



Our Lady of the Wayside National School Mobile Phone and Electronic Devices Policy

Introductory Statement:

This policy was drawn up in response to technological advances, which have seen a significant increase in hand held electronic 'gadgets' amongst the school population over recent years.

Rationale:

- iPods, mobile phones, Game Boys, PSP's, MP3's, Smart Watches etc. are intrusive and distracting in a school environment
- Strategies must be put in place to reduce the intrusiveness of unauthorised technology in a school situation
- Some electronic devices may be harmful due to frequent use
- Mobile phones may be used to conduct bullying campaigns

Relationship to School Ethos:

The use of mobile phones and other electronic devices contravene the provision of a safe and secure school environment and is not conducive to learning - a provision which is central to the mission statement and ethos of our school.

Aim:

- To lessen intrusions on and distractions to children's learning

Policy regarding Mobile Phones and Electronic devices:

- If it is absolutely necessary, pupils may carry a mobile phone in their school bag except on school tours where the School Tours and Trips policy applies. Parents must write to the class teacher regarding this. The phone must remain in their school bag and must be switched off. "Switched off" does not mean "silent", "Meeting" or any other similar mode. The **phone must be powered off**. Children are not allowed the use of mobile phones during school hours. The school holds no responsibility for phones lost, damaged or stolen.

- Personal Electronic devices are not allowed in school, either during school hours or on school tour. Children/Parents who need to contact home/school during school hours may do so through the school secretary using the school landline phone.
- Any pupil who has his/her phone/electronic device switched on or uses a mobile phone/electronic device in school will have it confiscated. The device will only be returned to the parent by the principal.
- If a pupil is found taking photographs, video footage or audio recordings etc. with an electronic device, of either other pupils or teachers, this will be regarded as a serious offence and disciplinary action will be taken.
- The school will not be responsible for any class WhatsApp groups, messaging services or any other social media communication aid.
- Staff have access to the school landline if urgent calls need to be made to parents.
- Staff personal calls are confined to break times.
- Mobile phones are not allowed on school trips, in line with the School Tours and Trips policy. Teachers will have a contact number in the event that it is necessary to make contact with a parent/guardian.

Mobile Phone Use by Staff:

- Staff use of mobile phones for personal reasons will be confined to break times and after school (except in the case of an emergency)
- Staff are reminded to be careful when using their personal mobile phones to contact parents. For privacy and personal safety, teacher should use the school phone or if personal phone must be used, the personal phone number should be withheld through the phone settings.
- Personal phones should never be used to take photographs of children, or the school environment, or staff, or to store their personal data. Instead school cameras should be used for official school photography.

Mobile Phone Use by Parents:

- Mobile phones must never be used to take random photographs in the school building or grounds during school hours, with the exception of formal occasions e.g. Hallowe'en parade, Paráid Glas or Sean Nós Céilí, or outside, without the specific permission of all parents whose children might be included. The taking/sharing of school related pictures is discouraged on social media platforms.
- Personal cameras and mobile phone cameras should not be used to take pictures of children. If parents who accompany children on a school trip are asked by the teacher to take photos as a record of the educational visit, they will be issued with a school camera. Parents accompanying children on school trips should not use their mobile cameras / electronic devices to take pictures of children.
- Please be aware that there may be children in any given class whose photos should not be taken.

Whatsapp Guidelines:

- The role of a whatsapp group is first and foremost communication and is intended to get messages and important information to people quickly and efficiently. The school does not contribute to whatsapp groups.
- Whatsapp groups may not be used to post private messages.
- Whatsapp group should never be used to voice grievances or drive personal agendas.

Links to other Policies:

This policy supports the Health and Safety, Anti- Bullying, Child Protection and ICT policies.

Roles and Responsibilities:

All staff share in the co-ordination and implementation of this policy.

Evaluation: This policy is monitored on an ongoing basis and amendments added as new technology comes on stream.

Ratification:

The Board of Management ratified this policy.

It was reviewed in November 2016.

Updated January 2019.

Updated February 2020.