



St Kieran's College

Policy on Use of Mobile Phones/Smart Devices

Mission

St Kieran's College, as Ireland's oldest all-boys Catholic Secondary School, continues its founding aim of the pursuit of real excellence in education and formation, in the light of the Gospel, so as to allow all our students to realise the fullness of their potential.

Our mission is to provide an atmosphere of Christian care and concern in which the student can grow to maturity. Academically, spiritually, physically and emotionally our students are encouraged to strive for all that is possible in the relentless pursuit of perfecting their individual gifts and talents. In so doing they bring to life the joy intended by our motto, "Hiems Transiit", for themselves, those they love and the community where they will live, serve and lead.

Context

The Board of Management of St Kieran's College recognises the request by the Minister for Education to consult with our school community regarding the use of mobile phones/smart devices with a view to developing a whole-school policy for their use. This policy should complement the use of technology in the classroom for teaching and should be developed in an open and inclusive way involving all members of the school community including teachers, students and parents.

The Digital Strategy for Schools 2015-2020 has the following vision:

"Realise the potential of digital technologies to enhance teaching, learning and assessment so that Ireland's young people become engaged thinkers, active learners, knowledge constructors and global citizens to participate fully in society and the economy."

Research shows that digital technologies can play a positive role in supporting high quality teaching, learning and assessment. These technologies help promote student engagement and enhance the teaching and learning experience by opening new opportunities for learning, promoting independent learning and providing access to quality online resources. However, their use needs careful consideration and management if they are to have a positive educational impact.

St Kieran's College recognises that the use of tablet devices and smart phones is now an integral part of the lives of children and young people. While this is a positive development, concerns have been identified including some risks associated with the misuse, abuse and possible overuse of these devices and the various associated technologies.

Children and young people need to be guided and supported to become good digital citizens. In a school setting, using digital technologies mediated by the teacher with the skills to exploit the potential of the technologies can be invaluable in equipping children with the skills to navigate the online world safely.

To further this vision, the school envisages the development of a community wherein-

- A shared approach exists, regarding the appropriate use of digital technologies in the school.
- Students and staff are valued and their talents and abilities recognised and developed to prepare for changes in society.
- Each person recognises his/her own responsibility in implementing agreed standards of conduct.
- Good communication is maintained between all members of the school community.
- All staff members, pupils and parents share in the co-ordination and implementation of this policy.

Relevant Policies

This Policy on use of Mobile Phones and Smart Devices should be read in conjunction with the school's Code of Behaviour (in particular Section 13), Anti-Bullying Policy, Internet Acceptable Use Policy, ICT/eLearning Policy and Wellbeing Statement.

Objectives

Through implementation of this Policy St Kieran's College expects:

- To foster an appreciation of learning among students in the appropriate use of Mobile phones/Smart devices.
- To encourage general wellbeing amongst all of the school community.
- To positively encourage social interaction and communication.
- To protect the personal dignity and rights of our students.
- To develop a safe and nurturing environment for all our whole school community.

Communication with Parents/Guardians

- In order to assist the school in implementing this policy, parents/guardians are asked not to contact students by mobile phone at any time during the school day.
- In the case of family emergencies parents can contact a student at any time during the school day by ringing the School Office on 056 77 61707 (Code of Behaviour 13.7).
- In the event of an emergency e.g. illness, a student may use his mobile phone with the permission of a member of staff (Code of Behaviour 13.3)
- Ordinarily, a student who wishes to go home for any reason during the school day, must arrange to do so through the Deputy Principal's Office/School Office and not independently by mobile phone.
- All students are required to seek permission from their Year Head prior to departing the school building.
- A call may be placed home via the Deputy Principal's Office/School Office and the student may then sign out at the Deputy Principal's Office.
- This ensures that correct procedures are observed and all relevant parties are informed of the student's departure.
- Responsibility cannot be taken by the school authorities for students who arrange independently to go home without following proper procedure. Any such arrangement is a breach of the Code of Behaviour for Students and may incur sanctions.

Appropriate Use of Mobile Phones/Smart Devices

- Teachers may require the appropriate use of mobile phones in pursuit of learning in their classrooms or in a designated supervised area where class activities are taking place. In such circumstances, students must only switch on/off their mobile phone / smart device in the designated classroom/ learning area when instructed by the teacher.
- No photographs or recording either video or audio can be made on the phone on the school premises without the school's permission. Using phones in such a way can seriously infringe on people's privacy and rights (Code of Behaviour 13).
- The school accepts no responsibility for lost, stolen or damaged mobile phones/smart devices or any other electronic equipment. The safety and security of mobile phones/smart devices is wholly a matter for students/ parents.

Restriction on Use of Mobile Phones/Smart Devices

- If students bring a mobile phone/smart device to school, it must be switched off during the school day (including break times) and stored in their locked locker, unless otherwise directed by teachers.
- Senior students (Fifth Years and Sixth Years) may have access to their mobile phone/smart device only when they are off the school campus during the one hour lunch break from 1-2pm. This arrangement will be reviewed if necessary.
- For non-classroom based activities, (e.g. Evening Study, School related activities and programmes, Extra-Curricular Activities, School Trips and Tours etc.) students may be permitted to access their mobile phone/smart device. In such cases students must adhere to the guidance given by the relevant teacher/supervisor in charge of the activity.
- For the purposes of this policy, all examinations, guest speakers etc. will be treated as per the normal school day and therefore mobile phone/smart devices must be switched off and stored in their locked locker, unless otherwise directed by teachers.

Sanctions for Breaches of Policy on Use of Mobile Phones/Smart Device

- A student in breach of this Policy may receive a verbal warning and/or have their phone/smart device confiscated by a teacher.
- In the case of a mobile phone/smart device being confiscated, the teacher should ensure that the student has the capacity to contact home if necessary. The teacher should then give the phone/smart device to the Deputy Principal with a report and details.
- Refusal to hand over a phone/smart device is a serious offence. The student's mobile phone/smart device will be confiscated immediately and stored in a safe place in the Deputy Principal's office. In such instances, the relevant device can be detained for a period of up to seven days in order to ensure that school authorities are satisfied with the student's cooperation and compliance.
- In certain instances, parents/guardians may be required to collect the mobile phone/smart device from the school.
- For subsequent offences, further sanctions may be incurred. Repeated offences will be treated with greater severity.
- Any sanctions relating to mobile phones/smart devices will be examined on a case by case basis.

*This Policy will be reviewed by the Board of Management
on an ongoing basis.*