

Mobile Phone and Electronic Devices Policy

Introductory Statement:

This policy was drawn up in response to technological advances, which have seen a significant increase in hand held electronic 'gadgets' amongst the school population over recent years. The purpose of this policy is to endeavour to provide a caring, safe and supportive environment showing respect to the whole school community, knowing that there are structures in place that will help.

Courtnacuddy N.S. aims to protect the wellbeing of our students as referred to in our mission statement:

Courtnacuddy N.S. is a Catholic School which welcomes all nationalities and religions. The school celebrates the uniqueness of each child and aims to develop him/her spiritually, morally, cognitively, emotionally, socially and physically. We want our students to develop into healthy, confident mature adults.

Rationale:

- iPods, mobile phones, Game Boys, PSPs, MP3 Players, etc. 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 with frequent use.
- Mobile phones and other electronic devices 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 Courtnacuddy N.S.

Aims:

- To lessen intrusions on and distractions to children's learning
- To maintain a safe learning environment

Internal School Procedures:

The following are the guidelines for mobile phone/electronic devices usage in the school:

Children are not allowed to use mobile phones/electronic devices during school hours. There is no need. The school phone is available for all urgent calls that need to be made.

In exceptional circumstances, such as when out of school activities and after school games are scheduled, school tours etc. children may be allowed carry a phone as parents may need to be contacted. Phones must be switched off. The teacher's permission is necessary before a phone may be switched on. This is to prevent misuse such as taking photos or swapping unsuitable digital material.

Where a pupil brings a mobile phone to school, the phone must be kept out of sight in his/her schoolbag, switched off during the school day and may not be used, for any purpose, on school premises, grounds or during off-site school activities (such as school swimming lessons, tours or sports activities).

Pupils who ignore this policy and use or handle a mobile on school premises without permission will be required to hand over their phone to the principal and a parent/guardian must come and collect it.

If a teacher has any suspicion that a mobile phone has unsuitable material stored on it, pupils will be required to hand over the phone to a teacher and parents will be asked to collect it from the school. 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 for further investigation. Parents will be informed in such circumstances.

The school will incorporate this policy in the school's discipline policy and will treat breaches as they would treat any other breach of school discipline.

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 accepts no responsibility for pupils who lose or have their mobile phones stolen while travelling to and from school.

Pupils using mobile phones to bully other pupils or send offensive messages/calls will face disciplinary actions as per the School Code of Behaviour.

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 School in this regard is deemed

ineffective, as with all such incidents, the school may consider it appropriate to involve the Gardaí.

The school accepts no responsibility for pupils who, by their actions, cause a phone/electronic device to be confiscated.

Pupils should mark their mobile phone clearly with their name.

Mobile phones/ electronic devices which are found in the school and whose owner cannot be located should be handed to a member of staff.

It is strongly advised that pupils use passwords/pin numbers to ensure that unauthorised phone calls cannot be made on their phones (e.g. by other pupils, or if stolen). Pupils must keep their password/pin numbers confidential. Mobile phone and/or passwords should not be shared.

If a pupil needs to contact home, or vice versa, in exceptional circumstances during the course of the school day the school phone is available to them.

Additional Points

- Children who need to contact home during school hours may do so through the school secretary using the school landline phone
- All electronic gadgets are banned, even during after-school activities
- Any pupil who brings a mobile phone or electronic device to school in contravention of the rules risks having it confiscated and not returned until collected by the pupil's parent.

Ratified by Board of Management on the 13/3/18

Signed _____ Chairperson Board of Management

_____ Principal