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Mobile Phone Policy

Date Ratified: 28th May 2024

Mobile Phones/Devices Procedures

Aim

This procedural policy aims to ensure that teaching and learning can take place without interruption from mobile phones and devices and that students and staff are protected from potential harassment or bullying.

The procedural policy extends to all students in Coláiste Mhuire Johnstown, and links with our Code of Behaviour and Acceptable Use Policies.

The policy encompasses mobile phones and all other electronic devices capable of making or receiving calls or connecting to social media.

Procedure

The following outlines the procedures relating to this mobile phone/device policy:

1. At Coláiste Mhuire, mobile phones are not permitted to be used by 1st or 2nd-year students. Exceptions to this rule are extremely rare and require prior approval from school management. When permission is granted, mobile phone use must be strictly supervised and guided by a staff member.
2. All other year groups are allowed their mobile phones, but it must be switched off or locked in the student's own locker, or out of sight always.
3. Phones must be switched off in class and can only be used with the permission and under supervision of the teacher.
4. If a student must leave the class e.g. toilet break, they must leave their phone on the teacher's desk when getting a note in their diary.
5. Students are not permitted to contact home during school time and must go through their year head, management or the front office if required.
6. Accessing social media or apps is prohibited during school hours and on school property.

7. To assist the school in implementing these procedures, parents/guardians are asked not to contact students by mobile phone at any time during the school

day. In the event of an emergency, contact may be made through the office at 056 88 31135.

8. Students who need to contact home urgently, should request permission to contact home from the school phone via Year head /Deputy Principal/Principal. They may also use the designated restricted area outside the principal's office, but this should only happen on rare occasions.
9. No photographs may be taken, or recordings made while on the school premises or during school related activities with a mobile phone/digital device. Using mobile phones/digital devices in such a way without permission is a serious infringement on the rights of others and is considered a major offence in our school's Code of Behaviour.
10. Any student who records or takes an image of any school or class-based activity without permission will be deemed to have violated the school Code of Behaviour and Acceptable Use/ICT Policy and are subject to the sanctions that apply when these policies are violated.
11. Should a student record another student, or should a student arrange another student to record them, this is also deemed as a violation of the Code of Behaviour and Acceptable use Policy.
12. Students are permitted to bring a mobile phone with them on school activities or day trips for the sole purposes of parental contact, if necessary or educational uses, as directed by the supervising teacher. Phones must still not be visible and cannot be use without the express permission from the supervising teacher. [Our acceptable use policy applies to all trips].
13. Should a student violate the Code of Behaviour, Mobile Phone & Acceptable Use/ICT Policy by taking a recording or an image and then share this image with another person they will be subject to serious sanctions which can include immediate suspension.
14. Any student who receives a school-based video or image and then go on to further share this image to any other person will be deemed to be violating the school Code of Behaviour. The sharing of and further sharing of any images or material is a serious offence and will be subject to serious sanctions which can include immediate suspension.

15. Where the school is made aware of an incident where students use mobile phones/digital devices to bully others or to send offensive messages or calls, this will be investigated under our Anti-Bullying Policy and will also be dealt with under the Code of Behaviour. **It should be noted that it is a criminal offence to use a mobile phone/digital device to menace, harass or offend another person.** As such, the school may consider it appropriate to involve outside agencies or the Gardaí in such incidents.
16. The school is not responsible for inappropriate use of the phone outside of school time and this responsibility lies firmly with the parent/guardian. In the event of such an activity occurring and causing interference with the daily running of the school parents will be contacted. The school may consider it appropriate to involve outside agencies or the Gardaí in such incidents.
17. The school accepts no responsibility for replacing lost, stolen or damaged mobile phones/digital devices. The safety and security of these items is wholly a matter for students and their parents/guardians.

It is strongly advised that students mark their mobile phones/digital devices with their names and use passwords to ensure that unauthorised phone calls cannot be made on their phones.

18. A student who is found using a mobile phone/digital device outside of the stated times, or who contravenes this policy in any way, will have his/her mobile phone/digital device and its SIM card confiscated

As Coláiste Mhuire is a Digital School, implementing the use of digital strategies to further the Teaching and Learning occurring across the classroom setting, the following exceptions to the mobile phone/devise procedures policy may exist when:

Students are instructed by their classroom-based teachers to bring a mobile phone/device to participate in a digital learning assessment, use of a digital learning strategy or photograph a piece of work or project. The instruction around this will be given by classroom-based teachers, and students are permitted to only have their phone visible for that set class period, outside of that specified time the non-visible mobile phone rules apply.

Parent/Guardian Responsibilities

- To assist the school in implementing mobile phone procedures, parents/guardians are asked not to contact students by mobile phone at any time during the school day. In the event of an emergency, contact may be made through the office at 056 88 31135.
- It is advised that parents have parental restrictions on their child's device and limit their access to apps or sites.
- To monitor the use of mobile phones and the internet in the home
- To monitor activities that may be preventing engagement in schoolwork, e.g., overuse of digital devices etc.
- To sign and adhere to the school Code of Behaviour & Mobile Phone/Device procedural policy.
- We advise parents/guardians to attend online or in school talks which the school will promote with regards to internet safety and use of electronic devices.

Student Responsibilities

- To understand that music devices such as MP3 Player, or IPod, smart watch etc., cannot be at any time on the school premises. These shall be confiscated as digital devices and confiscated as outlined in the Code of Behaviour. Failure to hand up mobile phones and digital devices when requested/ inappropriate use of a mobile phone/digital device is a major offence.

- To understand that having a digital device (including mobile phone) visible on the school premises or switched on during any time may be confiscated.
- To understand that having a digital device (including a mobile phone) on a school activity or day trip is solely for the purposes of parental contact, if necessary or educational use. Students can use such devices only when directed by the supervising teacher to do so. Phones must still not be visible and cannot be used without the express permission from the supervising teacher. [Our acceptable use policy applies to all trips].
- To understand that a digital device (including a mobile phone) can only be brought to class to participate in a digital learning assessment, a digital learning strategy or photograph a piece of work or project when explicit permission to do so is given by their classroom-based teacher. The instruction around this

will be given by classroom- based teachers, and students are permitted to only have their phone visible for that set class period, outside of that specified time the non-visible mobile phone rules apply.

- To understand that any digital device (including mobile phone) will be confiscated.
- Attend online or in school talks which the school will promote with regards to internet safety and use of electronic devices.
- If a student refuses to hand over their phone the student will be dealt with by management and parents will be contacted.

Sanctions for Mobile Phone Misuse:

First Offence 1st & 2nd years:
1. Confiscation: Phone is confiscated and stored securely in the principal's/deputy principal's office.
2. Parental Notification: Parents/guardians are informed about the incident by text.
3. Reminder of school procedures by Principal, deputy principal or year head.
4. Parents contact school to make an appointment to collect the phone, no later than 4:30pm.

Second Offence 1st & 2nd years:
1. Confiscation: Phone is confiscated and stored securely in the principal's/deputy principal's office.
2. Parental Notification: Parents/guardians are informed about the incident by text.
3. Friday detention
4. Parents contact school to make an appointment to collect the phone, no later than 4:30pm.

First Offence 3rd-6th year:
1. Confiscation: Phone is confiscated and stored securely in the principal's/deputy principal's office.
2. Parental Notification: Parents/guardians are informed about the incident by text.
3. Reminder of school procedures by Principal, deputy principal or year head.
4. The phone will be returned to the student at the end of the school day.

Second Offence:
1. Confiscation: Phone is confiscated and stored securely in the principal's/deputy principal's office.
2. Parental Notification: Parents/guardians are informed about the incident by text.

3. Friday detention.
4. The phone will be returned to the student at the end of the school day.

Subsequent Offences:
1. Confiscation: Phone is confiscated and stored securely in the principal's/deputy principal's office.
2. Parental Notification: Parents/guardians are informed about the incident by text.
3. Friday detention.
4. Parents contact school to make an appointment to collect the phone, no later than 4:30pm.

Sanctions for Serious Breaches for All Students 1st-6th Year

This includes and is not limited to:

- Taking Inappropriate photos/videos
- Sharing inappropriate photos/videos
    - **(Also read the section below regarding the Improper use of the camera feature on mobile phones/devices)**
- Cyberbullying
- Cheating during exams
- Inappropriate use of AI
- Unauthorised recording
- Accessing or sharing explicit content
- Using phones to organise disruptive/illegal activities.

First Serious Offence:
1.Immediate Confiscation: Phone is confiscated immediately and retained pending investigation.
2. Parental Notification: Immediate notification of parents/guardians.
3. Formal Warning: Warning issued to the student and recorded in their file.
4. Detention or Suspension: Depending on the severity, a significant detention or a short-term suspension (1-5 days) is enforced.
5. Restorative Session: Student must attend a restorative session to understand the gravity of their actions and the impact on others.

Second Serious Offence:

1. Extended Confiscation: Phone is confiscated for a significant period (e.g., remainder of the term).
2. Parental Meeting:
   - Mandatory meeting with parents/guardians to discuss repeated serious breaches. The phone will be returned to the parent/guardian if they request but the student will not be allowed to bring the phone into school for the remainder of the year.
   - If this is the case and the student is caught using the phone again.
     - for a minor breach, they will again receive a 1-5day suspension.
     - If it is for another serious breach the matter will be brought to the Board of Management following investigation and the sanction will include further suspension or expulsion.

Legal Action:

In cases where laws are broken (e.g., distribution of explicit images), the school may have to seek legal advice.

Improper use of the camera feature on mobile phones/devices

- Violations of this policy in CMJ may have disciplinary repercussions including but not limited to Recording of violation(s) on the School Referral System
- Any student who records or takes an image of any school or class-based activity without permission will be deemed to have violated the school Code of Behaviour and Acceptable Use/ICT policy and are subject to the sanctions that apply when these policies are violated.
  - First offence 1-5day suspension for recording a class or school activity without permission. If they record a teacher during this class/activity, they will receive a 1-5day suspension. If they post this on social media or share with another student, they will receive a 1-5day suspension. In all cases parents will be contacted.
  - If a student takes a picture or a video of another student, they will be suspended for 1-5day. If they post this on social media or share with another student without their approval, they will receive a 1-5day suspension.
  - If any pictures or videos taken are of a serious nature, placing the teacher/s, students, or school reputation at risk the student will be suspended whilst an investigation takes place. This serious breach of policy will be brought to the Board of Management and if necessary, reported to the Gardaí. This also applies if they send or share this picture/recording with others or put on social media.
  - If a student receives a picture or recording from another student and resends it on, they will receive a 1-5day suspension. If the picture/recording is of a serious nature placing the teachers, students, or school reputation at risk they will be suspended whilst an

investigation takes place. This serious breach of policy will be brought to the Board of Management and if necessary, reported to the Gardaí.

- Should a student arrange another student to record them this is also deemed as a violation of the Code of Behaviour and Acceptable Use policy.
- Should a student violate the Code of Behaviour, Mobile Phone & Acceptable Use Policy by taking a recording or an image and then share this image with another person they will be subject to serious sanctions which can include immediate suspension.
- Any student who receives a school-based video or image and then goes on to further share this image to any other person will be deemed to be violating the school Code of Behaviour. The sharing of and further sharing of any images or materials is a serious offence and will be subject to serious sanctions which can include immediate suspension.
- Should a student fail to adhere to this mobile phone/device procedural policy the phone will be confiscated: