



# Mobile Phone Policy

## **NB This is a translation of the original Irish Document**

*All references will be taken from the wording of the Irish document*

### **Introductory Statement**

This policy was drafted in September 2008 in response to the reality that mobile phones can be used to bully other people. This is especially pertinent to students attending school. Laura Nic Eoin accepted responsibility for drafting the policy in collaboration with the Board of Management, the school staff and the parents of the school.

### **Rationale**

There has been an increase in the ownership of mobile phones and as a result schools are responsible to ensure that mobile phones are used appropriately. This policy was designed to ensure both staff and students understand the importance of appropriate mobile phone use in Gaelscoil Sáirséal.

“Schools have comprehensive autonomy in decision making and implementation in order to prevent students, attending the school, from bringing in anything that may be of concern.”

*(Department of Education and Skills)*

“It is recognised that mobile phones can be intrusive and distracting in all situations and particularly in schools. In addition to the inconvenience, the debate still goes on about the possible harmful effects of the frequent use of mobile phones. Children could be particularly vulnerable in this regard. Boards of Management should ensure that there is a policy in the school forbidding the use of mobile phones in the school. A notice to that effect should be displayed in the school. The use of mobile phones by staff for essential calls should be kept to the minimum and should be taken /made if possible in an open area or in an area where pupils are not present. Camera phones should not be allowed in schools.” *Solas - July/August 2004*

## **Personal Safety**

Gaelscoil Sáirséal understands that parents may give their child a mobile phone for their own safety to protect them from daily risks when travelling to and from school on their own. If this is the case the mobile phone must be turned off and remain in the secretary's office for the duration of the day. It is not permitted to turn the phone on while in the school or the yard. The child's name should be clearly written on the phone and the school cannot accept responsibility for loss or damage to the phone.

Parents are requested to send a written note to the principal teacher if their child is permitted to bring a mobile phone to school. If the situation changes at any time parents are requested to communicate this information with the school.

## **School Rules Regarding the Appropriate use of Mobile Phones for Students**

If any of these rules are broken sanctions will be enforced as per the school's Code of Behaviour.

1. Some children may be given permission to bring a mobile phone to school only on the grounds of personal safety. Parents / Guardians are requested to provide the school principal with a written explanation. The phone must be turned off at all times while on the school grounds. Any child with a phone must leave it in the secretary's office as they enter the school and collect it on his/her way out at the end of the school day. The phones must remain off while in the school and the yard. The child's name should be clearly written on the mobile phone. The school staff does not accept responsibility for loss or damage to any phone while on the school premises.
2. No child is allowed bring a phone into class or have a phone in his/her possession on the school grounds. If any child is found with a phone in their possession it will be confiscated by the class teacher, the parents will be informed and they will have to come to the school to collect the mobile phone.
3. Contact should be made through the school reception if any child or parent/guardian needs to contact one another during the school day.
4. Children are not permitted to take a mobile phone with them on any school tour.

5. If a mobile phone is found in the school premises it must be given to a member of staff.
6. Punishment will be given to any child using a mobile phone to upset, insult or send offensive text messages to another student in accordance with the school's code of behaviour (including the taking of photographs). Parents are requested to inform the school of any events of this nature. It is a criminal offence to use a mobile phone to bully, upset or intimidate another person and the matter may be referred to the Gardaí should school sanctions not address the issue.
7. If it is thought that unsuitable material is stored on the phone parents / guardians will be requested to collect the phone from the school.
8. If it is thought that material of a criminal nature is stored on the phone it will be given to the Gardaí for them to investigate. Parents /Guardians will be informed in this event.
9. The school accepts no responsibility for phones lost or damaged on the way to or from school, on the school premises or while stored in reception. The full responsibility lies with the children and their parents / guardians.
10. It is the responsibility of all children to follow these rules. If any child is in possession of a mobile phone regardless of whether it is switched on or off the teacher will take the phone and the parent or guardian will need to come and collect the phone from the school.

### **School Rules Regarding the Appropriate use of Mobile Phones for Staff**

1. No staff member should use their mobile phone for personal reasons during teaching time except in exceptional circumstances for important phone calls.
2. Teachers may only use their mobile phones during teaching time for school related tasks especially tasks with an educational purpose (There are lots of educational uses of the Smartphone for example recording the class singing).

**Review**

This policy was reviewed during the 2012/2013 school year. The next review will take place during the 2016/2017 school year. If there are any difficulties in implementing this policy these will be discussed at staff meetings.

**Ratification and Communication**

This policy will be presented to teachers, parents and the Board of Management. Students will be informed of the school rules in relation to mobile phone use. A copy of this policy will be available to the teachers and extra copies will be available in the school office for those parents who wish to read the policy. The policy is also available on the school website.

This policy was presented to the Board of Management.

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on \_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Chairperson of Board of Management

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Principal

Date: \_\_\_\_\_