



St. Patrick's Cathedral Grammar School

Mobile Phone Policy September 2023

This mobile phone policy seeks to address the growing threat to the wellbeing of students, teachers and all in the school community from inappropriate use of mobile phone technology. It is impossible to control the circulation of any type of material once it has entered the domain of social media and the potential harm cannot be undone.

Mobile phone technology is increasingly being used as an educational tool. Such use is only permitted with the **express permission** and under the **direct supervision** of a member of staff. Such use will be for educational purposes only. Where possible, alternative school provided devices should be used instead of mobile phones. Any use of a mobile phone other than that specified by a teacher in this context will be considered to be a breach of these regulations. Students should be regularly reminded about the strict conditions of use in this context.

In general, photographs, videos and other recordings must never be made without the **express permission** of those concerned and their parents/guardians. Parents are asked to sign consent forms to allow photographs and video recordings to be used for specified purposes such as the school magazine and school website.

Except in the limited circumstances outlined above all students are expected to power off their mobile phones on arrival to school and may not switch them on until they leave the school at the end of the day. Students must keep their phones powered off during lunch and breaks, while on the school premises and while in the vicinity of the school during school hours. The vicinity of the school includes St. Patrick's Park and the sections of St. Patrick's Close, Kevin Street and Patrick Street which surround the school. The rule extends to break times and to when students are in the vicinity of the school because the potential threats are just as significant there as they are on the school premises. The rules extend to all normal school activities and trips. Separate arrangements may be made for overnight trips or for travel abroad.

Students who need to contact their parents/guardians during normal school hours should do so through the school office. In **exceptional circumstances**, students may ask for permission to use their own phones.

Other than in the ***exceptional circumstances*** outlined above, mobile phones should not be seen and should not be switched on. If these simple rules are not adhered to, the following sanctions will apply:

The phone will be confiscated and returned at the end of the next school day. For confiscations that occur on days preceding weekends or holidays, the phone will be returned at the end of that day but must be handed in again for the full duration of the next school day. Confiscated phones will be held in the school office and parents will be informed by text message.

If, having been informed that their phone is being confiscated, a student objects or in any way delays handing over the phone it will be confiscated for an additional day.

Any misuse of mobile phone technology will be treated as a serious breach of the code of conduct and will, in addition to the above sanctions, be dealt with in accordance with the code. In certain situations, particularly where material is shared through the internet or other forms of social media even a single incident of misuse may be deemed as cyber-bullying and, in addition to the implementation of school sanctions, may be reported to the Gardaí.

In summary, unless instructed otherwise, phones should always be OFF and always be OUT OF SIGHT in St. Patrick's Cathedral Grammar School.