be switched off or put on 'silent' or 'discrete' mode.
2. Personal calls are normally confined to staff's own break times. In cases of emergency staff are expected to use discretion in relation to calls.
3. In very exceptional circumstances, the staff may, with the permission of the principal, have their phones on for a period.
4. Mobile phones or devices may be used by teachers as an educational resource in school. Teachers would monitor such usage rigorously. Staff are reminded to use school devices to record children's work and to delete the same when printed or recorded on pupil file/folder.
5. Classroom supervision is usually organised if a class teacher has to contact other professionals or outside agencies in relation to a particular child.

6. Staff are reminded to be careful when using their personal mobile phones to contact parents. Staff has access to the school landline if calls need to be made to parents. On activities away from school staff may have to use their phone to contact the school who will then contact parents as required. Staff should not give out their personal phone number to pupils.

### Parents and Visitors:

- We request that parents not use mobile phones in the school building or grounds.
- We respectfully ask that mobile devices are not used to take photographs or record video in the school building or grounds.

### Roles and Responsibilities


All staff share in the coordination and implementation of this policy.

### Evaluation

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

### Implementation

This policy has been in place since 2003 and has been reviewed in September 2024, It was agreed and ratified by the Board of Management at a meeting on 23/09/2024.

Signed:   
Chairperson of BOM

Date: 23/09/2024.