

St Joseph's Secondary School

Newfoundwell, Drogheda, Co. Louth

Mobile Phone/Digital Devices Policy



Mission Statement.

Our school recognises that each pupil who enrolls in our school is unique and has different gifts as well as different needs. It is our wish that our pupils will leave us with enhanced self-confidence and with life skills and attitudes which will enable them to lead lives satisfying to themselves and which may contribute to the betterment of society. We recognise that a pupil's development is closely linked to a good self image and so we strive to present the school's total curriculum in such a manner as to allow all to realise their full potential. We see ourselves as working in partnership with parents to develop the gifts and to meet the needs of all. We regard our school as an educational establishment with a Christian community characterised by care and justice.

Aim of This Policy

The following policy aims to maintain a safe, nurturing environment where the personal dignity and rights of all the members of the school community are preserved in line with our mission statement. This policy has been put in place in order that teaching and learning can take place without interruption and also with the intention of protecting students and staff from potential harassment or bullying.

Policy Context

St Joseph's Secondary School recognises that such technology will play an increasing part in future learning practices, but, like existing ICT use, this should follow agreed rules and guidelines to prevent disruption and instil good learning habits.

Mobile Phones do present a number of problems;

- They can disrupt the learning environment.
- They can be used to cyber bully other students.
- They are valuable items that can be stolen.
- Camera functions can lead to child protection and data protection issues with regard to inappropriate capture, use or distribution of images.

This policy is informed by the school's Child Safeguarding Policy, Code of Behaviour, Internet Acceptable Usage Policy for Students and Staff, Dignity in the Workplace Policy and Wellbeing Policy.

Policy Arrangements

In order to assist the school in implementing this policy, parents/guardians are not to arrange to contact students by mobile phone at any time during the school day. Contact with the school may be made through the school office at 041 9837232.

If a student wishes to contact home, he may do so by using the school phone outside the general office. Permission to use this phone must be given from the office.

Students (**enrolled prior to the 2023/24 school year**) are permitted to bring their mobile phone/digital device to school. This is to ensure pupil safety to and from school. The school operates a 'Powered Off and Out of Sight' policy. Students should keep their mobile phone/digital device powered off and in their pocket, or locker at all times and may not be used for any purpose on the school premises (inside the school gates) at any time, including before and after school. Mobile phones/digital devices may not be used in the classroom for any purpose, including the use of calculators or checking the time.

*Please note:

A ban on mobile phones was adopted by St. Josephs B.O.M in August 2023 and is applicable to 1st Year enrolled for the 2023/24 school year and all subsequent 1st Years students enrolling thereafter.

Students are never permitted to record on their own device. In circumstances where the curriculum requires that recording takes place, this will **only be done on a school device under the supervision of the teacher.**

St Joseph's Secondary School is committed to educating students about responsible use of the internet and using mobile devices with camera functions through the school's Wellbeing programme. Students will learn internet safety and cyber security by utilising the resources available on www.webwise.ie through SPHE and CSPE. The school's Wellbeing policy contains more detailed information on these arrangements.

Sanctions for Misuse of Mobile Phones/Digital Devices

Breaches of this policy will be dealt with under the school's Code of Behaviour.

- A student who is found using a mobile phone/digital device or with a mobile phone/digital device in his hand where a teacher can see it will result in the phone/digital device being confiscated, given to the principal/deputy principal and will be confiscated for at least one week. Note: The SIM card is defined as part of the phone. There are no exceptions to this rule. The mobile phone/digital device will be placed, powered off in front of the principal/deputy principal, in a sealed envelope with the student's name on it and the date on which it was confiscated. This will be stored securely in the school building.
- When a mobile phone/digital device is confiscated, the student will be asked to ring a parent/guardian to let them know that the phone/digital device was confiscated. This will be followed up with a text sent home by the secretary in the office.
- The use of electronic recording equipment of any type is strictly forbidden in the school building and grounds or on any school activity. The sanction for

noncompliance with this rule will include up to and including expulsion.

- At the end of the five school day period, the phone/digital device will be returned. The school has the right to ensure in so far as is practicable, that the phone/ digital device contains no images or information which would compromise any member of

the school community. The student will be required to remove any school related images with a parent/guardian present after which the phone/digital device will be returned.

- Incidents where students use mobile phones/digital devices to bully other students or send/record offensive messages or calls will be investigated under the Anti-Bullying Policy for Students. It should be noted that it is a criminal offence to use a mobile phone/digital device to menace, harass or offend another person. As such, the school may consider it appropriate to involve the Gardaí in such incidents.
- The school accepts no responsibility for replacing lost, stolen or damaged mobile phones/digital devices. The safety and security of mobile phones/digital devices is wholly a matter for students and their parents/guardians.

This policy was reviewed on 10/01/23

Signature: Chairperson of the Board of Management :E.Coffey

Date: 10/01/23

Signature: Principal & Secretary to the Board of Management: P.Savage

Date: 10/01/23