



St. Mary's Secondary School

Convent of Mercy, Newport, Co. Tipperary V94 RY18

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Registered Charity Number: 20148379



Mobile Phone Usage Policy

St. Mary's Secondary School, Newport, is a Voluntary Catholic Secondary School under the Trusteeship and the Patronage of C.E.I ST. (Catholic Schools, An Irish Schools Trust). The School is grant aided by the Department of Education & Skills, and is a co-educational school.

School Management: The Board of Management of St. Mary's Secondary School is a statutory Board, appointed pursuant to the provisions of the Education Act 1998.

Mission Statement:

St. Mary's Secondary School, Newport operates as a Catholic co-educational Secondary School, to provide teaching and learning of the highest quality for the benefit of the community which it serves.

In pursuing this mission we aim:

- To provide a quality educational experience that caters for the full range of academic aptitude and abilities.
- To foster the intellectual, physical, social, cultural, moral and religious development of our students.
- To enable pupils to achieve their full potential academically.
- To promote the Catholic ethos and faith.
- To cater for the needs of the local community in so far as ethos, resources and facilities permit.

Ethos: As a CEIST school, St. Mary's seeks to promote the five key elements of the CEIST charter.

Promoting Spiritual and Human Development.

Achieving Quality in Teaching and Learning.

Showing Respect for Every Person.

Creating Community.

Being Just and Responsible.

This policy should be read in conjunction with St. Mary's Secondary School ICT policy, the Acceptable Usage Policy, the Remote Learning Policy, the Anti Bullying Policy and the code of behaviour. The term mobile phone in this policy denotes mobile phones, ipods, MP4 players, and any similar smart devices such as watches etc.

Rationale

St. Mary's Secondary School, Newport 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 as an educational tool, when used in an appropriate manner. We believe that such technology will play an increasing part in future learning practices, but, like existing ICT use, we are cognisant of the problems that this technology may present.

Aims

The aim of this Mobile phone usage policy is to promote good practice and safe, responsible use of the mobile phone. This access is considered a valuable teaching and learning resource, and a privilege. If the Mobile Phone Usage Policy of St. Mary's Secondary School is not adhered to, this privilege may be withdrawn and appropriate sanctions will be imposed.

The main goals of this policy are:

- To ensure that the students of St. Mary's benefit, in a safe and effective manner, from the learning opportunities offered by use of their mobile phones
- To define the parameters of behaviour
- to specify the consequences of violating those parameters

Responsibilities

The school therefore permits pupils to bring mobile phones and digital devices to school, but their use is strictly subject to the following guidelines.

The use of mobile phones in St. Mary's Secondary School is for educational purposes only, and always under the guidance and supervision of a teacher. Students must use their phones and devices responsibly at all times

The following is absolutely not acceptable. This list is not exhaustive.

- Recording footage
- Taking photos
- Sharing content
- Use of social media
- Any form of inappropriate communication.

Responsibility for the mobile phone rests with the student, and the school accepts no responsibility whatsoever for damage, loss or theft either of the phone, or of content therein.

Mobile phones/headphones etc must be switched off, and not be visible at all during the course of the school day.

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

Students who feel unwell must report to their teacher, and the secretary will contact home. 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.

In an emergency situation at home, 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.

Mobile phones, and other devices cannot, under any circumstances, be taken into examination rooms. Breach of this rule will lead to invalidation of that examination and potentially other examinations.

Sanctions

In the event of a student failing to comply with the above school policy, the following sanctions will apply, in accordance with the code of behaviour, and at the discretion of the Principal.

First Offence

On the first offence, the phone/audio device will be removed from the student and brought to the main office where it will be stored securely. The school authority will hold the phone/audio device until the end of the following school day. The offence will be recorded by the reporting teacher, and brought to the attention of the appropriate Year head through the behaviour slip system.

In brief, the protocol for breach of school policy is as follows:

- Student turns off his/her phone
- The phone is given to the staff member who puts it in an envelope with the students name and details on it
- The phone is stored securely in the main office
- A behaviour slip is given to the student

Should a student be found to be using a phone/audio device during the course of the school day and refuse to hand up the phone/ device, the period of confiscation will be longer, the

phone must be handed up and other sanctions/disciplinary actions may apply, at the discretion of the Year Head or Principal.

For serious or repeated breaches of this policy, all sanctions and/or disciplinary actions up to and including expulsion may be applied.

Advice to students regarding the safe use of mobile phones.

Using your mobile is convenient and practical but you need to protect yourself from potential abuse or danger.

Don't give out any phone numbers to people you don't know.

Keep your security code or PIN number private.

If you get texts or images which upset you, don't reply but keep a record and tell an adult.

If students are members of social media platforms, where hurtful material is being shared, we strongly advise you to leave such a group, and to let a teacher know.

Visit www.thinkuknow.co.uk for more information on staying safe.

Timetable for Review

The Mobile Phone Usage Policy will be reviewed as the need arises, and/or every year. The next review is scheduled to take place in 2024.

Policy review team: Mr. D O'Callaghan, Ms. E. Mullally, Ms. G. Foley, Mr. D. Hickey

Relevant dates for this policy:

Policy reviewed and amended by team: October & November, 2021

Consultation with Student focus group: 8th November, 2021

Consultation with Senior Management: 16th November, 2021

Consultation with Staff: 18th November, 2021

Consultation with Student Council: 24th November, 2021

Consultation with Parents Council: 24th November, 2021

Draft Policy presented to Board of Management: 1st December, 2021

Policy approved by Board of Management:

Signed: 

Chairperson, Board of Management

Date: 1/12/2021

Signed: 

Principal, St. Mary's Secondary School

Date: 1/12/2021