

# Coola Post Primary School Mobile Phone Policy

Coola Post Primary School 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.

## **Rationale for the Mobile Phone policy**

The school recognises the potential of mobile phones and digital devices to support a more student-centred, active learning approach, with students taking more responsibility for their own learning.

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

The school therefore accepts that students are permitted to bring personal mobile phones and digital devices to school but that their use is subject to rules and guidelines.

The school aims to educate students in the responsible use of technology.

Note: The term 'phone' in this policy denotes mobile phones, iPods, MP3, MP4 players and any similar portable electronic devices.

This policy was developed in an open and inclusive manner following consultation with students, teachers and parents and is in-line with the Department of Education's circular (Circular 0038/2018) on the use of smart phones and tablet devices in schools [https://www.education.ie/en/Circulars-and-Forms/Active-Circulars/cl0038\\_2018.pdf](https://www.education.ie/en/Circulars-and-Forms/Active-Circulars/cl0038_2018.pdf)

**The need for Mobile Phone Policy** culture and way of life, the school is aware that there are a number of problems associated with their use and a whole school policy is needed to address some of the problems associated with

As mobile phones and digital devices are now an integral part of young peoples' mobile phone use. Some of the problems include:

- They are valuable items that can be stolen.
- Their use can render students subject to potential cyber-bullying or inappropriate contacts.

- Camera functions can lead to child protection and data protection issues with regard to inappropriate capture, use or distribution of image.
- They can disrupt the learning environment.

### **Rules and Guidelines around mobile phone use in school:**

- Responsibility for the phone rests with the student and the school accept no financial responsibility for damage, loss or theft.
- During class time, students must only use their phones under the direction of the class teacher for specific teaching and learning purposes.
- During school hours, phones are only permitted at break-time or at lunchtime. This means that phones must not be used for making calls, checking the time or texting during assembly, while in class or between classes.
- Students may not use their phones in the Mobile Phone Free Zones in the school, namely the canteen and the foyer or the toilets. Students are not permitted to use their phones in these areas at any time.
- Students may only use their phones outside of the Mobile Phone Free Zones at break-time and lunchtime. Sanctions will apply if students are found using their phones in the Mobile Phone Free Zones.
- Headphones must not be worn during or between lessons, for reasons of safety and courtesy.
- Students may only use the school wireless network and content filtered broadband. Use of unfiltered public access wireless connections, such as mobile networks, is not allowed during school hours.
- Students may not charge their devices under any circumstances anywhere in the school. This is part of our Green Schools initiative to cut down on energy consumption.
- No device should be used in the school to photograph or video students or staff without the authority of the teacher. In the case of a student, a Parent/Guardian must have given permission for such photographs/videos to be taken of their son/daughter.
- If there is an emergency which requires communication with home, students must speak to a member of staff who will deal with the matter.
- During class time and in the event of an emergency, parents/guardians should phone the school office 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 difficult situation.

- During class time, students who feel unwell must report to the School Reception who will contact Parents/Guardians. Students are not permitted to use their mobile phones to make such calls. This allows support and supervision and also avoids students leaving the school grounds without a record being made.
- Mobile phones cannot, under any circumstances, be taken into examination rooms. Breach of this rule will lead to invalidation of that examination and potentially other examinations.

### **Consequences:**

In the event of a student failing to comply with the above school policy the student will receive one demerit for phone usage. Subsequent breaches of the policy will result in more demerits being issued. Any student found charging their phone will be issued a demerit in line with the rules and guidelines of the policy.

If a student persists to break the rules as laid out in this policy, the parents/guardians will be notified of the issue by the relevant Year Head.

### **Responsible Use of Mobile Phones in the classroom.**

- Students are required to use phones and devices responsibly at all times, and only under direction of their class teacher for teaching and learning purposes while in class.
- 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.
- Cyber-bullying is completely unacceptable and will be followed up by the school as serious misbehaviour for which the school, in turn, will invoke the necessary sanctions as laid out in the school's Code of Behaviour.

### **Advice to Students on the Safe Use of Mobile Phones**

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.

- Don't give out your number or friends' numbers to people you don't know, especially in Instant Messenger or Chat rooms.

- Keep your security code or PIN number private.
- If you get texts which upset you, don't 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 don't 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.
- 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 [www.webwise.ie](http://www.webwise.ie) for more information on staying safe online.