



St Kieran's College
Secondary School
Kilkenny

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 that schools are required to implement a policy to restrict the use of and access to, personal mobile phones by students in all recognised schools for the duration of the school day.

Schools play a vital role in promoting wellbeing and mental health by equipping children and young people with the knowledge, skills, and competencies to deal with the challenges that may impact on their wellbeing.

It is recognised that technology is ever evolving and increasingly part of everyday life. However, excessive mobile phone use, and screentime generally, can have a detrimental impact on students' concentration and academic performance. Ensuring that students are not using their mobile phone for personal use during the school day can help to address these issues and foster an environment more conducive to learning, as well as supporting in-person engagement with their peers.

The policy to restrict the use of phones by students during the school day, outside of limited exceptions, will enable schools to provide a phone-free environment, to support students' wellbeing, concentration, academic performance, and development. It will provide a space for children and young people to disconnect from their online world and can assist in supporting them to become less dependent on their mobile phones.

Research including the UNESCO Global Education Monitoring Report "Technology in Education a tool on whose terms", and the Norwegian Screen Use Committee Report on the impact of the use of mobile 3 phones during the school day on wellbeing and academic performance, will continue to inform department policy and resources in this area.

Relevant Policies

This Policy on use of Mobile Phones and Smart Devices Policy should be read in conjunction with the school's Code of Behaviour, Bí Cineálta Policy, Acceptable Use Policy, Data Protection Policy, Child Protection Policies, ICT/eLearning Policy and Wellbeing Statement.

Objectives

This policy is intended to support schools, in:

- improving the learning environment in schools by reducing distraction
- reducing the risk of cyberbullying and access to inappropriate content during school hours
- increasing traditional social interactions between students at school break times.

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 7761707 (Code of Behaviour 13.7).
- In the event of an emergency e.g. illness, a student can contact any staff member regarding the emergency.
- A student who wishes to go home for any reason during the school day, must arrange to do so through the Year Head/Deputy Principal's Office/School Office only.
- 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 School 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.

Restriction on Use of Mobile Phones/Smart Devices

- The use of mobile phones during the school day is prohibited.
- 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.

- If a student has an issue with their locker, their mobile phone/smart device can be temporarily stored in the school office.
- Teachers will use Chrome books in lessons where technology/devices are required.
- Senior students (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.

Possible exemptions that may apply

Exemptions will only apply for medical, wellbeing or specific practical reasons, or for reasons related to pupils' special educational needs. The exemptions should allow pupils to access their phones for the specific reason outlined in the exemption, and not for general use. The examples below are not exhaustive and consideration will be needed on a case-by-case basis. Some possible issues where exemptions are justified may include but are not limited to:

- Diabetes blood glucose monitor and/or insulin delivery mechanism
- Blood pressure monitoring
- Seizure conditions where monitoring via a mobile phone app is needed.
- Mental health conditions.
- Additional/special educational needs, for specific tasks relating to a student's visual impairment, hearing impairment, speech and language impairments.
- Access by an English as a Second Language (EAL) pupil to specific applications to support language.

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 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.