



St. Peter's National School Phone Policy and electronic devices policy for Staff/Ancillary staff and students

This policy was originally adopted in September 2022.

Mindful of the duties and responsibilities assigned to staff in working with children, it is vital that staff be engaged with children at all working times. In this context, **access to phones for staff should be limited to urgency only.**

Work Calls

- Calls to parents/guardians should be kept as short as possible. Where a lengthy conversation with parents/guardians is required, appointments should be made to meet parents.
- Calls to other professionals and organisations should be made in consultation with the Principal and classroom supervision will be arranged where appropriate.

Personal Calls

- In general, personal calls should be carried out during break times.
- In cases of urgency, a staff member should use discretion in making calls.
- Incoming personal calls should be reserved for urgent matters.
- Staff have access to the school landline if urgent calls need to be made to parents.
- Classroom supervision must be organised if a class teacher has to make an urgent call.

Mobile Phones

- Mobile phones may be turned on during break times.
- In case of urgency, staff should use discretion in making calls.
- Texting should follow the rules in relation to calls.

Children's Phones and electronic devices

Rationale:

- Mobile phones and electronic/recording devices are intrusive and distracting in a school environment
- Strategies must be put in place to reduce the intrusiveness of unauthorised technology in a school situation
- Some electronic devices may be harmful due to frequent use
- Mobile phones may be used to conduct bullying campaigns

Relationship to 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 St. Peter's National School.



Aims:

- To ensure a “free from mobile phone and electronic/recording device usage” school environment
- To lessen intrusions on and distractions to children’s learning.

General considerations:

- **Pupils’ use of Mobile phones and all other electronic/recording devices is strictly prohibited in the school** (including ceremonies taking place during school hours e.g. Communion/Confirmation and Graduation ceremonies) while on school tours/outings and/or attending any other school organised event outside the school grounds e.g. swimming lessons, orchestra trips etc.
- Mobile phones may not be used to take videos, photographs or to record another pupil or member of staff. Using a device in this way without someone’s permission can seriously infringe on a person’s rights. To misuse a phone in this way is deemed a serious breach of the Code of Behaviour and may result in sanctions up to and including suspension.
- In accordance with child protection procedures, parents who accompany a class on an outing or school tour are not permitted to take photographs or recordings using phones or other electronic devices.
- Pupils are not permitted to wear smart watches in school.
- All pupils’ mobile phones/electronic devices must be switched off prior to entering the school grounds. They may be switched on again after exiting the school grounds. **Failure to comply with this guideline is a serious breach of our Code of Behaviour and sanctions outlined in this policy will be applied.**
- If a child leaves their mobile phone switched on by accident and phones beep/ring during class/lunch/break, phones will be confiscated and kept in the school office to be collected by the parent of the child in question.
- If a child turns on their phone on purpose and uses it or checks it either in class or at break times they will **lose their privilege of having their phone in school permanently.** The phone will be confiscated and the situation will be explained to the parent/guardian when they come to collect the phone.
- If a teacher or staff member has a suspicion that a mobile phone has unsuitable material stored on it, the pupil will be asked to hand over the phone to the teacher or the school principal. The child’s parents will be contacted and will have to collect the phone from the school.
- Where there is evidence that the material on the phone may provide evidence relating to a criminal offence, the phone will be handed over to the Gardaí for further investigation and the parents will be informed.
- The school accepts no responsibility for replacing lost, stolen or damaged mobile phones.
- Mobile phones which are found in the school without a name must be handed to a member of staff immediately.
- Pupils who take unauthorised photos or recordings of other students or staff members will face disciplinary actions as per the school’s Code of Behaviour.
- 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 school in this regard is ineffective, as with all incidents, the school may consider it necessary to involve the Gardaí.

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Roles and Responsibilities:

All staff members share in the co-ordination 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 was reviewed and ratified by the BOM of St. Peter's N.S. on the 20th of June 2023.