

MOBILE PHONE POLICY

St. Benedict's College



Guígh Agus Foghláim

ST. BENEDICT'S COLLEGE

Policy Date: _____

Signature of Principal: _____

Signature of Chairperson of Board of Governors: _____

Review Date: _____

Policy Overview:

This policy explains the use of mobile phones by students in school. Students are required to keep their phones turned off and stored away in their school bags unless given authorisation by the teacher to use the phone for educational purposes. Unauthorised use of mobile phones will result in disciplinary measures.

Rationale:

The decision to limit mobile phone access is based on growing evidence showing the negative impact of phone use on students' academic performance, focus and social well-being. The Education Minister, Paul Givan's recent guidance highlights research indicating that limiting mobile phone access improves concentration, learning outcomes and overall engagement in the classroom.

Key reasons for this policy include:

1. **Academic Focus:** studies show that mobile phones are a significant distraction, pulling students away from educational tasks and reducing their ability to concentrate during lessons (reducing the use of mobile phones will create a more focused learning environment, supporting academic engagement and achievement.
2. **Mental Health and Wellbeing:** reducing mobile phone usage can help decrease the chances of mobile phone misuse during school hours, contributing to a safer and more positive school environment. These changes aim to help students concentrate better in class, reduce social media-induced anxiety and improve their overall emotional and mental well-being.

Responsibility:

It is the responsibility of students who bring mobile phones to school to abide by the guidelines outlined in this document. The decision to provide a mobile phone to their children should be made by parents/carers.

We cannot accept any responsibility for the damage or loss of confiscated mobile phones during school hours. The school is not liable for damage that occurred in this time.

Acceptable Uses:

During Break time and Lunch time:

Pupils will not be asked to put their mobile phone away. However, if staff suspect that the mobile phone is being used in an inappropriate way – videoing/taking photographs - then the phone should be removed by that member of staff and placed in the office. The member of staff should record on SIMS that the phone has been confiscated and refer the matter to the pupil's Form Teacher.

Mobile phones can only be used to contact parents/carers after **3.25 pm** each day. All other communication should be made through the main office. Similarly, we ask parents/carers not to contact their child directly but to phone the main switchboard on 028944 72411.

Unacceptable Uses:

Mobile phones should **not** be visible (unless it is breaktime and lunchtime) and pupils are expected to have them stored and turned off safely **inside** their school bags.

Pupils will only be allowed to use their mobile phones in the classroom if permission has been given by a teacher and it is part of their learning and teaching.

Mobile phones must **not** be used to take photos/videos of other students or staff members. Furthermore, these should not be sent to other pupils or uploaded/shared on websites or Social Media platforms. It is a **criminal offence** to use mobile phones to bully, harass, threaten or offend another person and could lead to the involvement of the PSNI.

For Child Protection purposes, mobile phones are forbidden in the toilets and changing room areas at **all** times. Therefore, in the interests of safety, teachers will request that phones are left on their desks when pupils visit the bathrooms.

At the beginning of each public examination, pupils will be obliged to hand over mobile phones and Smart Watches according to JCQ rules.

Any student caught using a mobile phone to cheat in exams or assessments will face disciplinary action as sanctioned by the principal. If this occurs during a public examination the relevant examining body will be contacted and their guidelines/sanctions followed. This may result in disqualification from the examinations offered by that exam board.

Theft or damage:

If a mobile phone is found in the school, it should immediately be handed into the main office.

The school accepts no responsibility for replacing lost, stolen or damaged mobile phones. This also includes mobile phones that are lost or damaged whilst travelling to and from school.

In the classroom, if the student refuses to put the mobile phone away, then they are taken to HoD, if the HoD is not available, referred to HoY, if they are not available then KSM and likewise if they are not available then Vice Principal or Principal.

At the change of classes, if the student refuses to put the mobile phone away, then they are referred to HoY. If they are not available then KSM, and likewise, if they are not available then Vice Principal or Principal.

If they are seen with the mobile out, the confiscation procedure commences as per below:

	<u>Staff will:</u>	<u>Office will:</u>	<u>Student will:</u>	<u>Parent/Guardian will:</u>
1st Confiscation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Confiscate the phone. Take the phone to the Front Office. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Store the phone in the office in an envelope with pupil details. Log this as a behaviour point on SIMS and on <i>The Mobile Phone Confiscation Form</i>. Get pupil to sign <i>The Mobile Phone Confiscation Form</i> confirming receipt of mobile phone at the end of the day and keep record until the end of the school year. Add the student name to the ASDT schedule for the next available session and inform the FT and HOY. Send a parent text message notifying parent/guardians of confiscation and reminding them of the school policy and notifying them of ASDT details by letter. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collect the phone at the end of the day from the Front Office and the student confirms receipt of mobile phone by signing book – the <i>Mobile Phone Confiscation Form</i>. Verbal confirmation of ASDT details 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Receive a parent text message with school policy reminder, 1st confiscation alert and ASDT details by letter.
2nd Confiscation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As above 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Store the phone in the office in an envelope with pupil details. Log this as a behaviour point on SIMS and record on <i>The Mobile Phone Confiscation Form</i>. Send a text message notifying parent/guardian of confiscation, reminding them of the school policy and notifying them that they need to come in and collect the phone through text message. Get parent to sign the <i>Mobile Phone Confiscation Form</i> confirming receipt of mobile phone when the phone is collected and store safely until the end of the school year. Add the students name to the ASDT schedule for the next available session and inform the FT and HOY. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Verbal Confirmation of ASDT details but no phone given over 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Receive a parent text message with 2nd confiscation alert, ASDT details by letter and that parent/guardian needs to come into school to collect the phone by text message.
3rd Confiscation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As above 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Store the phone in the office in an envelope with pupil details. Log this as a behaviour point on SIMS and record on <i>The Mobile Phone Confiscation Form</i>. Send a parent text message notifying parent of confiscation and reminding them of the school policy and that they cannot pick up the phone until they arrange to meet with a member of the Pastoral Team. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> After the 3rd confiscation, they need to decide with their parents that they will either leave their phone daily at home or at the front office on arrival to school 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Receive a parent text message with reminder of the school policy, that they cannot pick up the phone until they meet with a member of the pastoral team to discuss student leaving the phone at home or at the front office when they arrive at school.