

# CBS Roscommon Mobile Phone Policy



## **Rationale**

CBS Roscommon recognises that mobile phones and digital devices are now an integral part of young peoples' culture and way of life and can have considerable value, particularly in relation to individual safety.

It is recognised that such technology will play an increasing part in future learning practices, but, like existing ICT use, this should follow agreed rules and guidelines to prevent disruption and instil good learning habits.

The school therefore accepts that pupils are permitted to bring mobile phones and digital devices to school but that their use is subject to the following guidelines.

The school aims to educate pupils in the responsible use of technology. Note: The term 'phone' in this policy denotes mobile phones, iPods, MP3, MP4 players, smart watches and any similar portable electronic devices.

Mobile phones do present several problems:

They are valuable items that can be stolen

Their use can render pupils subject to potential bullying or inappropriate contacts

They can disrupt the learning environment

Camera functions can lead to child protection and data protection issues about inappropriate capture, use or distribution of images

## **RESPONSIBLE USE**

Students are required to use phones and devices responsibly at all times.

1. Students must ensure that files stored on their phones do not contain violent, degrading, or offensive images. The transmission of some images/information can be a criminal offence and will be dealt with as such by the school.

2. Cyber-bullying is completely unacceptable, and will be followed up by the school as serious misbehaviour which the school, in turn, will invoke the necessary sanctions as laid out in the school's code of conduct.

3. CBS Roscommon aims to provide effective teaching and learning in a safe and caring atmosphere. Phones can disrupt effective teaching and learning, even when in silent mode, and irresponsible use can lead to child protection and data protection being compromised. CBS Roscommon expects that phones will be switched off and kept in bags during the school day, including break-time and lunchtime, to avoid disrupting teaching and learning and a breach of data and child protection.

4. Good habits in digital usage are outlined in the notes of information attached to this policy.

## **RULES**

Responsibility for the phone rests with the student and the school accept no financial responsibility for damage, loss, or theft.

Students must not use phones at all during the school day and applies to the entire school campus which includes the school buildings, environs and all school related activities that occur on-site and off-site in the name of the school.

This means that phones must not be used for:

making calls,

checking the time,

texting, MMS WhatsApp, Snapchat, Airdrop, Instagram or any similiar messaging platform used as a calculator,

Mobile phones/headphones etc must not be visible at all during the school day. Equipment must be switched off and stored in the students' bag.

In certain classes as pre-arranged by the class teacher, specific teaching and learning or research activities may require access to a personal mobile device. Such access and usage will take place under the clear, focused guidance and supervision of the teacher with defined learning intentions and once that activity is completed students will be requested and required to turn their mobile devices off and stow them safely in their bags or on the front corner of their desk depending on the class activity. Such access is limited to that specific activity

Headphones must not be worn during or between lessons, for reasons of safety and courtesy

Pupils must not use phones to broadcast music or transfer inappropriate material during the school day.

No device should be used in the school to photograph or video students or staff without the authority of the Principal. In the case of a student, a Parent/Guardian must have given permission for such photographs/videos to be taken of their son/daughter. (Convent Students)

If there is an emergency which requires communication with home, pupils must speak to a member of staff who will deal with the matter.

In an emergency parents/guardian should phone the school office on 090-6626496 and a message will be taken immediately to the student. This ensures that a student is given support and privacy in dealing with a potentially demanding situation.

Students who feel unwell must report to their Year Head who will contact home and students are not permitted to use their mobile phones to make such calls. This allows support and supervision and avoids students leaving the school grounds without a record being made.

Mobile phones cannot be used, under any circumstances during examination rooms. During house phones must be displayed on the corner of every desk. Breach of this rule will lead to invalidation of that examination and potentially other examinations.

Pupils need to acknowledge that it is a privilege to be permitted to bring mobile phones to school.

### **CONSEQUENCES**

In the event of a student failing to comply with the above school policy the following sanctions will apply;

### *First Offence*

On the first offence, the phone/audio device will be removed from the student and brought to the office where it will be stored securely. School authority will hold the phone/audio device until the end of the school day. The offence will be recorded by the reporting teacher and brought to the attention of the appropriate Year Head, Deputy Principal or Principal. Parents/Guardians will be notified of the offence.

### *Second Offence*

Should a student be found to be using a phone/audio device for a second time, the phone/audio device will be removed from the student and brought to the office where it will be stored securely. On this occasion, the phone/audio device will not be returned for 1 school day (e.g., If a phone/audio device is confiscated on Tuesday, it cannot be collected until Wednesday evening, if a phone/audio device is confiscated on Friday, it must be handed up on Monday morning and cannot be collected until Tuesday evening). School authority will hold the phone/audio device. Parents/Guardians are the only persons authorised to collect the phone/audio device. The offence will be recorded by the reporting teacher and brought to the attention of the appropriate Year Head, Deputy Principal or Principal. Parents/Guardians will be notified of the offence.

### *Third and Subsequent Offences*

Should a student be found to be using a phone/audio device on a third or subsequent occasion, the phone/audio device will be removed from the student and brought to the office where it will be stored securely. On this occasion, the phone/audio device will not be returned for Three school days after the offence (e.g., If a phone/audio device is confiscated on Monday, it cannot be collected until Thursday evening, if a phone/audio device is confiscated on Thursday, it cannot be collected until Tuesday evening). Parents/Guardians are the only persons authorised to collect the phone/audio device. The offence will be recorded by the reporting teacher and brought to the attention of the appropriate Year Head, Deputy Principal or Principal. Parents/Guardians will be notified of the offence.

If a student persists to breach the rules as laid out in this policy, then the parents/guardians and student will be requested to attend a meeting with the Principal to discuss the issue. Furthermore, if no resolution to the breach of policy can be found, the Parent/Guardian may be requested to attend a Board of Management Meeting.

### **NOTE:**

Should a student be found to be using a phone/audio device during the school day and refuses to hand up the phone/audio device, they will be brought immediately to the office where Parent/Guardian will be contacted and asked to take the student off the school premises for the remainder of the school day.

Students will only be allowed to return to school accompanied by their Parent/Guardian to meet with the Principal to discuss said breach of this policy.

All meetings held between the Parent/Student and School Authority will be minuted and held on file securely within the school.

### **ADVICE TO PUPILS ON THE SAFE USE OF MOBILES**

Using your mobile is convenient and practical but you need to observe some common-sense ground rules to protect yourself from potential abuse or danger.

Do not give out your number or friends' numbers to people you do not know, especially in Instant Messenger or Chat rooms.

Keep your security code or PIN number private.

If you get texts, which upset you, do not reply but keep a record and tell an adult. In serious cases you can report it to the Gardai.

If you receive a rude or embarrassing image or text about someone do not forward it to others. Distributing sexual images of other young people is harassment and is illegal. If you receive something like this, tell an adult immediately. See Coco's law.

Ask permission before taking a picture of your friends and think before sending it on. Once sent you have lost control of it and it could become public before you know it.

Visit the Thinkuknow website at [www.thinkuknow.co.uk](http://www.thinkuknow.co.uk) for more information on staying safe or [webwise.ie](http://webwise.ie)

### **BENEFITS**

Students can use phones in cases of emergency outside school hours. Students may feel more confident knowing they can contact someone if in difficulties. Some digital technology can be useful for learning and homework.

### **THE POTENTIAL DISADVANTAGES**

Mobile phones are valuable and can be lost or stolen.  
Students can be bullied by text messaging or silent phone calls.  
Mobile phones can be used to store and communicate inappropriate material.  
Unsuitable people are known to use mobile phones and text messages to make inappropriate contact with young people.

This policy was approved by the Board of Management on:

DATE.....

Signed: .....  
Chairperson of Board of Management.

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Secretary to the Board

